

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

**Becoming Fitly Joined Together: Unifying the Church Body for Vision  
Manifestation**

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

By

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December 2020

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**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, December 2, 2020

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This DMIN action research project fulfilled the purpose of increasing awareness within the four churches in the Greater Berea District concerning the value and function of having a vision. Preintervention and postintervention questionnaires, interviews, hypothetical case studies, and a class-styled intervention was employed. The one-day intervention educated participants concerning how a vision supports the work of the church, which enables it to be more fruitful. Furthermore, the class equipped attendees with a biblical foundation showing that God is a proponent and encourager of vision. The necessity of this study was determined when the researcher witnessed a church vision being cast by the pastor with no resulting action. She postulated that teaching a class on vision, which encompasses general vision education, biblical examples of vision in action, and scriptures to encourage and empower believers would create an openness amongst church members towards having and supporting a vision within the religious organization where their membership resides. An increase in education and willingness to support church vision is reflected in intervention engagement, post-intervention questionnaires, postintervention interviews, and through their excitement to return to their churches with a commitment to work with leadership to help bring the vision to fruition. Ministries that need assistance teaching and getting their members excited about their God-given vision will benefit from this study.

Thesis project topic abstract length: 215 words

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## **Abbreviations**

COGIC *Church of God in Christ*

DMIN *Doctor of Ministry*

GBD *The Greater Berea District*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.”<sup>1</sup> Individuals and organizations can change the world when vision is activated. Aubrey Malphurs defines vision as a “clear challenging picture of the future of the ministry, as you believe that it can and must be.”<sup>2</sup> The significance of having a vision is not confined to secular organizations. Maintaining a vision is essential to religious organizations as well.

Etymologically, the word vision was first established in religion. Christianity has employed the term in religious texts for thousands of years.<sup>3</sup> However, when it was used explicitly, it described a holy encounter producing a view of the future or detailed advice concerning how to address a situation.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, a vision was included in business texts to illustrate innovative mental images related to the future of the enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

This DMIN action research project is geared towards assisting religious institutions, particularly the churches in the Greater Berea District (GBC), with their knowledge, presentation, and vision implementation by providing the information necessary to gather

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<sup>1</sup> Joel A. Barker, “Favorite Inspiring Quotes: Vision,” Trans4mind, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://trans4mind.com/quotes/vision.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 134.

<sup>3</sup> Aurel Brudan, “Vision Statements as Strategic Management Tools – Historical Overview,” The KPI Institute, last modified July 3, 2010, accessed May 2, 2020, <https://www.performancemagazine.org/vision-statements-as-strategic-management-tools-%E2%80%93-historical-overview/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

adequate vision support from members. This topic is essential to the researcher because she is a church member where she has observed the rollout of a vision with no corresponding action. The researcher is also a district member (a group of three to five churches led by a superintendent). She has seen the fragmentation that exists without a vision, and a house divided against itself shall not stand (Matt 12:25).

The following pages provide readers with a wealth of information about the project. In the ministry context, there is foundational and current information on the four churches, the district, and the denomination in which they serve, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), which is the largest Pentecostal African American religious organization in the world with churches in more than 120 countries. The problem, which is the focal point of this project, is presented. Readers will be informed of the basic assumptions that the researcher makes concerning the churches and their members. Definitions for specific terms incorporated in this writing are provided, including vision, believer, and pioneer pastor. The reader will also be apprised of limitations that this endeavor encountered, with the researcher's delimitations placed on the project. Following the limitations and delimitations, a thesis statement is provided, which concludes the first chapter.

Chapter Two establishes the conceptual framework. An informative review of the literature on topics that are pertinent to the project such as The Purpose of Vision and Its Importance to the Church, Positive Outcomes from Having a Vision, Negative Outcomes for Not Having a Vision, Casting a Vision, Leadership Engagement, Personal Vision, and The Theological Implications of Having a Vision. Theological foundations explore the biblical basis for vision and the visionary's character traits to succeed at presentation and implementation, as

exemplified by leaders in the Bible. The next section of the chapter, Theoretical Foundations, discusses the kinds of research that have been done on the topic of vision.

In Chapter Three, Methodology, readers will find the researcher's intervention and information concerning its purpose, the participants, and survey instruments used. The chapter also describes the implementation of the intervention design.

Chapter Four, Results, contains the outcome of the intervention. A comparative analysis is provided of preintervention and postintervention data. Themes discovered during the intervention are presented along with quotes from participants. Information gathered from the insider, and the outsider observers are present along with the researcher's observations.

Chapter Five concludes the action research project. The researcher's findings are discussed concerning the literature review. The limitations of the project are reflected upon. The applicability of research is included, along with suggestions for future research. The researcher also addresses whether she believes that the study should be replicated in other church organizations. Questionnaires and additional tools utilized for the study are made available in the appendices.

### Ministry Context

This study is based on a district in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). The district was established over 25 years ago. It is currently comprised of four Pentecostal congregations under the leadership of a superintendent. Three of the churches individually range in size from 7 to 30 members, while one of the district's churches has approximately 200 to 250 members. All the churches are in southeast Michigan, three in Detroit and one in Sterling Heights. The congregations are African American. As far as the age range of leadership is concerned, all the

Pastors are between fifty and sixty years old except for the pastor of the largest church who is above the age of seventy. While there are several commonalities, each church is unique.

Church #1 is the oldest and largest church in the district. This church began in the living room of Mrs. Jerdeaner Moore (Mother Moore). Mother Moore started having prayer meetings in her living room. When the number of participants grew, she started looking for a building to have church services. When she found a building, she talked to her husband, and he agreed to be the pastor of the church because there were no women pastors in the denomination. The Church of God in Christ ordained Pastor Moore as an elder, and he pastored the church until death. The church has existed for over sixty years and is currently led by a second pastor in the church's history. He has been the pastor for 27 years. This pastor is also the former superintendent of the district.

Additionally, he is a retired corporate executive and a political and civil rights activist. It is not uncommon for the mayor, governor, or another politician to be in the pulpit speaking or sitting in the congregation. The pastor utilizes corporate strategies in ministry, such as teambuilding exercises and a board of directors for the outreach ministry. He is very familiar with mission and vision statements.

Church #2 has approximately thirty members and is led by the superintendent of the district. Elder Elbert Clark is the founder. He held the first service in his Detroit home.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after beginning services in his home, Elder Clark found a space for worship services in Highland Park, Michigan, until they could purchase two attached storefronts, a thrift store, a milk station,

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<sup>6</sup> "Berea's History," Berea Church of God in Christ, accessed February 7, 2020, <http://www.berea-cogic.org/berea-s-history.html>.

and convert them into a church.<sup>7</sup> He pastored the church for 38 years until his death and was succeeded by Pastor Dawson, who pastored the church for 13 years. The church is fifty-seven years old, and the current pastor has been a member his entire life. Pastoring the church for over four years, he is the third pastor in the church's history. In addition to being the current superintendent, he is a dual career pastor with a longstanding career at an energy company. The church is lead in a very traditional manner having the standard COGIC services and events, including noonday prayer, Tuesday night Prayer and Bible Band (Bible study), Friday night pastoral teaching, and Sunday morning worship services.

Church #3 has approximately ten members and is led by the founder of the church. This researcher is a member of this church. The church has been in existence for twelve years. The Lord directed the pastor to start a church-based upon Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The pastor is a dual-career pastor or "tent-maker" whose secular job is in the transportation industry. While the ministry has overcome many challenges in the past decade, such as theft and property destruction, the ministry has also obtained many victories, such as moving from an 800-square-foot office space into a 9300-square-foot church building and paying it off within three years. Service times and locations are unique partly because most of the membership are nondriving and depend on the church van for transportation. Sunday service is at 2 p.m. Bible Study is every other Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. in the morning in a McDonald's restaurant near some of the members' residence. Prayer meetings happen every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the evening and alternate Fridays at 3 p.m. via teleconference. The pastor has extensive entrepreneurial experience and regularly

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<sup>7</sup> "Berea's History."

encourages members to become business owners. He presented a vision statement to the congregation in 2019. Progress has yet to be made towards its fruition.

Church #4 has approximately seven members and is also led by its founder. The church has been in existence for less than five years. The pastor is a dual career pastor who works in the automobile industry. Services have initially been held sporadically in the pastor's home. They have recently moved into a church building and services are every Sunday at 10:30 am.

The churches in the district meet once a month to fellowship. The location alternates between churches according to the pastor that is scheduled to deliver the sermon. There has yet to be a vision or mission established for the district. The current superintendent is new, occupying the position for less than one year.

### **Commonalities Amongst the Churches in the District**

All the churches are Pentecostal and subscribe to the doctrine of the Church of God in Christ. Each pastor wants to see his church grow quantitatively and qualitatively. Except for the oldest church in the district, all the churches have less than 50 members. Except for the former superintendent, each pastor works a secular job in addition to pastoring a church. All the churches hold services in a church building.

### **Differences Amongst the Churches in the District**

Two of the pastors inherited their churches, while the other two founded their churches. Church #2 is very traditional in its service schedule, and they do many fundraising activities such as selling dinner or hosting jewelry parties. The pastor's wife in Church #1 is very proficient in grant writing. As a result, she can raise tens of thousands of dollars for the church with a single grant. Church #1 is also very civic-minded and has become less denominationally traditional



over the years than the other churches in the district. Politicians regularly speak to the congregation. The attire for services is very relaxed. Church #3 has very nontraditional service times, locations, and methods. For instance, Sunday service starts at 2 pm, weekly prayer happens over the phone, and Bible study occurs in a McDonald's restaurant. The pastor is very vision-oriented and has placed the vision statement in the vestibule for everyone to see. Whether or not the other churches have a vision is not evident. Church #4 rents space from another church for Sunday service. The other churches own their buildings. Additionally, Church #4 has yet to establish any auxiliaries or ministries within the membership.

### **History of the Church of God in Christ**

The founder of the Church of God in Christ, Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, began his preaching ministry in 1893 when Mt. Gale Missionary Baptist Church licensed him to be a minister in Arkansas.<sup>8</sup> In 1896, Elder Mason conducted a revival with Elder C.P. Jones and Elder Pleasant of Mississippi and Elder J. E. Jeter of Arkansas. The revival attracted large crowds. Many experienced theophanic manifestations and converted to Christianity through the dogmatic teachings of Bishop Mason on sanctification.<sup>9</sup> The Baptist association did not agree with these teachings. Therefore, Bishop Mason and all those who followed his teachings were disassociated from the Baptist association and could no longer use any Baptist churches for services.<sup>10</sup> Bishop Mason preached his next message in Jackson, Mississippi, from the back of a courthouse one night and from Mr. John Lee's living room the next night. Due to large crowds, Mr. Watson

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<sup>8</sup> "Our History," The Church of God in Christ, accessed February 7, 2020, <http://www.cogic.org/about-company/our-history/>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

allowed the revival to continue in his old warehouse, which used to be a gin house in Lexington, Mississippi.

When the revival ended, the decision was made to establish a church founded upon the doctrine of complete sanctification through the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup> Elder Mason, Elder Jones, and Elder Pleasant, along with sixty people, were charter members of the Pentecostal Assemblies originally called the Church of God.<sup>12</sup> In 1897, while seeking a different name, the Lord showed Bishop Mason the word “Church of God in Christ,” which is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:14, “For ye brethren became followers of the Churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye have suffered like things of your countrymen even as they have of the Jews.”<sup>13</sup> The elders agreed to the name unanimously. When the church reorganized, Elder C.P. Jones became the general overseer, Elder C.H. Mason was the overseer of Tennessee, and Elder J.A. Jeter was overseer of Arkansas.

In 1907, Elder Mason attended a revival in Los Angeles, California, that forever changed his life. He was deeply affected by the message preached by Elder William Seymour concerning Luke 29:39.<sup>14</sup> That message convinced Elder Mason that he needed the Holy Ghost’s manifestation with the evidence of speaking in tongues. He went to the altar asking the Lord for the Baptism of the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2:41.<sup>15</sup> Elder Mason’s testimony was that he became filled with the glory of the Lord and his language changed.

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<sup>11</sup> “Our History.”

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

After this Pentecostal experience, Elder Mason returned home, proclaiming his New Testament experience. However, his co-laborers in the gospel thought that he was delusional. As a result, his right hand of fellowship was revoked by the General Assembly.<sup>16</sup> In response, Elder Mason initiated a conference in Memphis, Tennessee, for all preachers who believed in the Holy Spirit's baptism according to Acts 2:1-4.<sup>17</sup> The ministers who attended established the first Pentecostal General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ and chose Elder C.H. Mason as their overseer.<sup>18</sup> He was also unanimously made Chief Apostle of the denomination. Absolute authority was given to Elder Mason concerning the doctrine, auxiliaries, and the appointment of state overseers.<sup>19</sup> Instantly, he designated November 25<sup>th</sup> – December 14<sup>th</sup> as a meeting period where everyone would fellowship together and attend to ecclesiastical and secular matters to further the national organization. These dates were intentionally chosen as a time that would not negatively affect the members who lived in farming districts.<sup>20</sup> By that time, the crops were harvested, and they were financially able to attend and support the meetings.

National Convocation is still held annually today. There have been several locations, with some built explicitly for the grand gathering. In 1945, a dream of Bishop Mason was realized when Mason Temple was built in Memphis during World War II for less than \$400,000.<sup>21</sup> It was the largest convention hall in America owned by any colored religious group.<sup>22</sup> The Church of

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<sup>16</sup> "Our History."

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

God in Christ had ten congregations in 1907. It is currently the largest Pentecostal organization in America, and there are over six million members worldwide, on every continent.

### Problem Presented

Sharan B. Merriam asserts that a problem is an issue that challenges and perplexes the mind.<sup>23</sup> This study addresses the perplexing issue concerning people of faith who have been called to walk together within a religious organization, group or auxiliary that lack a united, God-given vision. Vision ignites excitement within a group for the organization's future.<sup>24</sup> It provides direction and goals as well as stimulates action. Proverbs 29:18 informs one that people cease to exist without a vision.

Furthermore, a God-given vision strengthens the faith of a believer. It activates the assertion that nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37, Matt 19:26). For a vision to become a reality within any organization, support from its' members is vitally important.

Visionary leadership is considered a part of good management.<sup>25</sup> There is no more superior management position than the one who watches for your soul (Heb 13:7). Visionary leadership is not only needed to thrive in corporate America; it is also necessary for the execution of a God-given vision within the community of faith. Leaders categorized as

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<sup>23</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (La Vergne: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 30.

<sup>24</sup> Malphurs, 35.

<sup>25</sup> Hudson E. Kibuuka, "Vision and Mission Statement in Christian Higher Educational Management in Eastern Africa," *JRCE* 10, no. 1 (Spr 2001): 87.

visionaries comprehend the vision source, how the vision will inspire people, and explain the concept.<sup>26</sup>

Many churches do not have a vision, or the leadership does not know how to communicate their vision effectively. While many pastors may be familiar with a vision statement's function, the significance must be conveyed to congregants in an understandable and motivational manner so that the vision will become a reality.

A house divided against itself shall not stand (Matt 12:25b). When church members unite to support the leadership's vision, significant progress can be made within the ministry. People are enthusiastic when they are a part of a movement, an organization, or a group progressing and working towards fulfilling a greater purpose than themselves.<sup>27</sup> How one communicates the greater goal is crucial to its fulfillment. The Bible informs believers that people perish due to a lack of knowledge (Hos 4:6, Isa 5:13). Knowledge is the key to sustainability and growth. Approximately 25% of the churches within this district have expressed a vision. The issue is, religious organizations, especially churches within this particular district, need a substantial increase of awareness concerning the value and the function of a vision.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to increase awareness within the four churches in the district concerning the value and function of having a vision. Through a one-day intervention, it will show how a vision supports the church's work, which enables it to be more fruitful and provides a biblical foundation showing that God is a proponent and encourager of

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<sup>26</sup> Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 86.

<sup>27</sup> Malphurs, 129-130.

vision. Vision promotes excitement and cohesiveness within a group or organization.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, this study explores the impact of a church utilizing a vision versus a church not using a vision. The research will also examine the importance of having a vision appropriately communicated to the congregants.

### Basic Assumptions

It is assumed that all the pastors in this district desire for their churches to grow in numbers and progress in the faith. They want their congregants to prosper and be in health even as their soul prospers (3 John 2). Corporate growth and individual growth are vital to them.

Another assumption is that all members who participate in the survey are followers of Jesus Christ and want to please and obey God. They believe in the authority of the Bible and desire to obey God's Word.

Lastly, this study assumes that the lack of knowledge concerning the importance of a vision and how to present it effectively are the key reasons for the absence of vision implementation in the district churches and the district itself. The Bible instructs one "with all thy getting, get an understanding" (Prov 4:7). In this study, the belief is that vision education is a critical missing component hindering productivity in this area.

### Definitions

**Believer** - A name ascribed to Christians due to the focus on faith in the New Testament.<sup>29</sup> The Old Testament roots for this title can be found in Genesis 15:6, Isaiah 7:9, and Habakkuk 2:4. It

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<sup>28</sup> Mel Lawrenz, *Whole Church: Leading from Fragmentation to Engagement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 116.

<sup>29</sup> R.S. Rayburn, "Christians, Names of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 236.

is verbalized in several scriptures in the New Testament, such as Acts 5:14, and depicts the doctrine of faith as confidence and trust in the mercy of God found in Christ in John 20:31 and Romans 3:22.<sup>30</sup> Acts 16:1 and Ephesians 1:1 shows it can mean a faithful and trustworthy or believer. However, various occurrences in the New Testament affirm its educational use as a title for Christians (2 Cor 6:15 and 1 Tim 4:10, 12).<sup>31</sup> This term will be used interchangeably with the word “Christian” and other terms or phrases in the study depicting a follower of Christ.

**Pioneer Pastor** - The term pioneer pastor is a term not directly defined in scholarly works. However, it is used to describe a pastor who did not inherit a church. He founded a church, a ministry that did not exist and had no other leaders before him. Pioneer Pastor and church planter are very similar terms. However, many church planters seemed to be birthed out of larger churches where they receive financial or mentorship support along with a group of members from the larger church being sent out or assigned to help plant the new church for at least one year. Contrastingly, most pioneer pastors begin the ministry with themselves and immediate family members. There is no formal program in place to launch the ministry or support the new pastor. This term will be used in the study when describing pastors in the district who started the churches they lead.

**Vision** - This term is defined as a coherent, challenging depiction of a ministry’s future, as one believes that it can and must be.<sup>32</sup> This term, knowledge of it and its application is the main focus of the study.

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<sup>30</sup> Rayburn, 236.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Malphurs, 134.

## Limitations

Participation in the district fellowship has declined with the change in leadership. One of the limitations that the project may encounter is leaving the study before it is complete. For instance, if some of the participants submit the questionnaire but fail to attend the one-day intervention, there may not be enough participants remaining to have an adequate sample size. Incentives will be present to foster participation.

Everyone in the district is African American. There is no possibility for a racially diverse sample size. While the study will survey various viewpoints concerning vision, it will not obtain preliminary information from within the district about multiple cultures and their thoughts concerning vision.

An additional limitation includes the nature of self-reporting during one-on-one interviews. Participants may feel compelled to pretend like they are entirely on board with the idea of a church vision when speaking with the researcher face-to-face. As a result, their responses will not be factual, which would adversely affect the study. As a remedy, anonymous questionnaires collected by a disinterested third-party will be employed. These questionnaires will be examined along with the interviews to reveal incongruencies.

The limitation of survey instruments is another issue for consideration. Suppose participants feel pressured by the time constraints of the survey. Their answer choices towards the end of the questionnaire may not be what they would choose if they had more time. Furthermore, their answer may not be included in the available answer choices. Interviews will minimize this problem and allow the participants to speak freely and ask clarifying questions.



## Delimitations

The sample size will only include members of a district in the Church of God in Christ because the focus of the thesis project is only on the community and the four churches about their lack of an expressed vision or lack of support. Additionally, visitors will not be included because they have yet to commit to being a member of any of the churches. As a result, full engagement is not expected.

Only members of the district who are participants in the one-day intervention will complete and submit the initial questionnaire. Reception of the surveys is vital because they signal to the researcher the depth of education the participants need to gain a valuable understanding of vision and their willingness to participate.

Another delimitation involves the timeframe of the intervention. It will only be one day, lasting 6 to 8 hours. The researcher believes that this is a sufficient amount of time to educate participants on the vision and its' biblically-based foundation and measure whether participants are becoming excited about it and willing to commit to the vision without creating a significant intrusion members' time.

An additional delimitation is a location since the curriculum will be administered in a classroom environment on the church's property. The focus will remain on the church. However, instead of the formal setting that the sanctuary provides, the classrooms will be utilized to cultivate one's focus on the task at hand in a more relaxed atmosphere.

## Thesis Statement

Having a vision is significant to the vitality of the church. Suppose church members are educated about the features and benefits of vision, its theological foundations, and empowerment

scriptures for implementation; they will become more open to having and supporting a vision within the religious organization where their membership resides. Willingness to support will be reflected in the post-intervention questionnaires and through their excitement to return to their churches and district with a commitment to work with leadership to help bring the vision to fruition and to compel other members to join in as well.

## Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

### Literature Review

This literature review comprises scholarly resources that will significantly increase the reader's knowledge of vision and its' significance to organizations, especially the church. In addition to learning about a vision and its' purpose, leaders will be enlightened by the tools and characteristics necessary to implement a vision and have it flourish along with the adverse outcomes that derive from an institution not having a vision. An individual needs to have a personal vision and be a part of an organization with a corporate vision. Finally, this review looks at the theological basis for a vision that is evident throughout the Bible.

### The Purpose of Vision and Its Importance to the Church

According to Aubrey Malphurs, author of *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model for Church Leaders*, vision is crucial to a ministry.<sup>33</sup> It supports the fulfillment of the mission for the organization. In other words, the vision illustrates to members how the mission should look.<sup>34</sup> Vision has the power to unite and excite people simultaneously towards reaching a common goal. In *Leaders on Leadership (the Leading Edge Series): Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People*, George Barna defines vision as an understandable mental image of a preferred future, conveyed by God to his chosen servant-

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<sup>33</sup> Malphurs, 128.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

leaders, founded upon a correct comprehension of self, God, and the state of affairs.<sup>35</sup> According to Thomas Fernandes in *Strategic Leadership and Decision Making 2*, an individual or a group cannot strive towards mastery and greatness without a vision.<sup>36</sup> They can maintain and survive, but they will not thrive. Eric Allenbaugh argues in *Deliberate Success: Realize Your Vision with Purpose, Passion, and Performance* that the burning desire and passion for making a difference combined with a compelling and clear direction can transform an organization from mediocrity to mastery.<sup>37</sup> *The Executive Director's Guide to Thriving as a Nonprofit Leader* notes that vision indicates a direction, signifies an ideal standard of excellence by implying a choice of values, and possesses unique characteristics by hinting at what makes a group organization special.<sup>38</sup>

A vision is needed in the church, and any institution comprises people with various ideas, attitudes, and outlooks. In Shelley Kirkpatrick's *Build a Better Vision Statement: Extending Research with Practical Advice*, without a communicated vision, people in the group will resort to guessing where the leader is taking the organization.<sup>39</sup> As a result, there will be subgroups and individuals going in a direction that they think the entity is or should be going. The division will be prevalent when a clear vision is absent. Progress will be stunted because a house divided against itself shall not stand (Mark 3:25). Henry and Richard Blackaby inform readers of

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<sup>35</sup> George Barna, ed., *Leaders on Leadership (the Leading Edge Series): Wisdom, Advice and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 36.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Fernandes, *Strategic Leadership and Decision Making 2* (Delhi: Global Media, 2008), 111.

<sup>37</sup> Eric Allenbaugh, *Deliberate Success: Realize Your Vision with Purpose, Passion, and Performance* (Franklin Lakes: Career Press, Incorporated, 2002), 25.

<sup>38</sup> Mim Carlson and Margaret Donohoe, *The Executive Director's Guide to Thriving as a Nonprofit Leader* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2010), 79.

<sup>39</sup> Shelley A. Kirkpatrick, *Build a Better Vision Statement: Extending Research with Practical Advice* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 2.

*Spiritual Leadership* that a vision is vital because it serves as the focal point to assist leaders as they progress.<sup>40</sup> It keeps an organization from becoming distracted so it can fulfill its purpose.

Vision fosters unity. Unity is imperative to a church's survival. The health of the entire church diminishes when church members fail to work together. *I am a Church Member* by Thom Rainer maintains that each member must support unity in the church because it is integral to the church's health.<sup>41</sup> Paul, the apostle, emphasized church unity in 1 Corinthians 12. As reported by Youngju Kwon in "Cacophony or Symphony: Paul's Grand Vision of the Church in 1 Cor 12," Paul calls for unity of the Corinthian church members. The latter are divided due to the issue of spiritual gifts.<sup>42</sup> The author maintains that having a correct understanding of God, according to Paul, is the theological foundation for redirecting the Corinthians' thoughts and actions in a manner that would motivate them to engage in being a united community.<sup>43</sup>

Paul also provided a substantial amount of information about unity in his letter to the Ephesians. For instance, in Chapter 4, he admonishes them to unite with one another since they are spiritually united through Christ. In the *Holman New Testament Commentary - Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, one can ascertain that Paul believed Christians should be united in their actions because God has joined them through Christ.<sup>44</sup> Gentleness (meekness), patience, and forbearance are attributes that generate unity. In "The Unity of the Church as the

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<sup>40</sup> Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 85.

<sup>41</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *I am a Church Member* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 21.

<sup>42</sup> Youngju Kwon, "Cacophony or Symphony: Paul's Grand Vision of the Church in Cor 12," *한국기독교신학논총*, 101 (July 2016): 75.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Max E. Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary - Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 36.

Witness of the Church,” William Stringfellow described the agreement as a gift from God.<sup>45</sup> God generously supplied believers with the gift of unity to be the substance of the love for the unsaved and service to the world.

### Positive Outcomes from Having a Vision

When people agree, they can walk together (Amos 3:3). Mel Lawrenz stated in *Whole Church: Leading from Fragmentation to Engagement*, “Vision is a powerful, cohesive force in the church.”<sup>46</sup> When people focus their attention in the same direction and move forward together, cohesiveness is nurtured. Furthermore, a well-communicated vision possesses the power of revitalization. Ian Fair asserts in *Leadership in the Kingdom, Second Edition: Sensitive Strategies for the church in a Changing World* that vision fortifies relationships and becomes a platform for purposeful effective action.<sup>47</sup> Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission*, maintains that nothing will re-energize a disheartened congregation quicker than restoring their purpose.<sup>48</sup>

In *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, Multiplying Influence, Defining Character*, a visionary leader can see and assist others in seeing the mission that God desires for the organization to execute.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, an innovative leader can inspire others to enthusiastically support the mission that God has called church members to carry out. Members get excited about

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<sup>45</sup> William Stringfellow, “The Unity of the Church as the Witness of the Church,” *Anglican Theological Review*, 100, no. 3 (Sum 2018): 523.

<sup>46</sup> Mel Lawrenz, *Whole Church: Leading from Fragmentation to Engagement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 116.

<sup>47</sup> Ian A. Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom, Second Edition: Sensitive Strategies for the Church in a Changing World* (Abilene: A C U Press, 2007), 72.

<sup>48</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 54.

<sup>49</sup> Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer, *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, Multiplying Influence, Defining Character* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 96.

doing something big or important to God. They want to participate in their success. When individuals unite around a shared vision, they can combine their gifts and achieve something more significant than they could do individually.<sup>50</sup> The concept is reflective of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, which informs the reader that two people are better than one person because they will receive a good reward for their endeavors. If one person falls, the other person is there to help him stand.

### **Adverse Outcomes for Not Having a Vision**

Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, authors of *Re: Vision*, believe that a church without a God-inspired vision is pointless because it neglects to express what God has called it to do.<sup>51</sup> The church is aimless, having no direction. The church body does not know where it is and is not going. Their energy and resources are not utilized efficiently and effectively.<sup>52</sup> A church split usually occurs because people are operating in various incorrect directions.<sup>53</sup>

According to Michael Quicke, *author of 360-Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations*, when there is no vision present in the ministry, members are deprived of the “richness of God’s vision for saved people.”<sup>54</sup> The belief that God can do exceedingly and abundantly more than all they can ask or think (Eph 3:20) is not activated in their faith. The church is deprived of the opportunity to witness God do amazing things through their efforts collectively.

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<sup>50</sup> Ogden and Meyer, *Leadership Essentials*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2014), 147.

<sup>52</sup> Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 26.

<sup>53</sup> Malphurs and Penfold, 148.

<sup>54</sup> Quicke, 26.

When an organization does not have an established vision, a succession plan is likely to be absent. As a result, if the leader dies, there is no plan to continue the work that God has assigned to that ministry. Peter Wiwcharuck said, “Success without a successor is a failure.”<sup>55</sup> A true visionary leader is prepared to pass the vision on to another visionary leader at the appropriate time. Precious time is wasted, starting over instead of being able to build from what was already established.

### Casting a Vision

Warren Bennis maintains in *On Becoming a Leader: The Leadership Classic--Updated and Expanded* that a “guiding vision” is the first primary ingredient in leadership because it provides the leader with clarity in terms of personal and professional goals, along with the resolve to remain diligent when facing failures or setbacks.<sup>56</sup> In *Choosing to Lead* by Kenneth and Miriam Clark, the leader expresses a vision for the group or organization, illustrates a pathway to reaching goals, strengthens the group’s confidence to achieve them, and acquire trust by showing integrity, commitment, courage, and an active willingness to take personal risks for the group.<sup>57</sup> Visionary leaders tend to exhibit entrepreneurial leadership. Authors Jacques Hefti and Jonathan Levie contend in *Entrepreneurial Leadership - Vision Casting and the Role of Signaling* that entrepreneurial leadership contains a signal which is the capacity to construct and cast a vision to oneself, to the people inside the organization and persons outside of the

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<sup>55</sup> Malphurs and Penfold, 52.

<sup>56</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader: The Leadership Classic--Updated and Expanded* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 33.

<sup>57</sup> Kenneth E. Clark, and Miriam B. Clark, *Choosing to Lead* (Greensboro: Center for Creative Leadership, 1996), 26.



organization through communicating the vision and reaffirming it constantly.<sup>58</sup> Erika Andersen writes in *Leading So People Will Follow* that leaders cling to the vision and maintain a clear view of it even when others no longer see it, do not believe it is possible, or ridicule his attempts.<sup>59</sup> This type of leader is farsighted.<sup>60</sup> As a result, the vision remains fresh and at the forefront of one's mind. According to Andy Stanley in *Visioneering*, a focused, clear vision allows people to experience the emotions connected to the expected future even before the vision has come to fruition.<sup>61</sup> Passion is a great encourager of vision progression. When a vision is a cast, it should evoke passion, motivation, direction, and purpose.<sup>62</sup> Esther Cameron and Mike Green, authors of *Essential Leadership: Develop Your Leadership Qualities Through Theory and Practice*, believe effective vision casting requires that leaders verbalize an idea of the direction in which the team should be heading while avoiding being too prescriptive or narrow and issue an impactful invitation to the listeners to participate.<sup>63</sup> Aaron Olsen and B. Keith Simerson agree that visionary leaders not only inspire others through communicating a compelling vision, but with their passion as read in *Leading with Strategic Thinking: Four Ways Effective Leaders Gain Insight, Drive Change, and Get Results*.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Jacques Hefti and Jonathan Levie, *Entrepreneurial Leadership - Vision Casting and the Role of Signaling* (Kidmore End: Academic Conferences International Limited, 2015), 96.

<sup>59</sup> Erika Andersen, *Leading So People Will Follow* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2012), 9.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Andy Stanley, *Visioneering: Your Guide for Discovering and Maintaining Personal Vision* (New York: Multnomah, 2016), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 9-12.

<sup>63</sup> Esther Cameron and Mike Green, *Essential Leadership: Develop Your Leadership Qualities Through Theory and Practice* (London: Kogan Page, Limited, 2017), 259.

<sup>64</sup> Aaron K. Olson and B. Keith Simerson, *Leading with Strategic Thinking: Four Ways Effective Leaders Gain Insight, Drive Change, and Get Results* (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015), 57.

Visionary leaders with God-given visions are influential. John Maxwell, author of *Be a People Person: Effective Leadership Through Effective Relationships*, maintains that great leaders are skilled in visually communicating their message to people.<sup>65</sup> They can see the vision that they want to convey. Great leaders share the vision creatively in an understandable manner so the people can grasp the concept.<sup>66</sup> According to authors Shalom Saar and Michael Hargrove, building a “pillar of creativity” is a prerequisite for leading an institution into the future.<sup>67</sup> Karen Ward asserts in “Back to the Future: Visionary, Entrepreneurial, Missional Anglican Leadership for Today’s Church” that visionary leaders can imagine a future ordained by God and cast a vision of how this God-ordained future and the giftings of a particular community can work together.<sup>68</sup> They are capable of seeing the outstanding potential for the ministry that surrounds them. For example, John Milford Price was given a pioneering vision by God. As stated in his biographical sketch, “John Milford Price: Visionary leader,” even though Price only had one student, he was able to “look through the corridor of time” and see thousands of students worldwide who would answer the call to carry out the Great Commission.<sup>69</sup>

Leaders are the motivators of change. Ian Parkinson and Rob Peabody maintain in *Reignite: Seeing God Rekindle Life and Purpose in Your Church* that one of their primary responsibilities is to help others welcome God’s desired future for their church or other

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<sup>65</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Be a People Person: Effective Leadership Through Effective Relationships* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 70.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>67</sup> Shalom Saada Saar and Michael J. Hargrove *Leading with Conviction: Mastering the Nine Critical Pillars of Integrated Leadership* (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013), 154.

<sup>68</sup> Karen Ward, “Back to the Future: Visionary, Entrepreneurial, Missional Anglican Leadership for Today’s Church,” *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 170.

<sup>69</sup> Philip H. Briggs and William A. Smith, “John Milford Price: Visionary Leader,” *Christian Education Journal* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 21.

organization and be fully engaged with it.<sup>70</sup> One of the leading resistors of change is hopelessness. However, a leader needs to express and confer a vision of a promising future so that the congregants share it and dedicate themselves to it.<sup>71</sup> He should clearly articulate the desired outcome so that members will know the appearance of improvement, according to Carl George and Warren Bird in *How to Break Growth Barriers: Revise Your Role, Release Your People, and Capture Overlooked Opportunities for Your Church*.<sup>72</sup> Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus emphasized that leaders must be wholly aware of what they trust is the right thing to do and follow through on that vision by instituting directional movement and galvanizing others to follow, according to David Pardey in *Introducing Leadership*.<sup>73</sup>

### **Leadership Engagement**

Changing and growing an organization is not achievable in isolation. Historically, the most exceptional leaders are aware of their reliance on others.<sup>74</sup> Engagement, especially from within the leadership team, is instrumental in vision presentation and execution. Leadership engagement is enabled when the senior leader or pastor supplies a straightforward strategic narrative of the organization's past, present, and future and exhibits alignment between role assignments and direction, according to Jane Sparrow, author of *The Culture Builders: Leadership Strategies for Employee Performance*.<sup>75</sup> Positive leadership is a producer of

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<sup>70</sup> Ian Parkinson and Rob Peabody, *Reignite: Seeing God Rekindle Life and Purpose in Your Church* (Chicago: Lion Hudson, 2015), 44.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>72</sup> Carl F. George and Warren Bird, *How to Break Growth Barriers: Revise Your Role, Release Your People, and Capture Overlooked Opportunities for Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2017), 40.

<sup>73</sup> David Pardey, *Introducing Leadership* (Jordan Hill: Routledge, 2006), 12.

<sup>74</sup> Blackaby, 295.

<sup>75</sup> Jane Sparrow, *The Culture Builders: Leadership Strategies for Employee Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 19.

engagement. Kim Cameron, author of *Practicing Positive Leadership: Tools and Techniques That Create Extraordinary Results*, maintains that positive direction involves the implementation of various positive practices that assists organizations and individuals in reaching their highest potential, thriving at work, elevating energy, and obtaining levels of efficacy that is challenging to gain alternatively.<sup>76</sup>

Additionally, engagement is supported when the leadership team knows that their leader cares for them. Bill Hybels argued in *Leadership Axioms* that the people the pastor leads need to know they are a part of a team who activates Galatians 6:2 by carrying one another's burdens.<sup>77</sup> The team needs to know that they are welcomed to share their hardships without penalty. Authors, Lee Bolman, and Terrance Deal, describe good leaders as people who possess a deep level of care for their work and the people who do it, along with being tenaciously persistent in advancing the cause.<sup>78</sup> Leaders are encouraged by the assurance that their pastor and fellow leaders are praying for them. Although they know that progress is a priority, they need to know that their pastor prioritizes people at a higher level.<sup>79</sup> Prioritizing people over progress is an attribute of authentic leadership. Authentic leadership contributes to engagement. Kathryn Goldman Schuyler's argument is utilized in *Leading with Spirit, Presence, and Authenticity: A Volume in the International Leadership Association Series, Building Leadership Bridges*. She contends that an authentic leader goes beyond simply appearing to live the values that aid the

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<sup>76</sup> Kim Cameron, *Practicing Positive Leadership: Tools and Techniques That Create Extraordinary Results* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Incorporated, 2013), 84.

<sup>77</sup> Bill Hybels, *Leadership Axioms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 88.

<sup>78</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2017), 338.

<sup>79</sup> Hybels, 127.

organization's members honorably.<sup>80</sup> Authentic leaders are genuine people who do not mind serving others through leadership and empowering their followers according to *Authentic Leadership Theory and Practice: Origins, Effects, and Development*.<sup>81</sup>

The effectiveness of leaders can be heightened when they realize that leading is serving. According to David Dockery, writer of *Christian Leadership Essentials*, servant leaders endeavor to make decisions that consider the thoughts and feelings of the people they lead.<sup>82</sup> Christian leaders usually strive to emulate Christ, who came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45).<sup>83</sup> Jesus's leadership exemplifies servanthood (Mark 10:43-45), John 13:4-17). *Serving with Joy: Lessons From Pope Francis for Catholic Deacons Today* informs readers that Jesus's leadership derived from his relationship with God, was noticeable by well-defined attributes, and was aligned toward mission.<sup>84</sup> John Adair asserts in *Inspiring Leadership: Learning from Great Leaders* that Jesus taught leadership was a form of service that should be executed with humility.<sup>85</sup> In Mark 9:35, Jesus rebuked his disciples for quarreling over who should be first by telling them that whoever desires to be first will be last and servant of all. In *A Guy's Journey to Servant Leadership*, Doug Marsh writes that authentic leadership attends to building up and serving others rather than what a leader can gain for himself.<sup>86</sup> George Washington, Abraham

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<sup>80</sup> Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, *Leading with Spirit, Presence, and Authenticity: A Volume in the International Leadership Association Series, Building Leadership Bridges*, eds. Karin Jironet, John Eric Baugher, and Lena Lid-Falkman (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014), 187.

<sup>81</sup> William L. Gardner, Fred O. Walumbwa, and B. J. Avolio, eds. *Authentic Leadership Theory and Practice: Origins, Effects and Development* (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2005), 86.

<sup>82</sup> David S. Dockery, *Christian Leadership Essentials* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 16.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> William T. Ditewig et al., *Serving with Joy: Lessons from Pope Francis for Catholic Deacons Today* (Newburyport: Abbey Press, 2016), 22.

<sup>85</sup> John Adair, *Inspiring Leadership: Learning from Great Leaders* (London: Thorogood Publishing, 2002), 38.

<sup>86</sup> Doug Marsh, *A Guy's Journey to Servant Leadership* (Ashland: Gospel Publishing House, 2013), 43.

Lincoln, and Mother Theresa demonstrated this kind of leadership. Placing the needs of others above their own bolstered their strength and success as leaders.<sup>87</sup> Bob Rhoden contends in *Four Faces of a Leader: What It Takes to Move a Church* that when those who occupy superior positions display humility by opening doors for others or choosing to stand so that someone can have a seat, the spirit of Jesus is modeled.<sup>88</sup> In *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Service*, readers discover an essential relationship between the leader and God is where leadership (for Christians) starts.<sup>89</sup> This is the essence of servant leadership. Instead of being served, Christians are called to do. Don Frick, author of *Robert K. Greenleaf: A Life of Servant Leadership*, believes one of the essential characteristics of servant leaders is the ability to listen with a keen interest in the speaker's healing instead of keeping quiet to formulate an appropriate response.<sup>90</sup> In other words, they listen with deep care and concern for the wellbeing of the speaker. *Servant Leadership: Developments in Theory and Research* depicts servant leadership as a leadership style that is beneficial to organizations because it develops, awakens, and engages employees or members in conjunction with being helpful to employees or followers by connecting with people as whole persons possessing spirit, heart, and mind.<sup>91</sup>

Servant leaders produce great fruit. Those served grow as people. Larry Spears maintains in *Conversations on Servant-Leadership: Insights on Human Courage in Life and Work* that

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<sup>87</sup> Marsh, 43.

<sup>88</sup> Bob Rhoden, *Four Faces of a Leader: What It Takes to Move a Church* (Ashland: Influence Resources, 2013), 85.

<sup>89</sup> Walter C. Wright, Jr., *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Service* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 15.

<sup>90</sup> Don M. Frick, *Robert K. Greenleaf: A Life of Servant Leadership* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Incorporated, 2004), 288.

<sup>91</sup> Dirk Van Dierendonck and Kathleen Patterson, *Servant Leadership: Developments in Theory and Research* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2010), 5.

while being served, they become healthier, freer, wiser, more autonomous, and a desire stirs within them to serve.<sup>92</sup> Servant leaders often make sacrifices to pursue causes larger than their self-interests, according to William F. Brandt in *Compass: Creating Exceptional Organizations: A Leader's Guide*.<sup>93</sup> This is a part of the ministry. In *Pastoral Ministry in the Real World: Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's People*, Jim L. Wilson defines ministry as “participating with God and cooperating with his people in serving others to meet their needs, fulfill our calling, and bring glory to God.”<sup>94</sup> The centurion in Matthew 8:5-7 is an excellent example of servant leadership. He went to Jesus on behalf of his servant, who was at home paralyzed and suffering. Neil Kennedy, author of *Centurion Principle: The Protocol of Authority*, claims that servant leaders like the centurion tend to cultivate a sense of respect, confidence, and motivation in the people they lead.<sup>95</sup>

Furthermore, servant leaders exhibit Godly character through hospitality according to Titus 1:8. They do not let racial or social status stop them from helping people in need. Daniel Akin maintains in *Living Doctrine: The Book of Titus* that this type of leader publicly activates the gospel's beauty and credibility.<sup>96</sup>

Jesus's words of rebuke and exhortation in Luke 22:25-26 provide insight concerning servant leadership's responsibility. *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the*

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<sup>92</sup> Shann Ray Ferch, Larry C. Spears, and Mary McFarland, eds. *Conversations on Servant-Leadership: Insights on Human Courage in Life and Work* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 9.

<sup>93</sup> William F. Brandt, *Compass: Creating Exceptional Organizations: A Leader's Guide* (Ashland: Winter Vale Press, 2013), 66.

<sup>94</sup> Jim L. Wilson, *Pastoral Ministry in the Real World: Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's People* (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2018), 147.

<sup>95</sup> Neil Kennedy, *Centurion Principle: The Protocol of Authority* (Springfield: My Healthy Church, 2013), 26.

<sup>96</sup> Daniel L. Akin, *Living Doctrine: The Book of Titus* (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2017), 13.

*Local Church* by Charles Van Engen maintains that the servant concept includes illustrating, modeling, and doing as integral components of leadership.<sup>97</sup> The leader serves other leaders who serve the membership so that they will help the world.<sup>98</sup>

Lay members are not the only ones who need pastoral care. Leaders need it also. Annemie Dillan contends in *Soft Shepherd or Almighty Pastor?: Power and Pastoral Care* that Christian leaders and lay members alike view their pastor as a shepherd who is close to people, attentive to them, helping people get better, assisting them on their quest for meaning, providing guidance, and allowing them to experience the truth that God, who is the fullness of healing and salvation, wants to be in close relationship with them.<sup>99</sup> Several of the followers of Christ were also leaders. SeonYi Lee, writer of “Missiological Perspective of Church Leadership, Restoring Missional Leadership,” maintains that the function of leadership is to mold and prepare people who reveal and publicize the direction of God through Jesus.<sup>100</sup>

Leaders with high emotional intelligence frequently succeed in leadership engagement. According to *Leadership for Leaders* by Michael Williams, they detect and interpret the feelings and emotions of themselves and other people well employing high empathy and understanding.<sup>101</sup> These leaders have high inter-personal awareness levels, which is evident in how they coach people, including the rising leaders who report to them.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Charles E. Van Engen, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1991), 120.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Roger Burggraeve and Anne Vandenhoeck, *Soft Shepherd or Almighty Pastor?: Power and Pastoral Care*, ed. Annemie Dillan (Cambridge: James Clarke Company, Limited, 2015), 17.

<sup>100</sup> SeonYi Lee, “Missiological Perspective of Church Leadership: Restoring Missional Leadership,” *선교신학* 46 (2017): 221.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Williams, *Leadership for Leaders* (London: Thorogood Publishing, 2005), 90.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



Empowering leaders can increase their engagement. A leader should know that they are not a leader in title only. For a person within an organization to feel empowered, there should be a liberal amount of shared information accessible to him, including the goals, history, mission, and market of the organization, according to Twyla Dell, author of *Motivating at Work: Empowering Employees to Give their Best*.<sup>103</sup> Jesus empowered his disciples and entrusted them with fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20). As noted in *Empowerment Takes More Than a Minute*, empowerment provides a sense of ownership.<sup>104</sup> Empowered people are not afraid to be their best. Engagement increases when leadership (associate pastors, elders, and ministers) are encouraged and rewarded by top management (the Sr. Pastor) to do things right.<sup>105</sup> When leaders relinquish their desire to have control and power over followers, the result is increased productivity, effectiveness, and motivation, according to *Empowerment: A Practice Guide for Success*.<sup>106</sup> Empowerment is a catalyst for engagement. Instead of people feeling like they are merely responsible for executing their assigned task, they perceive that they are a key player in making the entire organization look better.<sup>107</sup>

Empowered people like being present. They are excited about actively participating in the organization. Matt Tenney contends in *Serve to Be Great: Leadership Lessons from a Prison, a Monastery, and a Boardroom* that shaping an enjoyable team culture leads to increased

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<sup>103</sup> Twyla Dell, *Motivating at Work: Empowering Employees to Give Their Best* (Menlo Park: Course Technology Crisp, 1993), 23.

<sup>104</sup> Ken Blanchard, John P. Carlos, and Alan Randolph, *Empowerment Takes More Than a Minute* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Incorporated, 2001), 22.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Dennis T. Jaffe and Cynthia D. Scott, *Empowerment: A Practice Guide for Success* (Menlo Park: Course Technology Crisp, 1991), 3.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 4.

productivity and greater innovation while having a substantial effect on an institution's ability to appeal to and keep expertly skilled people.<sup>108</sup>

Ronald Sims and Scott Quatro remind readers in *Leadership: Succeeding in the Private, Public, and Not-For-profit Sectors* that leading from personal strengths instead of trying to fit into a leadership mold fosters effective leadership.<sup>109</sup> Authenticity shines when leaders show that they are free to employ the strengths they have been blessed with rather than imitate others' strengths.

Leadership development positively impacts leadership engagement. Lorin Woolfe shares in *The Bible on Leadership: From Moses to Matthew -- Management Lessons for Contemporary Leaders* that successful organizations with longevity are intentional about developing leaders in every generation.<sup>110</sup> In 1 Samuel 22:1-2, David, while running from King Saul, became a leader of men long before he became the king and immediately started establishing his inner circle. Leadership development should not only be provided for leaders under the senior pastors or executives. The leaders of leaders should participate and ongoing development also. A leader who fails to take the time for his leadership development limits himself and the development of the people he leads according to Bruce Avolio, author of *Leadership Development in Balance MADE/Born*.<sup>111</sup> *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* maintains that effective leadership development equips leaders to carry out the tasks of gaining

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<sup>108</sup> Matt Tenney, *Serve to Be Great: Leadership Lessons from a Prison, a Monastery, and a Boardroom* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014), 132.

<sup>109</sup> Ronald R. Sims and Scott A. Quatro, *Leadership: Succeeding in the Private, Public, and Not-For-profit Sectors* (Armonk: Routledge, 2005), 139.

<sup>110</sup> Lorin Woolfe, *The Bible on Leadership: From Moses to Matthew -- Management Lessons for Contemporary Leaders* (Nashville: AMACOM, 2002), 196.

<sup>111</sup> Bruce Avolio, *Leadership Development in Balance: MADE/Born* (Mahwah: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 3-4.

commitment, setting direction, creating alignment, and leading oneself by managing one's thoughts, actions, and feelings.<sup>112</sup>

Trust is instrumental in engagement. That is why leaders must always tell the truth even when it is difficult. Matthew 5:37 admonishes believers “to let your yes be yes, and your no no.” Integrity tells the truth even if the truth is life-threatening, according to Carolyn Nystrom in *Integrity: Living the Truth*.<sup>113</sup> Telling the truth fosters trust and is seldom as painful as anticipated, according to Larry Johnson and Bob Phillips in *Absolute Honesty: Building a Corporate Culture That Values Straight Talk and Rewards Integrity*.<sup>114</sup> Telling the truth carries a significant level of importance in church settings where everyone supposedly subscribes to the Holy Bible's authority. Exodus 20:16 instructs one not to bear false witness. Victor Hamilton contends in *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* that the ninth commandment is about lying, including lying to and about someone and how the fallout from being dishonest will affect the community or group.<sup>115</sup> Proverbs 21:28 informs readers that a false witness will die. Pertaining to this scripture, Duane Garrett, author of *Proverbs*, classifies a false witness as a perjurer who will be punished.

Moreover, Revelation 21:8 warns that all liars shall have their turn in the lake of fire. In *Revelation* by William C. Weinrich and Thomas C. Oden, liars are specifically referred to as deceivers. In this text, deceivers are defined as those who conduct themselves in a manner contrary to nature and falsify virtue's natural beauty into the base and counterfeit image of

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<sup>112</sup> Cynthia D. McCauley, Marian N. Ruderman, and Ellen Van Velsor, eds. *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2010), 14.

<sup>113</sup> Carolyn Nystrom, *Integrity: Living the Truth* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 4.

<sup>114</sup> Larry Johnson and Bob Phillips, *Absolute Honesty: Building a Corporate Culture That Values Straight Talk and Rewards Integrity* (Saranac Lake: Amacom, 2003), 56.

<sup>115</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 340.

evil.<sup>116</sup> Simon Schrock maintains in *Where has Integrity Gone* that the power to overcome and live above dishonesty has been placed in the believer via the Holy Spirit's indwelling.<sup>117</sup>

Gilbert Fairholm informs readers in *Perspectives of Leadership: From the Science of Management to Its Spiritual Heart*, trust is more resonant than confidence.<sup>118</sup> It is "unquestioned belief."<sup>119</sup> Contrastingly, faith is trust founded upon experience or evidence. Trust is built with open, non-defensive interpersonal communication.<sup>120</sup>

Leaders set the tone in an organization. They establish acceptable norms. Thus, integrity should start at the top. It should be exemplified in and expected from those in leadership. Timothy Clark contends in *Leading with Character and Competence: Moving Beyond Title, Position, and Authority* that integrity must be maintained with skill and vigilance and that integrity is learned by seeing it in action.<sup>121</sup> It is impossible to have virtue without authenticity. Authenticity is genuineness in action. Followers focus on what their leaders do significantly more than what they say. Karen Lawson argues in *The Trainer's Handbook of Leadership Development: Tools, Techniques, and Activities* that when the actions of people in leadership fail to correspond with what they say, the risk of alienating colleagues, customers, and followers is substantial.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Williams C. Weinrich and Thomas C. Oden, *Revelation* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 360.

<sup>117</sup> Schrock, Simon. *Where Has Integrity Gone* (Harrisonburg: Vision Publishers LLC, 2010), 89.

<sup>118</sup> Gilbert W. Fairholm, *Perspectives on Leadership: From the Science of Management to Its Spiritual Heart* (Westport: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2000), 119.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Timothy R. Clark, *Leading with Character and Competence: Moving Beyond Title, Position, and Authority* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Incorporated, 2016), 20.

<sup>122</sup> Karen Lawson, *The Trainer's Handbook of Leadership Development: Tools, Techniques, and Activities* (Somerset: Center for Creative Leadership, 2011), 6.

When the pastor exhibits steward leadership, engagement is fostered in the leadership team. According to *Steward Leadership in the Nonprofit Organization*, written by Kent Wilson, steward leadership's distinctive characteristic is trustworthiness and faithfulness.<sup>123</sup>

Dependability is demonstrated by consistency, reliability, and loyalty to stakeholders and God.<sup>124</sup>

Mark Thomas notes Warren Bennis in *Gurus on Leadership: A Guide to the World's Thought-Leaders in Leadership* for his belief that the "new leader" comprehends and activates the power of appreciation; continuously reminds others of what is essential; generates and maintains trust, and cultivates a relationship with the led where they are devoted allies.<sup>125</sup>

Aneil and Karen Mishra assert in *Becoming a Trustworthy Leader: Psychology and Practice* that most scholars believe trust is depicted by a willingness to be vulnerable to an individual or group based on positive expectations regarding the behavior or intentions of the party.<sup>126</sup> When a person trusts another person, they are willing to be vulnerable to that individual even during times of uncertainty. Megan Tschannen-Moran, author of *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools*, believes trust is manifested when circumstances arise. There is a reliance on others' competency and their readiness to attend to that which is precious to the dependents.<sup>127</sup> Historically, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, bishops expected trustworthy men to be a constant, reliable source of information with whom the truth was accessible and

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<sup>123</sup> Kent R. Wilson, *Steward Leadership in the Nonprofit Organization* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 108.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Mark Thomas, *Gurus on Leadership: A Guide to the World's Thought-Leaders in Leadership* (London: Thorogood Publishing, 2006), 43.

<sup>126</sup> Aneil K. Mishra and Karen E. Mishra, *Becoming a Trustworthy Leader: Psychology and Practice*, (London: Routledge, 2012), 17.

<sup>127</sup> Megan Tschannen-Moran, *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools* (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014), 17.

possessed a degree of certainty according to Ian Forrest, writer of *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church*.<sup>128</sup> The trust placed in them should not look completely different from the faith that Christians should have in God.

Meekness is another significant trait carried by many leaders of leaders. A meek person is not one without power. He or she has “power under control” according to Calvin Miller, author of *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership*.<sup>129</sup> They are not depicted as loose cannons or ticking time bombs. W. E. Vine reminds readers in *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words: With Topical Index*, Christ describes himself as meek in Matthew 11:29.<sup>130</sup> In *Real Christian: Bearing the Marks of Authentic Faith*, Todd Wilson maintains that meekness is an aspect of strength, a character trait embedded in self-composure and thoughtful confidence.<sup>131</sup>

Leaders with a character-centered approach are likely to have high levels of engagement. In *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches*, a leader who attends to character knows that personal formation foreshadows and goes along with good decision-making.<sup>132</sup> The wisdom writings in the Old Testament are focused on character. Character has an

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<sup>128</sup> Ian Forrest, *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 114.

<sup>129</sup> Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership* (B&H Publishing Group, 1997), 6.

<sup>130</sup> W. E. Vine and Merrill Unger, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words: With Topical Index* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 1996), 1331.

<sup>131</sup> Todd A. Wilson, *Real Christian: Bearing the Marks of Authentic Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 43.

<sup>132</sup> Robert J. Banks and Bernice Murray Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 162.

impact on a person's emotional intelligence and the ability to relate. Relational ability is vitally important in leadership.<sup>133</sup>

*The Charismatic Principle in Life*, written by Luigino Bruni and Barbara Sena, states that charisma consists of qualities such as attracting others, trustfulness, charm, optimism, and the ability to influence others.<sup>134</sup> Charismatic leaders tend to have a special relationship with their followers. According to Robert J. Starratt, the author of *The Drama of Leadership*, people who follow charismatic leaders see leadership qualities that significantly exceed their own.<sup>135</sup> In *Psychology of Human Leadership: How to Develop Charisma and Authority*, readers are told that charisma is a phenomenon residing within great leaders responsible for producing essential acts.<sup>136</sup> Successful outcomes increase with an appeal. Charismatic leaders seem to effortlessly attract supportive and loyal "followship" according to Nikki Owen in *Charismatic to the Core: A Fresh Approach to Authentic Leadership*.<sup>137</sup> Charismatic leaders easily engage others. Mark Warren and David Gillespie maintain in *How to be Interesting: Simple Ways to Increase Your Appeal* that most people want to spend time with them because they leave them feeling different about an issue or with a new outlook.<sup>138</sup> Len Oakes asserts in *The Charismatic Personality* that charismatic leaders can motivate action utilizing passion and conviction.<sup>139</sup> In *Servants of the*

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<sup>133</sup> Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 162.

<sup>134</sup> Luigino Bruni and Barbara Sena, eds., *The Charismatic Principle in Social Life* (London: Routledge, 2012) 52.

<sup>135</sup> Robert J. Starratt, *The Drama of Leadership* (London: Routledge, 1993), 45.

<sup>136</sup> Michael Paschen and Erich Dihlmaier, *Psychology of Human Leadership: How to Develop Charisma and Authority* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 29.

<sup>137</sup> Nikki Owen, *Charismatic to the Core: A Fresh Approach to Authentic Leadership* (Bristol: SRA Books, 2015), 21.

<sup>138</sup> Mark Warren and David Gillespie, *How to Be Interesting: Simple Ways to Increase Your Personal Appeal* (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013), 19.

<sup>139</sup> Len Oakes, *The Charismatic Personality* (Brisbane: Australian Academic Press, 2010), x.

*People: The 1960s Legacy of African American Leadership*, L. Williams mentions Burt Nanus's characterization of a charismatic leader who constructs and communicates a compelling vision that enchants the imagination of followers.<sup>140</sup> Robert J. House contends that certain traits are evident in followers when activated by charismatic leaders, such as generous levels of trust and affection and undisputed acceptance of and obedience to the leader because the followers and the leader have similar beliefs.<sup>141</sup> Charismatic leaders are beneficial to the realization of a vision. They are instrumental in inspiring followers to function greater than expectations, working diligently to achieve phenomenal goals.<sup>142</sup>

Leaders within a church organization are a part of a community. The leader of the leaders, who is usually the bishop or the senior pastor, benefits from being skilled in community building. Phillip Lewis and Johnson Harrison inform readers in *Longevity in Leadership: Essential Qualities of Longtime Leaders* that community building involves the practice of shaping unselfish relationships among people who have a common interest.<sup>143</sup> This relationship occurs through various activities, including church potlucks and mentorships. Community building aids in the production of an emotionally intelligent congregation. Emotional intelligence within an assembly is developed continually when pastors and congregations establish a history of deep, meaningful relationships with one another and within the community according to *The*

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<sup>140</sup> L. Williams, *Servants of the People: The 1960s Legacy of African American Leadership* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 25.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>143</sup> Philip Lewis and John Harrison, *Longevity in Leadership: Essential Qualities of Longtime Leaders* (Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2016), 70t.



*Emotional Intelligence of Jesus: Relational Smarts for Religious Leaders* written by Roy Oswald and Arland Jacobson.<sup>144</sup>

A culture of leadership enhances leadership engagement. According to Joan Gallos and Ronald Heifetz in *Business Leadership: A Jossey-Bass Reader*, senior leaders must allow leaders to lead early in their careers because they learn valuable lessons in triumphs and failures.<sup>145</sup>

## **Personal Vision**

Having an individual vision for one's life is essential. Peter Benson asserts in *Vision: Awakening Your Potential to Create a Better World* that vision involves the power of seeing and imagination along with "unusual foresight or discernment."<sup>146</sup> Having a vision and acting on it exercises the believer's faith through trusting in Scripture, which asserts that all things are possible with God (Luke 1:37). Trent Butler exclaims in the *Holman New Testament Commentary – Luke* that God did the impossible during the lifetimes of the virgin Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth, and he is still doing the impossible now!<sup>147</sup> God is honored when his creation takes the time to recognize his vision for their lives.<sup>148</sup>

Real visionaries unyieldingly go after the change they want to see, according to Brant Cooper and Patrick Vlaskovits in *The Lean Entrepreneur: How Visionaries Create Products*,

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<sup>144</sup> Roy M. Oswald and Arland Jacobson, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus: Relational Smarts for Religious Leaders* (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015), 82.

<sup>145</sup> Joan V. Gallos, ed., *Business Leadership: A Jossey-Bass Reader* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2008), 13.

<sup>146</sup> Peter L. Benson, *Vision: Awakening Your Potential to Create a Better World* (West Conshohocken: Templeton Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>147</sup> Trent Butler, *Holman New Testament Commentary – Luke* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2000), 23.

<sup>148</sup> Stanley, 13.

*Innovate with New Ventures, and Disrupt Markets*.<sup>149</sup> Reverend, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one such visionary. He relentlessly pursued “the dream” while being beaten, jailed, and, eventually, assassinated. Dr. King did not relinquish his dream of Civil Rights for everyone. True visionaries are driven internally to cause significant change.<sup>150</sup> By definition, good leaders are change agents who propel their organizations to higher levels of service and excellence, according to *The Senior International Officer as Change Agent*.<sup>151</sup> They wholeheartedly reject mediocrity or being average.

Nehemiah had a great vision for the restoration of Israel, and it was personal. When he found out about the horrible state of the wall in Jerusalem, he became very depressed, so much so that King Artaxerxes made mention of his continence (Neh 2:1-2). Martha Bergen asserts in *Ezra and Nehemiah* that negative emotions are not allowed in Persian courtly etiquette because it can be interpreted as discontentment with the king.<sup>152</sup> However, a visionary acts even when he is afraid. Nehemiah fearfully responded to the king by telling him the reason for his sadness (Nehemiah 2:2-3). In the Ancient Near East, having a strong wall was the main part of the defense for a city, according to *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther: Teach the Text Commentary Series*.<sup>153</sup> A dilapidated wall was shameful because it made the city susceptible to more attacks. Although many barriers existed, Nehemiah was passionate about his vision to rebuild. He expressed this passion clearly to a crowd of Jerusalem’s officials. The political and religious

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<sup>149</sup> Brant Cooper and Patrick Vlaskovits, *The Lean Entrepreneur: How Visionaries Create Products, Innovate with New Ventures, and Disrupt Markets* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2016), 22.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>151</sup> John D. Heyl and Fiona J. H. Hunter, *The Senior International Officer as Change Agent* (Bloomfield: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2019), 1.

<sup>152</sup> Martha Bergen, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 56.

<sup>153</sup> Douglas J. E. Nykolaishen and Andrew J. Schmutzer, *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther (Teach the Text Commentary Series)*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018.

leaders were impressed and motivated by Nehemiah's speech.<sup>154</sup> As a result, they instantly supported his endeavor.

Business owners possess a personal vision. They believe that being an entrepreneur is mandatory because it fulfills their destiny in life.<sup>155</sup> Holly Marie Katko contends in *Entrepreneur You: Passion, Success, Prosperity* that "all you really need is drive and passion for the vision to become a reality."<sup>156</sup> When God instructs Habakkuk to write the vision so that the reader may run with it; he conveys the message that the vision must be publicized as a rejuvenating message of hope, stimulating the depressed to action.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, writing the vision aids the visionary in focusing and articulating a dream; it provides the leader with a tangible outcome for which to strive.<sup>158</sup> Even if the vision that God has given the leader is delayed for a while, documentation of it works as a witness to an appointed time that will arrive according to *Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk* written by Carol Dempsey.<sup>159</sup>

### **Theological Implications of Having a Vision**

The vision concept can be found in the Old and New Testaments in the Bible.<sup>160</sup> Abraham was informed of God's vision for him in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3). In Exodus 3:7-8 and Deuteronomy 8:7-10, one can see how God employed Moses to deliver his

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<sup>154</sup> Bergen, 59.

<sup>155</sup> Holly Marie Katko, *Entrepreneur You: Passion, Success, Prosperity* (Ashland: U-Connect, Inc., 2011), 12.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> David W. Baker, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 58.

<sup>158</sup> Rich Wilkerson and Robyn Wilkerson, *Inside Out: How Everyday People Become Extraordinary Leaders* (Saint Louis: Salubris Resources, 2016), 44.

<sup>159</sup> Carol J. Dempsey, *Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 11.

<sup>160</sup> Malphurs, 129.

vision for Israel.<sup>161</sup> Both of these examples show that a visionary's current situation is not indicative of a God-given vision coming to fruition. Abraham was 99 years old and childless when God told him that his seed was as plenteous as the stars in the sky (Gen 15:5). *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* asserts that the promise of a descendent was confirmed by a covenant ceremony where, in addition to God assuring his promises, he informed Abram of what will occur in future generation until the fulfillment of the pledge to the land of Canaan.<sup>162</sup>

Having and implementing a vision is faith in action. It shows that a Christian truly subscribes to Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The Apostle Paul was a visionary who made great strides in discipleship. According to Ralph Martin in *Philippians*, Paul recognized that the maintenance of his apostolic work and the realization of his aspiration to advance the gospel further was only possible through the continuous supply of strength gained through a relationship with Christ.<sup>163</sup> Paul testifies that Christ is sufficient for all situations, according to Fred Craddock in *Philippians: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*.<sup>164</sup>

When God provides the vision, the visionary must trust God and trust his plan. According to Jill McGaffigan, author of *Run with Abandon: Restoring your Childlike Joy and Trust in God*, the difference between the two levels of trust may not be noticeable until the Christian encounters a necessary step of faith that has the power to disturb the stability in his life.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Malphurs, 129.

<sup>162</sup> Andrew E. Steinmann, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 167.

<sup>163</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 185.

<sup>164</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *Philippians: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2011), 76.

<sup>165</sup> Jill McGaffigan, *Run with Abandon: Restoring your Childlike Joy and Trust in God* (HigherLife Publishing, 2012), 72.

Abraham is a prime example. He was instructed to leave his family, which meant that he would be abandoning his inheritance, a directive that was exacerbated by Sarah's barrenness (Gen 12:1-4). When God told Gideon that he would save Israel from the Midianites, but he had to substantially decrease the size of his army, Gideon was victorious because he trusted God's plan (Judges 6-7). With just 300 men, he could defeat an army whose number was equivalent to a swarm of locusts.

Daniel is another biblical example of a person who did not stop trusting God when life seemed to be going in the wrong direction. Although he was captured and taken away from his homeland (Dan 1:1-6), he continued to commune with God (Dan 6:10). When the threat of being violently killed by lions arose, his trust in and obedience to God did not waiver, which resulted in deliverance (Dan 6:23).

Visionary leaders must trust God's plan even when the steps or pathways leading to realizing the vision are unorthodox. When the prophet, Samuel, came to Jesse's house and anointed David as the one to succeed Saul as king (1 Sam 16), David had no idea that the journey to the crown would have him on the run in the Wilderness of Ziph due to King Saul's jealous rage (1 Sam 23:14-29). However, the wilderness experience did not hinder the promise of David's kingship. Gideon is another example of being obedient to God's plan, although the steps to achieving the desired results were unusual and seemed like a prelude to failure. While Gideon was hidden away from threshing wheat by the winepress, God told Gideon that he and the Israelites would have victory over the Midianites (Judg 6:11-16). Gideon was surprised that God desired to use him to lead the Israelites in overtaking the Midianites because his family was poor, and he was least in his father's house (v. 15). However, the things that are impossible with man are possible with God (Matt 19:26). After assembling an army of over 32,000 men, the Lord

instructed Gideon to reduce the size of the military several times until he was left with only 300 men (Judg 7:1-7). It seemed like it would be impossible to defeat the Midianites, an army with approximately 135,000 men, with 300 men. However, Because Gideon continued to trust and follow God's plan, he was successful.

Vision is an expression of greater works. Christ instructs his followers in John 14:12 that they shall greater works because he will be with his father. The works of Jesus, as depicted in the book of John, includes evangelizing the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4:34), healing the lame man who was laying at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:20, 7:21), and healing the man who was born blind (John 9:3,4), along with his teachings and his entire ministry.<sup>166</sup> Upon Jesus' return to the father, he equipped his followers with the Holy Spirit to help them do greater works than he did (John 16:7). Jo-Ann Brant contends in *John* that doing greater works is a promise made by Jesus to all those that believe in him.<sup>167</sup> He further promises that if his followers ask anything in his name, he will give it to them (John 14:14). It is evident that Christ expects his people to be visionaries and do great things in his name through these scriptures.

Furthermore, one should not be fearful of implementing a vision. Fear is not of God. Psalm 118:6 gives the assurance that the Lord is on the Christian's side. Therefore, he should not live in fear of what man can do to him. Steven Lawson maintains in *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Psalms 76-150* that nothing can prevent his purposes from being accomplished when God is for a person.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 298.

<sup>167</sup> Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 214.

<sup>168</sup> Steven Lawson, *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Psalms 76-150* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 236.

Believers were not left alone when Jesus ascended into heaven. According to Christopher Hall in *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*, he gave the Holy Spirit to empower his disciples for ministry and form them into the church, which is the body of Christ on earth.<sup>169</sup> Through the Holy Spirit comes the activation of gifts and the manifestation of miracles. Christ has supplied his people with everything they need spiritually for vision. Philippians 4:19 is a reminder that God shall provide his people's needs according to his riches in glory. *The Holy Spirit* by Geoffrey Thomas mentions that the Holy Spirit brings about new dimension and power in the Christian's life through God's grace according to the apostle, Paul.<sup>170</sup> By God's grace, the Holy Spirit works in all Christians, endowing them with gifts to change the world.<sup>171</sup>

Greg Ogden asserts in *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* that every Christian can make a substantive contribution to the body of Christ utilizing gifts that have been graciously provided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>172</sup> Spiritual gifts are vital. They are given to Christians by God to strengthen and build other Christians and further the church's influence on an unsaved world.<sup>173</sup> The Holy Spirit is crucial to doing the greater works that Jesus said his followers would do in John 14:12. Millard J. Erickson mentions in *Christian Theology* that contact between the believer and God is provided through the Holy Spirit.<sup>174</sup> Romans 8:26 informs one that he makes intercession for those in Christ Jesus with groanings that cannot be spoken.

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<sup>169</sup> Christopher A. Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 18.

<sup>170</sup> Geoffrey Thomas, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 134.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 186.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>174</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2013), 771.

Burt Nanus argues in *Visionary Leadership* that the most powerful engine driving an organization towards virtue and sustainable success is an appealing, worthwhile, widely shared, achievable vision for the future.<sup>175</sup> Entire books of the Bible are dedicated to the future through divine prophecies, including Daniel, Isaiah, and many minor prophets. Hans Finzel, the author of *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, believes that the Bible is very uplifting concerning the long-term future.<sup>176</sup> The Lord informs his people in Jeremiah 29:11 that he knows the plans he has for them, not plans for disaster, but for their welfare, to provide hope and a future. Walter C. Kaiser asserts in *Walking the Ancient Paths: A Commentary on Jeremiah* that God's children were encouraged by the promise of life beyond the judgment of exile; a life of well-being, peace, and prosperity.<sup>177</sup> This same offering is available to those who trust and obey God today.

### Theological Foundations

This DMIN action research project focuses on the importance and value of having a vision within a particular district containing four churches. This section explores the biblical basis for a vision and the character traits needed by the visionary for effective presentation and implementation of the vision.

God instructs Habakkuk to write the vision plainly to cause progress to occur (Hab 2:2). Taking the time to write a vision requires that the visionary takes the time to focus on the substance of the vision. Additionally, as stated in Habakkuk 2:2, the written document supplies

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<sup>175</sup> Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1992),

<sup>176</sup> Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 212.

<sup>177</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Walking the Ancient Paths: A Commentary on Jeremiah* (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2019), 245.



others with the information needed to proceed with the vision. God desires for the vision that he gives his leaders to be “recorded, preserved, and proclaimed to all.”<sup>178</sup>

Nehemiah proclaimed the vision of the walls being rebuilt in Jerusalem (Neh 2:17-18). He did it in a manner that inspired the Israelites to take action. After fasting and praying to God and with King Artaxerxes' blessing, Nehemiah appealed to the people. Nehemiah reminded them of the terrible state that Jerusalem was in, with the city in ruins and the gates burned down. Not only did he highlight the areas of weakness, but he gave direction concerning what needed to be done. While appealing to their sense of dignity and honor, Nehemiah urged Jerusalem's citizens to join him in rebuilding the wall.<sup>179</sup> The people were comforted and encouraged by the favor that Nehemiah received from God and the king. As a result, they replied to Nehemiah's imploration by saying, “Let's start rebuilding.”<sup>180</sup> Similar to any leader, the way that Nehemiah communicated the vision was crucial to its fruition. If he appealed to the people without a plan, discouraged, distraught, and weak, a favorable outcome would have been unlikely. The people knew that Nehemiah truly cared about the walls being rebuilt and that he would work beside them to make it happen. Delivery that promotes engagement is significant.

King Artaxerxes helped Nehemiah by giving him the written letters he requested and granting him a leave of absence (Neh 2:6-7) because Nehemiah was trustworthy. This attribute is imperative for visionary leaders because it supports engagement. Responsible people conduct themselves with honesty and integrity. They abide by Exodus 20:16, which prohibits bearing

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<sup>178</sup> Stephen B. Miller, *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Nahum-Malachi* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2004), 65.

<sup>179</sup> Knute Larson, Max Anders, and Kathy Dahlen. *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2005), 112.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

false witness. Christians are admonished in Scripture to not lie because telling lies is reflective of one who has not been converted (Col 3:9).

Moreover, the Bible warns that all liars shall have their turn in the lake of fire with those who have committed other offensive acts against God, including being fearful and unbelieving (Rev 21:8). Ezekiel prophesied against Israel's spiritual leaders, who gained much by taking from the people instead of feeding them spiritually (Ezek 34:1-3). These leaders spent their time eating the best meat, clothing themselves with wool, and slaughtering prime livestock instead of providing strength to the weak, healing the sick, bandaging the wounded, returning those who have strayed, and searching for the lost (Ezek 34:4). Followers are more loyal to leaders that they trust. The delivery and implementation of a vision are more favorable when the Pastor has proven that he can be trusted.

For the vision to manifest, the pastor and the congregation need to be faith-filled. They need to subscribe to the belief that they can do all things through Christ, which strengthens them (Phil 4:13). The Bible warns that it is impossible to please God without faith. (Heb 11:6). Faith motivates God to move on behalf of the believer. When the centurion with a sick servant expressed to Jesus that he would be healed without Jesus visiting him if he just sent his word, Jesus was amazed (Matt 8:8-10). Jesus healed the servant instantly based on the centurion's great faith (Matt 8:13). True fellowship with God is nonexistent without faith.<sup>181</sup> For leaders and followers to be fully engaged in implementation, they must have faith that the vision will become a reality. Furthermore, their faith will prevent them from being distracted by the naysayers and preserve them when tough times arise.

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<sup>181</sup> Thomas Lea, *Holman New Testament Commentary - Hebrews and James* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 188.

Faith enables visionaries to trust God and his plan. In other words, they will be equipped to trust the process. The Bible instructs Christians to trust in the Lord with all their heart and do not lean to their understanding (Prov 3:5a). They are urged to trust in God instead of relying on themselves entirely.<sup>182</sup> Abraham trusted and obeyed God even when he instructed him to take his only son, Isaac, and sacrifice him as a burnt offering (Gen 22:2). This command was a tough order to obey, especially since Sarah was barren for many years before God blessed them with their beloved Isaac in their old age. Nevertheless, Abraham obeyed God and trusted that the Lord would provide a sacrifice. As a result, Abraham did not have to sacrifice his son, and the Angel of the Lord promised Abraham that his seed would be as numerous as the stars in the sky because of his obedience (Gen 22:17). Sometimes, it seems as if one's path is headed in the direct opposite direction of the vision. However, the visionary can take comfort in knowing that “the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord” (Ps 37:23). Like David, when he was well-stricken in years, the believer must be confident that “the Lord delights in the way of those who trust him making his steps firm.”<sup>183</sup>

King David exemplifies a leader who was able to reflect on his life and see God's handiwork. When he was a young boy living in his father's, Jesse's, house, he was initially not considered for the possibility of being the next king. However, as a last resort, he was brought to Prophet Samuel, and it was revealed through the anointing that he would be king (1 Sam 16:1-13). However, this revelation did not augment the hard times that David had to endure on his journey to becoming a king. The Greater Berea District's leaders and churches must continue to persevere, pressing forward to mark for the prize of the high calling through Christ Jesus (Phil

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<sup>182</sup> Lindsay Wilson, *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 81.

<sup>183</sup> Steven Lawson, *Holman Old Testament Commentary – Psalms* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2004), 214.

3:14) regardless of present circumstances and occurrences. Philippians 3:14 is a declaration of Paul's realization that he had not reached his destination yet, but he will continue to grind towards what is ahead of him.<sup>184</sup>

A vision is a catalyst for greater works. Jesus told his followers that they would do greater works than he has done after he goes to the Father (John 14:12). Jesus empowered his disciples through the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20 to do greater works, including making disciples worldwide through baptizing people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, along with teaching them to pay attention to every command that Jesus gave the disciples. In the New Testament, James challenges the validity of a declaration of faith that generates no reciprocal fruit.<sup>185</sup> While it is important to have faith, faith without works is dead (Jas 2:14-26). Additionally, Jesus promised that he would send them *allos parakletos*, another helper, to be with them forever.<sup>186</sup> After his departure, he sent the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost has many functions, including comforting, interceding, and guiding. The guidance of the Holy Ghost helps followers of Christ accomplish great and important things. One of the reasons that believers have the Holy Spirit is so they can achieve the vision that God has placed within them.

Courage was required of every leader in the Bible to accomplish something great for God. When Jeremiah was called to be a priest and prophet, he was afraid to speak because of his youthful inexperience in communications. God told him not to be afraid because he is with him to deliver him (Jer 1:7-8). God addressed Jeremiah's deficiencies and directly spoke to his

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<sup>184</sup> Charles B. Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon* (2009): A Commentary (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 76.

<sup>185</sup> Vernon D. Doerksen, *James- Everyday Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2019), 44.

<sup>186</sup> Jey J. Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2011), 177.

fear.<sup>187</sup> Joshua 1:9 admonishes Christians to be strong and very courageous because the Lord is with them wherever they go. This command is given three times in the book of Joshua. Joshua could be confident, dependent, and trusting because God is competent, dependable, and trustworthy.<sup>188</sup> It is worth mentioning that the very first sin mentioned in Revelation 21:8 when speaking of the doom that awaits the sinner is cowardice. In this verse, John is referring to the gutlessness that prompts a man to choose safety and self while leaving Christ as a last resort.<sup>189</sup> God did not give his children the spirit of fear. He gave them power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7). God has provided everything that a believer needs to live and serve faithfully. When a decisionmaker is apprehensive or vacillating, it is because his focus is on himself and his limited human resources instead of on the Lord and his limitless divine resources.<sup>190</sup> God gave Moses a vision of the children of Israel being set free from bondage in Egypt via a directive to go to Pharaoh (Exod 3:10). However, Moses was apprehensive due to focusing on his limitations, his speech impediment, among other fears. God graciously reassured Moses verbally and through miraculous signs (Exod 4) that he had everything that Moses needed to accomplish such an amazing assignment. Regardless of the magnitude of the vision that God gives the Pastor, he is admonished to employ strength and courage to proceed with the vision because nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37).

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<sup>187</sup> Fred M. Wood and Ross H. McLaren, *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 25.

<sup>188</sup> Kenneth Gangel, *Holman Old Testament Commentary – Joshua* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 25.

<sup>189</sup> Leon L. Morris, *Revelation* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 235.

<sup>190</sup> John F. MacArthur, *1 and 2 Timothy MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 2p.

God-given visions are manifested through servant leadership. When Titus selected men for leadership in the churches of Crete via the direction of the Holy Spirit, one of the qualifications was that they are hospitable (Titus 1:8). Jesus warned the disciples not to be like the Gentiles exercising authority over people. Instead, he admonished them to serve others (Luke 22:25-26). The Gentiles' princes, emperors, and gods were called *euergetai* which means benefactor or one who does good. However, the Gentile authorities dominated the people utilizing a system of unfairness and injustice that was saturated with oppression and void of freedom, opportunities, care, and love.<sup>191</sup> Likewise, the leaders denounced in Ezekiel 34 ruled with force and violence, so much so that the sheep were scattered because they had no shepherd. Jesus had a completely different operation. He taught that the leaders should not expect grandiose honors. Their role is to serve the people with a desire to truly do good for them.<sup>192</sup>

Pastors who practice servant leadership cultivate members who are more engaged than those who are under authoritarian leadership. Camaraderie is established because they do not act as if they are superior to their congregants. This form of fellowship opens the door for honest conversations and feedback.

Instead of haughtiness, meekness is necessary for Christian leaders to effect positive change. When the Jewish people were overwhelmed with the burden of legalities and religious expectations that were placed on them by false religious leaders, Jesus invited them to take his gentle yoke upon them and learn about him because he is meek and gentle (Matt 11:29).<sup>193</sup> In

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<sup>191</sup> Butler, 348.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Stu Weber, *Holman New Testament Commentary – Matthew* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2000),

Jesus, they would find rest in addition to freedom from the power and guilt of sin.<sup>194</sup> With meekness, Jesus was able to maintain self-control even in the face of temptation and betrayal. Character is very important in the Bible, as indicated by the wisdom writings in the Old Testament. A song to the king found in Psalm 45 encourages him to ride prosperously because of truth, meekness, and righteousness, and his right hand will teach magnificent things (v. 4).

The verses in the book of Jude concerning leadership issues form a powerful letter that can be significantly impactful to today's Christian leaders. In the first verse, instead of boasting about being a brother of Jesus, Jude introduces himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, who is also kept by Jesus Christ. Unlike the Gentile leaders previously mentioned, Jude desired for people to have mercy, peace, and love in abundance (v.2). Jude demonstrated that love, mercy, and peace are integral parts of leading as a servant. Jude was appalled by the self-serving behavior exhibited by false teachers who were attempting to provide the church with leadership.<sup>195</sup> Christian leaders should love the people that God has entrusted to their care by showing the love that God has bestowed upon believers in Christ.<sup>196</sup> Jesus told his followers that the only way people will know they are his disciples is they love one another (John 13:34-35). This same principle applies to Christians today, including ministry leaders.

### Theoretical Foundations

As noted in the literature review, there is an abundance of books advocating the significance of having and implementing a vision. However, it is challenging to find materials

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<sup>194</sup> Weber, 12.

<sup>195</sup> Walter C. Wright, Jr., *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Service* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 9.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

opposing the possession and activation of a vision. Aubrey Malphurs has written several books about Christian leadership and strategic planning in churches. He has helped many churches write their vision statements, including Northwood Community Church in Dallas, River City Community Church in Louisville, and Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo. Like many authors on the subject, Malphurs, author of *Advanced Strategic Planning*, believes that vision is essential to the organization. It provides energy, causes a sense of divine purpose, supports risk-taking, validates leadership, energizes leadership, sustains ministry, and inspires giving.<sup>197</sup> These positive outcomes from having and utilizing a vision debunk the antiquated belief that vision is only for secular industries. Malphurs references several biblical leaders while explaining the importance of vision, including Moses (Deut 8:7-10), Nehemiah (Neh 1:3), and David (2 Sam 5:2).

The demographics concerning the percentage of churches that have an active vision has not been fully explored. It would be interesting to know their geographic locations as well as percentages for each denominational category. Demographics concerning the congregations may also be helpful such as age, race, and gender.

Barton “Burt” Nanus is a best-selling author and leadership expert. He has written many leadership books, including some that are focused on vision creation. In his book, *Visionary Leadership*, he explains why vision is instrumental to leadership and shows how any leader can employ a logical, step-by-step method to construct and implement a dynamically new sense of direction in his or her organization.<sup>198</sup> Nanus maintains that a vision expresses a view of a

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<sup>197</sup> Malphurs, 129-131.

<sup>198</sup> “Visionary Leadership,” Amazon, accessed April 9, 2020, <https://www.amazon.com/Visionary-Leadership-Burt-Nanus/dp/0787901148>.



prudent, trustworthy, appealing future of an organization, a situation that is a significant improvement in reference to what currently exists.<sup>199</sup>

Although it was written over 2,000 years ago, the Bible maintains several instances of the vision concept in the Old and New Testaments. For example, God captured Abraham's attention in Genesis 12:1-3 with his vision for him, which was the Abrahamic Covenant.<sup>200</sup>

Theories of transformation undergird the concept of having and implementing the vision. Theories of transformation include transforming/transformational leadership, servant leadership, and the social change model of leadership development. These concepts highlight the simultaneous significance of people, process, and purpose when exploring how individuals and groups function while informing how leadership positively impacts systems.<sup>201</sup>

Transforming leadership incorporates both leaders' and followers' shared ethics, inspiration, and ambitions to achieve goals, modeling a more profound impact on followers by increasing their range of consciousness beyond self-interests, typically the focus of transactional leadership.<sup>202</sup> James MacGregor Burns was convinced that transforming leadership created "a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents... the type of leadership that can produce social change."<sup>203</sup>

Transformational leadership is steeped in moral ethics and valuable research that supports its validity. However, the categories portrayed in theory do not represent all leadership

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<sup>199</sup> Parkinson, 46.

<sup>200</sup> Malphurs, 129.

<sup>201</sup> John P. Dugan, *Leadership Theory: Cultivating Critical Perspectives* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2017), 182.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

behaviors, and there is not much evidence depicting the transformation of leaders, followers, or organizations.<sup>204</sup>

The idea of servant leadership began as a philosophical structure for comprehending administration in several papers penned by Robert K. Greenleaf, a retired AT&T executive, in 1970 and 1977.<sup>205</sup> Greenleaf's theory entailed his view of how leadership should be. He asserted that leaders should serve first and lead second, replacing the top priority of production and self-serving actions with a desire to give back.<sup>206</sup> Don Frick, a proponent of Greenleaf's philosophy, believes that servant-leaders use their power ethically, preferring persuasion without manipulation.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, servant-leaders seek the consensus of the group or team when possible. They avoid the persona of a dictator by showing that they value the input and opinions of others.

The final theory of transformation is the social change model of leadership development. This model was created to explain social responsibility within the confines of leadership.<sup>208</sup> It was to be used as a vehicle for increasingly effective learning and teaching about leadership and supply a better understanding of efforts in the arena of social change. The social change model currently has dual roles. It operates as a developmental and a process model. As a developmental model, it highlights details concerning the core values that govern how collectives and individuals increase their ability to participate in socially responsible leadership.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Dugan, 188.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Frick, 288.

<sup>208</sup> Dugan, 196.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

Relational leadership is a crucial relationship-centered theory. It focuses on the idea that relationships are an essential part of being an effective leader.<sup>210</sup> Susan R. Komives, an author of various leadership books, defines leadership as a “relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change.”<sup>211</sup> Relationships are crucial to having high levels of engagement in vision implementation.

The concepts that undergird the research in this project agree with the concepts asserted by authors previously mentioned in this Theoretical Foundations section and the Literature Review. A vision is necessary for a church or any organization to move forward. It provides the congregation with a unified purpose and a sense of corporate direction. The implementation of the vision is almost as important as the vision itself. It is imperative that vision casting contains educational and biblical components when introducing a vision within religious arenas. Keeping the vision visible, at the forefront of congregants’ minds, is key to the vision staying focused upon and fresh. There are several attributes that a pastor should have which will help him gather support for the vision, including being a servant leader who realizes that the church he leads has a social responsibility to the community in which it is located.

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<sup>210</sup> Dugan, 223.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The researcher began to study the problem of vision presentation and implementation within the church that she attends. The vision presentation that the Pastor gave appeared to be well-received. However, engagement and implementation from the members were nonexistent. One could easily observe that most of the membership were clueless concerning reaching such lofty goals while the rest of the congregation seemed entirely disinterested. The observation broadened to include the district, which has four churches, including the researcher's church. The researcher's leadership positions allow her to view the inner workings of her local church and district. Unfortunately, the researcher realized that the concept of vision was not attended to at all in the district. Several attendees believed that the district fellowships were solely to collect money. As a result, the researcher began to study this problem and possible solutions for the district and its' churches to have thriving, active visions collectively and individually. She concluded that an intervention was needed.

#### **Intervention Design**

The intervention design for this thesis project seeks to remind some participants and enlighten others about the biblical principles for having a vision while providing various examples of leaders in the Bible whom God gave a vision and a mandate. Additionally, it endeavors to understand the congregants' point-of-view on the subject and educate them concerning the usefulness and power of vision institution. Church members should be excited about the vision that God has given their pastors. The intervention is designed to ignite and/or

increase their enthusiasm; thus uniting zeal and knowledge according to Romans 10:2, 12:11, and Titus 2:14.

### **Intervention Purpose**

Purpose, leveraged as faithfully as organizations leverage their other accessible strengths, can be a dominant pipeline to success.<sup>212</sup> For individuals, purpose is the motivator that drives them through life and gives meaning to their world daily.<sup>213</sup> They know why God created them and find fulfillment in their assignment. It is important for people to spend their time doing something that they find meaningful while making the organization better.

The purpose of this intervention is to educate members of the four churches within the district concerning the vision and provide a biblical foundation to increase awareness concerning its value and function. They will be taught what a vision is, utilization of a vision, and the impact that it can have on a church and a community. Examples will be provided of ministries that have successfully implemented their God-given vision and the outcomes they enjoy. The goal of providing examples is for the participants to know what can be accomplished when they intentionally unite to support a common purpose.

Furthermore, the intervention aims to enlighten the pastors who have yet to effectively present and implement a vision in the previously mentioned areas while providing them with the tools necessary for successful implementation. Additionally, the study seeks to determine why some pastors have yet to present a vision to their congregation and where the disconnect lies concerning performance for those who have stagnant visions. Moreover, this intervention seeks

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<sup>212</sup> Alaina Love and Marc Cugnon, *Purpose Linked Organization* (New York: McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, 2009), 3.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

to be a guideline for leaders of congregations with 250 members or less concerning how to successfully present and institute a vision for their church in a manner that allows it to come to fruition.

### **Participant Recruitment**

The researcher approached the district superintendent after a district fellowship requesting help for this thesis project. The superintendent expressed excitement and verbally provided permission for the members of the district to participate. The researcher will ask the each pastor for permission to make announcements at their church about the project as well as distribute and collect questionnaires. A letter of consent will be given to each participant before the distribution of questionnaires. The primary mode of recruitment will occur verbally through in-person church announcements and speaking to potential participants individually. The conversation will be kept simple to avoid overwhelming the prospect.

Purposive samples are needed. These are people apprised of the situation and fit the criteria and characteristics crucial to the research.<sup>214</sup> This population can be found within the district's churches.

### **Potential Project Participants**

Many churches in the inner city of Detroit, Michigan, have congregations that are predominately or entirely African American. All the Greater Berea District churches are in Detroit except for one church, North Macomb Church of God in Christ. However, this church

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<sup>214</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (La Vergne: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 82.

was birthed out of one of the inner-city churches, and is also 100% African American. As a result, all the participants in the project are African American.

The study is open to adults between 18 to 75 years old in the district. There will be a minimum of 20 adults participating in the intervention. The pastors will be invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. Yet, they will not be asked to participate in the classroom intervention to provide an atmosphere where the members can speak freely and be at ease.

## **Interviews**

Interviewing has existed for a very long time in one form or another. For instance, even the ancient Egyptians administered population censuses.<sup>215</sup> Around 2500 BC, the ancient Egyptians conducted censuses to determine the scale of the labor force needed to build their pyramids.<sup>216</sup> Charles Booth is known as the first person to create a social survey that utilized interviewing. In 1887, Booth spearheaded a comprehensive survey employing survey research, ethnographic observations, and informal interviews.<sup>217</sup> Following Booth's study, in 1896, American sociologist W.E.B. Dubois studied Philadelphia's African American population.<sup>218</sup>

An interview is described as the shared product of two people, the interviewer, and the interviewee, consisting of what they discuss and how they converse together.<sup>219</sup> Qualitative

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<sup>215</sup> Andrea Fontana and Anastasia H. Prokos, *The Interview: From Formal to Postmodern* (Walnut Creek: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 13.

<sup>216</sup> "Census-taking in the Ancient World," Office for National Statistics, last modified January 18, 2016, accessed April 19, 2020, <https://www.ons.gov.uk>.

<sup>217</sup> Fontana and Prokos, 14.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ruthellen Josselson, *Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach* (New York: Guilford Publications, 2013), 1.

interviewing is currently an essential method in social and human sciences.<sup>220</sup> Humans use conversation as a critical instrument for gathering knowledge about others. People communicate with each other to find out how they experience the world and how they feel, act, think, and develop individually and corporately.<sup>221</sup> Nevertheless, research interviews are distinguished from conversations based on the amount of planning and thought that occur before the dialogue and the subsequent analysis. Interview-based qualitative research is commonly situated amid relativistic and realist approaches to knowledge.<sup>222</sup> Qualitative researchers are acquainted with the social constructs of reality and their role in creating the actual phenomenon they are studying by framing the interview questions and the types of investigation they perform.<sup>223</sup>

#### Survey Instruments: One-on-One Interview with Pastors

Each pastor who accepts the invitation to be interviewed will be asked eleven questions as appropriate based on the preceding answers. The interviews will be done in person or via live video. Face-to-face interviews have many advantages over minimally interactive interviews, especially when dealing with sensitive topics or special populations.<sup>224</sup> Research indicates that face-to-face structured interviews produce better response rates.<sup>225</sup> The time allotted for each talk is one hour. The interviewer is aware of respondent differences and the importance of making appropriate adjustments realizing that a singular interview style is not a fit for all respondents.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Syend Brinkmann, *Qualitative Interviewing: Understanding Qualitative Research* (Cary: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2013), 1.

<sup>221</sup> Brinkmann, 1.

<sup>222</sup> Josselson, 1.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>224</sup> Fontana and Prokos, 23.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 22.



Open-ended questions are intertwined with close-ended questions to encourage substantive responses. The purpose of the questions is to understand each pastor's viewpoint concerning having a church vision and the actions that they have taken based upon their perspective and the support they need to bring it to pass. The interview provides data that can be interpreted with the church members' questionnaire and intervention data to conclude whether the pastors' perceptions are realistic about the members' vision awareness, understanding, and ideology. The interview will also provide information concerning the percentage of pastors in the district who need vision development assistance.

Sample interviews of pastors who are not in the district uncovered that pastors commonly desire members who have the heart to move the vision forward and more capital to expand their current efforts. The interviews also showed that consistency from the members and keeping the vision in the forefront is imperative.

#### Survey Instrument: Individual Participant Interviews

Approximately twenty people who participated in the intervention will be interviewed within two weeks following the event. Interviews deliver them from the confines of the questionnaires because it allows them to speak freely concerning their experiences within their churches and the district concerning vision. Additionally, respondents will be asked to provide feedback concerning what they found helpful during the intervention and if they have any questions and thoughts on what contributes to casting and following a vision. The themes produced from the interviews will be reported in the results chapter of the project.

#### **Questionnaires**

“Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting

from among existing answers.”<sup>227</sup> Questionnaires can produce three kinds of data: factual, attitudinal, and behavioral. Objective questions usually address demographic characteristics such as age, race, and gender, while attitudinal questions typically cover values, beliefs, interests, and attitudes.<sup>228</sup> Behavioral problems are employed to discover what respondents have done previously or are currently doing, including questions about lifestyle, personal history, and habits.<sup>229</sup> The questionnaires in this project mainly consist of attitudinal and behavioral questions/statements.

Questionnaires are very efficient. Through utilizing them, researchers collect a lot of data while saving time, money, and effort.<sup>230</sup> In just one hour, a person can collect a substantial amount of information, with the amount of personal investment being minuscule compared to the time and effort required to interview every individual who supplied the information. However, the researcher is aware that every survey instrument has its’ limitations. For example, questions on self-completed questionnaires must be simple, which does not provide opportunities for in-depth exploration of an issue.<sup>231</sup>

The pre and post results from the questionnaires will be reported. Afterward, the similarities and differences will be analyzed. Then the researcher will contribute her thoughts based upon the outcomes.

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<sup>227</sup> Zoltán Dörnyei and Tatsuya Taguchi, *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 3-4.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 7.

### Survey Instrument: Preintervention Questionnaire

The first set of questionnaires will be distributed to the district members before attending the one-day intervention. They will be available electronically and in hard copies. There will be a \$5 gift card given to all who submit a completed questionnaire before the deadline. The deadline date will occur two weeks after distribution. In addition to gathering pertinent information, the completed questionnaires' submission will determine who is invited to the one-day session. Only those who have submitted their questionnaires will be invited to participate. The goal is to have at least 20 participants for the one-day intervention. Participants will be asked to circle the answer that best fits them. There are thirteen statements to address on the questionnaire.

The survey seeks to determine the participants' level of knowledge concerning visions generally, their church's vision, and their exposure to vision statements within and outside of the church. Furthermore, a few comments seek to reveal the participants' attitudes towards having a vision in the church. Research on sample interviews and questionnaires distributed in churches outside the district has shown that some members, including those in leadership, are unsure about their vision. Respondents expressed a desire for their church to have a vision and make them feel a part of it.

### Survey Instrument: Post-Intervention Questionnaire

The post-intervention questionnaire is the final collection of data from the respondents on the day of the intervention. It is mainly used to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention. It will be reviewed alongside all the data collected, including the pre-intervention questionnaire, interviews, and observations. The researcher will be reviewing these completed instruments to see if there was an increase in awareness concerning vision value and function. Additionally, she will see if presenting the biblical foundations and examples of vision increased interest in vision

implementation. Unlike the pre-intervention questionnaire, space will be provided for participants to express their thoughts in their own words on a few lines following specific questions. For example, there will be a question asking if the participant's perception of vision has changed. There will be space provided following this question for the participant to express how his/her perception has changed or why it remains the same. The postintervention questionnaires will be distributed at the end of the intervention for participants to complete and submit before leaving.

### **Intervention Program**

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, there are two options for the intervention. The best option will be chosen as the date for the intervention moves close. Option A is the traditional classroom setting for the intervention. Option B is to have an intervention via Zoom, which allows the facilitator and participants to see one another face-to-face while not being physically in each other's presence. Both options allow participants to receive firsthand information and interact with the class by commenting and asking questions. The intervention will be divided into biblical foundations, general vision education, and case study activity. Options A and B are identical except for the continental breakfast and meet-and-greet that will occur before the sessions begin in Option A. Option A: The day will start with check-in, prayer, continental breakfast, and meet-and-greet. Around 20 minutes after, the facilitator will present the schedule and the objectives for the intervention. Each session will last approximately one hour with a ten-minute break between sessions. Following the last session, case studies will be distributed. People can work individually or in groups according to their comfort level. Afterward, the day will conclude with a wrap-up, which involves thanking the participants along

with distributing and collecting post-intervention questionnaires. Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

#### General Vision Education (session 1)

“With all thy getting, get understanding” (Prov: 4:7b). This segment aims to give participants a general understanding of what a vision is and its components. In Session 1A, the facilitator will begin by inquiring about the definition of vision. Following participant responses, the facilitator will define vision, as stated by Aubrey Malphurs in *Advanced Strategic Planning*. The facilitator will also discuss what does not qualify as a vision. For example, mission and vision are two different concepts. The benefits of an organization having a vision will be presented and discussed. The features will be presented to tell the participants about the concept. The benefits will also be presented to know how having a vision can help them and the ministries they represent.

#### Biblical Foundations (sessions 2A, 2B)

The goal of this component of the intervention is to show how important vision is to God. There will be several scriptures presented in conjunction with examples of visions given by God in the Bible. The hope is that participants will see that vision is essential to God and, as followers of Christ, it should be important to them. Additionally, they will be shown scriptures to encourage, comfort, and empower them. For instance, Philippians 4:13 reminds believers that they can do all things through Christ, which strengthens them, and Luke 1:37 declares that nothing is impossible with God.

The first session of Biblical Foundations, session 2A, will be centered around God-given examples of vision in the Bible. The God-given vision of several biblical leaders will be expounded upon, including Moses, Abraham, and Nehemiah. The class will explore the process

each leader went through as a part of vision implementation. They will also explore the obstacles that they encountered and how the leaders responded. For example, when Nehemiah was taunted concerning the quality of the wall, he was not discouraged. He continued building Jerusalem's wall. The participants will be shown biblical proof that vision is not confined to corporations. God is the creator and proponent of vision.

Session 2B of Biblical Foundations will survey various scriptures that empower and encourage the believer to operate by faith and not fear, including the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 and faith in action in Hebrews 11. It will also explore believers' mandate to do more wondrous works through service as found in John 14:12 and Matthew 28:16-20.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits of the intervention, an added benefit will be its role as a form of group pastoral counseling. According to *Understanding Pastoral Counseling* by Elizabeth Maynard, pastoral counseling's main objectives include "accountability to the theological, spiritual growth, healing versus care, and joining with the transcendent."<sup>232</sup> During the intervention, attendees will be educated on vision and its biblical basis, which will enhance their spiritual growth. Additionally, participants will be shown how they are accountable to God to obey his Word as it relates to vision. While depending on God to help them support the vision, their relationship with him will be strengthened. During the intervention and the interviews, people will speak freely and receive caring feedback to help them concerning vision. This will benefit the participants individually and collectively.

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<sup>232</sup> Elizabeth Maynard and Jill L. Snodgrass, *Understanding Pastoral Counseling* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2015), 215.

### Activity: Case Study (session 3)

Following Biblical Foundations, the class will be divided into equal groups. Each group will be assigned a fictional case study. Each case study will be on a vision that God has given the pastor of a church. The members of the group will need to work together to determine actions to take concerning the vision. For example, in one case study, Pastor Mike believes that the Lord is leading his church to open a clinic for low- and no-income families. He is apprehensive about presenting this vision to the congregation of about fifty people. The group will be asked to determine Pastor Mike's next steps. They will also be asked to briefly describe how Pastor Mike should present the vision to the congregation if he decides to tell them. The groups will be allotted twenty minutes to read and discuss their case studies. The researcher and outsider will observe and note each group's interactions by walking around to each group if the intervention is done in person or by connecting virtually to the breakout groups via Zoom. The case study exercise creates an environment for the participants to place into action the information they have learned throughout the intervention and engage in the point-of-view of others.

### Observations

Observation is a useful activity lead by a hypothesis related to some form of purpose.<sup>233</sup> The reason that one observes is to construct what we will look at and how. Up to three disinterested third parties will execute observations during the classroom intervention to increase observational reliability. The observers will be members of the denomination, Church of God in Christ (COGIC), but they will not be members of the district that is being studied. The observers will be looking for various non-verbal cues that denotes engagement, confusion, disinterest, or

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<sup>233</sup> Jack Sanger, ed. *The Compleat Observer?: A Field Research Guide to Observation* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1996), 105.

epiphanic moments. Noted observations will be shared with the facilitator when participants are taking a break. If possible, adjustments will be made, such as clarifying a point previously made or a presented principle. These observations will be used as an additional tool to measure the members' perception of vision in general and as it relates to the church where their membership resides. There will be an after-action meeting following the intervention to ensure the recording of essential details.

A non-participant observer will be in the back of the room and one on each side, as part of the structured observation. The observers will be trained through role-play and examples to record the following events/behaviors during the intervention quietly:

- The number of questions asked (shows attentiveness and engagement)
- The number of head nods in agreement
- The number of blank facial expressions/stares (dazed looks or daydreaming)
- The number of people who did not actively participate (no comments or questions to the researchers or fellow participants even during the case studies with the breakout groups)
- The number of people overheard making positive remarks (For example: "I'm glad I came here." "The is good information.")
- The number of people overheard making negative remarks to themselves or others (For example: "This is a waste of time." "We don't need this.")
- The number of people overheard asking questions to fellow participants
- What are those questions asked to fellow participants?

In addition to observations conducted during the intervention by the disinterested third parties, following the intervention, there will also be observations recorded by the researcher and



one insider/participant, thus employing triangulation. Triangulation enables a fuller interpretation supplied by a detailed view of the intervention.<sup>234</sup>

## **Data Analysis**

The data from several sources will be analyzed. These sources are the pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires, observer notes from the classroom intervention, researcher notes from the intervention, along with pastoral and participant interviews. The researcher seeks to determine if there was an increase in knowledge and support of vision as an ideal properly suited for religious organizations.

During the analysis process, the researcher will consider recurring themes, claims, stories, topics, or expressions.<sup>235</sup> One will also examine if there was a correlation between the participants' actions and their words. For example, if a participant verbalizes that he agrees with everything in the intervention while murmuring and complaining about the topic to a fellow participant, that depicts incongruencies between the participant's actions and his words.

The researcher needs to be familiar with the data. As a result, she will read the data several times in different settings, reflecting upon how the documents such as interview questions, questionnaires, and observer notes were formed. The relevance of each document and the data it contains will be examined. Additionally, the researcher will pay attention to how the information gathered from the various data tools interact with each other, trying to decipher if they complement or challenge one another.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Sensing, 70.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.,163.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

Data can be read interpretively or reflexively.<sup>237</sup> This thesis project will use a combination of these approaches to reading the data. Utilizing observation notes from the intervention, one can read data involving gestures, language, and particular words or phrases. The data can also be categorized by implied and inferred meanings showing how it connects to the intervention design.<sup>238</sup> The researcher will document the meaning of the data and what it portrays along with the inferences she believes the data is making. Then, she will read the information reflexively. Reading the information reflexively allows the student-researcher to discover her role as a researcher in generating and interpreting the data.<sup>239</sup>

### **Thematic Discovery for Interviews**

Following interviews with the pastors and the congregants, data analysis will be employed in search of various themes. The methods used include a word-based technique, comparisons, and contrasts, along with metaphors and analogies.

There are several word-based techniques. However, this study will focus on word repetitions. Words that are spoken often are usually seen as being pertinent in the minds of the interviewees.<sup>240</sup> Notes and recordings will be reviewed following the interviews to uncover words and synonyms that were used frequently.

The belief that themes convey how information is different from or similar to one another is the compare and contrast approach.<sup>241</sup> Gery Ryan and H. Russell Bernard mentions that

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<sup>237</sup> Sensing, 163.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Gery W. Ryan and H. Russell Bernard, "Techniques to Identify Themes in Qualitative Data," *Analytic Technologies*, (May 2005): 2, accessed June 28, 2020, [http://www.analytictech.com/mb870/readings/ryan-bernard\\_techniques\\_to\\_identify\\_themes\\_in.htm](http://www.analytictech.com/mb870/readings/ryan-bernard_techniques_to_identify_themes_in.htm).

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 4.

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, developers of the grounded theory, labeled it the “constant comparison method.”<sup>242</sup> Each interview response will be reviewed and analyzed concerning its meaning and how it differs from previous or later statements. Ryan notes that, according to Kathy Charmaz, this method helps the researcher remain focused on the data while avoiding theoretical tangents.<sup>243</sup>

Gery Ryan and Russell Bernard mention schema analysts Roy D'Andrade, Claudia Strauss, and Naomi Quinn, who maintain that one should examine data searching for metaphors, similes, and analogies.<sup>244</sup> Ryan and Bernard also note pioneers George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson, who observed that people tend to express their behaviors, experiences, and thoughts through analogies.<sup>245</sup> In this study, the researcher will be attentive to the participants' usage of commonalities and metaphors in their rationale about church vision. She will search for metaphors intertwined in rhetoric and infer foundational principles that can produce metaphoric patterns.<sup>246</sup>

### Implementation of the Intervention Design

Prior to implementing the intervention design, a pandemic, COVID-19, manifested. As a result, limitations were placed on the ways that the researcher could access various church members. The researcher began studying ways to conduct the various forms of data collection while ensuring her safety and that of the participants. All in-person interviews on non-family

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<sup>242</sup> Ryan and Bernard, 4.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

members were conducted while wearing a mask and practicing social distancing. The only activity that required participants to meet outside of their home was the class facilitated by the researcher. There were ample space and seating to ensure that attendees were safely distanced from one another. Masks were required. The researcher brought fifty new masks just in case they were needed, and she removed the seating from the first row of tables so that the audience remained at a safe distance when she removed her mask to teach. Refreshments were individually wrapped. Pens and pads of paper were new and opened in the presence of the participants.

The collection of data began with focusing on the four pastors in the Greater Berea District. Each pastor was interviewed, two in person and two via the internet-based video conferencing service, Zoom. The first interview was in the home of the senior Pastor and former Superintendent of the district. The interview was videotaped, and it lasted approximately one hour. The two following interviews were done via Zoom, while the last one was in the Pastor's home. Fifty percent of the interviews lasted one hour, while the other interviews were approximately thirty minutes in length. Although each pastor was asked the same questions, two chose to elaborate more than the others.

All the pastors have expressed their vision to their congregation, and all of them affirmed that they have people in leadership who are assisting in vision execution. In other areas, their answers varied.

Recruitment of the member participants and collection of preintervention questionnaires was a tedious task. Some people did not respond to various forms of communication, including emails, and some did not want to be recorded. The researcher reached out to the pastors' wives in the district for assistance. Out of the four pastors' wives, one of them was instrumental in

recruiting participants and ensuring they attended the intervention. Many follow-up phone-calls, emails, and text messages were sent to collect signed consent forms and preintervention questionnaires. Although the researcher desired a minimum of twenty participants, she ended with fourteen people. However, the number of participants was sufficient for the study.

Intervention day occurred following the collection of data from the preintervention questionnaires. A Saturday was the chosen day of the week for the intervention because people are most likely to be free from work and have better chances of obtaining a babysitter if necessary. The researcher set the time frame from 10 am to 3 pm because it was the weekend, and people may not want to rise early, but she did not want to use their entire day. She knew that there would be an ample amount of time for the attendees to absorb the information, make comments, ask questions, and complete the postintervention survey. Furthermore, time was provided for a brief after-action meeting. The researcher presented to fourteen participants utilizing PowerPoint slides and case studies that she created. The curriculum was designed to align with the project's purpose, the problem statement, and the preintervention questionnaires. The presentation was designed with the audience in mind. The researcher knew that she would present to church members. As a result, biblically based information about vision and showing vision in action were imperative. Two people were a bit apprehensive a few days before the in-person intervention due to COVID-19. They reached out to the researcher, asking questions about the class's location, such as the room's size and if it was well-ventilated. Their fears subsided when they were informed that the conference room accommodates 90 people, even though no more than twenty people will be there. They were also reminded that the building is professionally cleaned daily; there are hand-sanitizing stations throughout the building; and everyone must wear masks in common areas.

It was a beautiful day. The researcher arrived at the intervention location approximately 45 minutes early and began setting up the refreshments and electronic devices. The researcher sent pictures of the site and signs leading to the conference center a few days before the intervention to decrease the chances of participants getting lost or inconvenienced by not entering the closest entrance. People began entering the conference center around 9:45 am. They were welcomed, offered refreshments, and informed of the restrooms' location. During the first thirty minutes, from 10 am to 10:30 pm, the participants had time to arrive, meet and greet, and get settled with a pen, paper, and refreshments. One lady was glad to know that she had time to go to the bathroom and not miss any information. The atmosphere was pleasant as the researcher allowed gospel music to play in the background until the first session began. One participant commented that she liked the music. People were happy to see those they had not seen since churches were closed due to the pandemic.

Refreshments were provided because the researcher knew that she was asking people to be there for several hours. She also considered those who may not have time to eat before arriving and those who will have to go to work immediately after leaving. The kinds of refreshments provided accommodated those with a sweet tooth and those who had dietary restrictions.

Teaching a class was chosen as the intervention method because the researcher suspected that lack of information was one of the main reasons congregants are not active participants in the local church's vision. The arrangement was the best way to educate them in an unthreatening environment free from distractions, where they can respond and ask questions freely. Pastors were not invited to this part of the study so that church members would feel comfortable expressing their views of and inquiring about church vision.

Case studies were done at the end of the last session as a way for attendees to activate what they have learned in class. In addition to employing the information they acquired in the sessions, people could brainstorm about ways to help the fictional pastors in their case studies cast a vision or get congregants excited about reinvigorating a stagnant vision. They enjoyed working together and hearing other points-of-view.

While the class was scheduled from 10 am to 3 pm, it ended around 1 pm. It did not take as long as anticipated to present the materials. Even though it was evident that the class members were engaged through their diligence in taking notes and their non-verbal expressions, they did not ask any questions and rarely spoke unless they were taking a break or working on a case study. The teaching was divided into three sessions, and a break was scheduled after each one. However, there was no break after the third session because of the need to progress towards the case studies. Several participants have commented that they enjoyed the class and did not realize that it was as long as it was. One of the members seemed disengaged the entire time she was there. As a result, the researcher communicated with her the next day to see if she was alright. She expressed that she was interested in the information that was being presented, but she was extremely hesitant to be around people due to COVID-19.

Out of the fourteen participants, one of them fulfilled the role of the insider observer. The chosen person as the insider observer was a woman who has been a district member for over fourteen years. As a result, this lady knows a lot of the members of the district. Additionally, she has been under the leadership of two of the pastors. There was also a disinterested third party in attendance as an outsider observer. The outsider observer is a member of the same denomination as the participants, the Church of God in Christ. However, she is not a member of the district. The outsider observer took notes vigorously. An after-action meeting was held immediately

following the class to share their observations with the researcher. In addition to many comments, the outsider observer noticed how the audience's engagement level increased when the researcher shared personal anecdotes to illustrate a concept or scripture further. The insider observer took note of how people were so engaged that they did not turn their heads towards the door when someone walked in the room. They stay focused on the presentation.

A post-intervention questionnaire was given to all participants to be completed before they left the class. The feedback was very positive. Many participants began to see their role and responsibility in the vision of their local church. Several attendees commented that the class needs to be taught in their local churches and abroad. Their sentiments were reiterated during the postintervention interviews via Zoom and over the phone two weeks following the intervention.



## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to increase awareness within the four churches in the district concerning the value and function of having a vision. It addresses the need for a substantial increase of understanding relating to the value and operation of a vision within religious organizations, specifically the churches within this district. The intervention attended to this issue.

### Authors with Comparable Findings

Aubrey Malphurs asserts that vision motivates giving.<sup>247</sup> The researcher agrees with this assertion. People want to donate to something exciting which, unfortunately, does not include the light bill or repairs to the building. During the postintervention interview, one of the participants disclosed that he is striving to earn more money to save it and present a monetary gift to the church. His pastor expressed that part of God's vision for the church is to open a credit union. This member is excited about the vision of the church he attends and is willing to contribute financially.

Aubrey Malphurs also contends that “the concepts of vision and mission are confused more than any of the other concepts in strategic planning.”<sup>248</sup> During the intervention, a segment of the presentation addressed the differences between a mission and a vision statement. Definitions of each term were provided and visual aid of a professional bodybuilder who was

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<sup>247</sup> Malphurs, 131.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 132.

labeled vision lifting weights that were labeled mission so that the attendees would see that the vision supports the mission. Surprisingly, upon reviewing the postintervention questionnaires, the researcher discovered that a few of the participants continued to confuse the concepts through assigning the functionality of vision to the term mission and vice versa.

Empowerment is essential to vision activation. Empowerment expert, Ken Blanchard, believes that people in organizations can do their best, but they fail to do so out of fear.<sup>249</sup> They are afraid of the repercussions that will come from the leadership. Unfortunately, it appears that this issue exists in one of the churches in the district. When asked what she thinks is essential to casting and following a vision, a participant passionately responded, “Empower your people. Don’t tear them down and expect them to work at the same time.” Fear has the power to paralyze progress. During the intervention, the researcher described the man who decided to do nothing with the one talent as fearfully stagnant. His inactivity negatively affected him and the businessman who gave him the money. People must feel empowered if they are to follow Habakkuk 2:2 and accelerate with the vision that has been expressed by their leaders.

Empowerment also involves providing members with pertinent information concerning the church's business, including how funds are being applied to support the vision. During the postintervention interview, a participant informed the interviewer that leaders could excite people about vision by helping members see the results of their efforts and telling them how the money they donated has helped with vision progression. She declared, “The results are exciting!”<sup>250</sup> The thoughts of this participant correlate with the views of leadership experts

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<sup>249</sup> Blanchard, 22.

<sup>250</sup> Virtual interview by researcher (All interviews are confidential; the names of interviewees are withheld per signed consent form), Zoom, October 14, 2020.

Twyla Dell and Michael Crisp. They believe that empowered people derive from an organization abundant in indispensable qualities and one such quality is shared information.<sup>251</sup>

Table 1. Summary of Literature Findings Comparable to Researcher's Findings

<u>Authors</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Aubrey Malphurs	<i>Advanced Strategic Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aubrey Malphurs asserts that vision motivates giving. The researcher found this to be true during participant interviews.</li> <li>• Aubrey Malphurs contends that people tend to confuse the concepts of vision and mission. The researcher agrees with this notion based on the results of questionnaires.</li> </ul>
Ken Blanchard, John P. Carlos, and Alan Randolph	<i>Empowerment Takes More Than a Minute</i>	The authors believe that members of many organizations are fearful of doing their best. They do not feel empowered. The researcher found this to be true during postintervention interviews.
Twyla Dell	<i>Motivating at Work, Empowering Employees to Give Their Best</i>	Twyla Dell believes that shared information is an indispensable, empowering attribute. The researcher found that church members get excited about knowing the results of their contributions.

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<sup>251</sup> Dell and Crisp, 23.

## Preintervention versus Postintervention Questionnaire

Participants completed a preintervention questionnaire before attending the intervention and a postintervention questionnaire before leaving the intervention. All the questions on the preintervention questionnaire were included on the postintervention questionnaire with a few additional questions. The following results call attention to noticeable changes from the pre- to the postintervention questionnaire.

The presenter defined vision during the intervention and provided several examples of the application of the term. The audience could view sample vision statements from domestic and international churches to better understand how one vision statement can look different from another vision statement and discover commonalities. While all the vision statements were worded differently, they supported the universal church's overall mission, the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:16-20. Before experiencing the intervention, 93% of the participants affirmed that they knew the vision statement's meaning. Following the class, 100% of the participants affirmed that they knew the meaning of a vision statement.

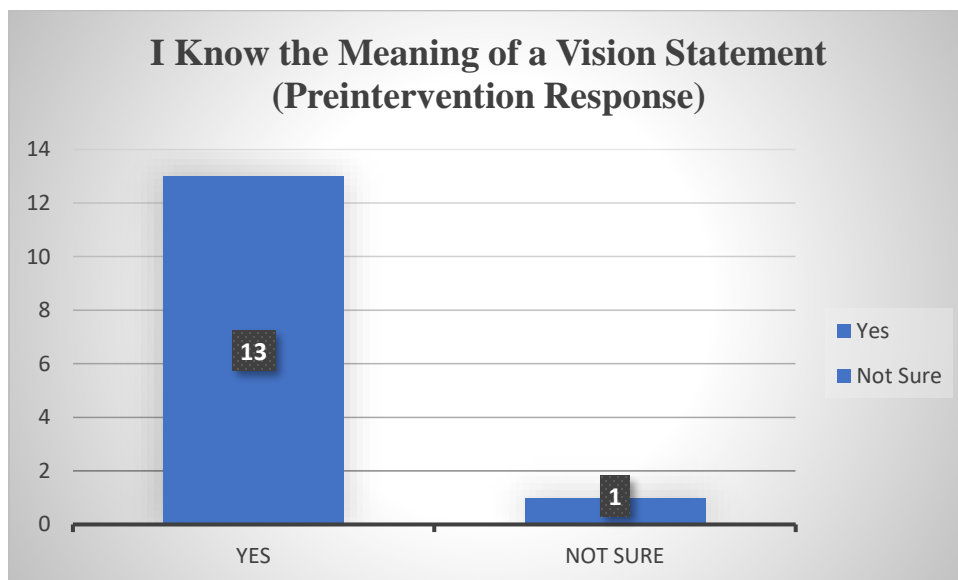


Figure 1. Preintervention Questionnaire: Question #2

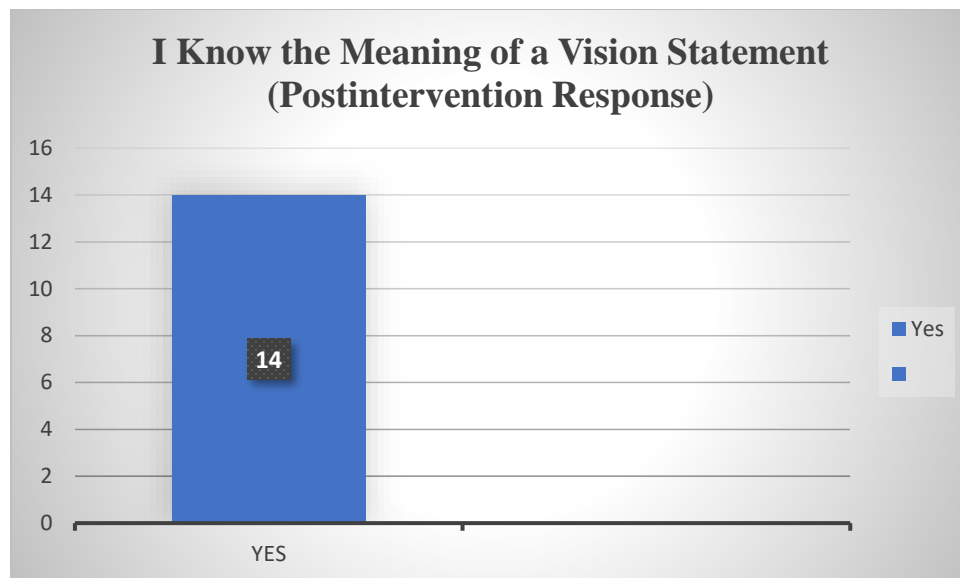


Figure 2. Postintervention Questionnaire: Question #2

Before the intervention, two participants did not believe that God gives the pastor a church vision. Following the intervention, all the participants maintained that God gives the church vision to the pastor. These favorable results will aid in the vision coming to fruition in the district's local churches as believers tend to follow ideas that they deem God-given.

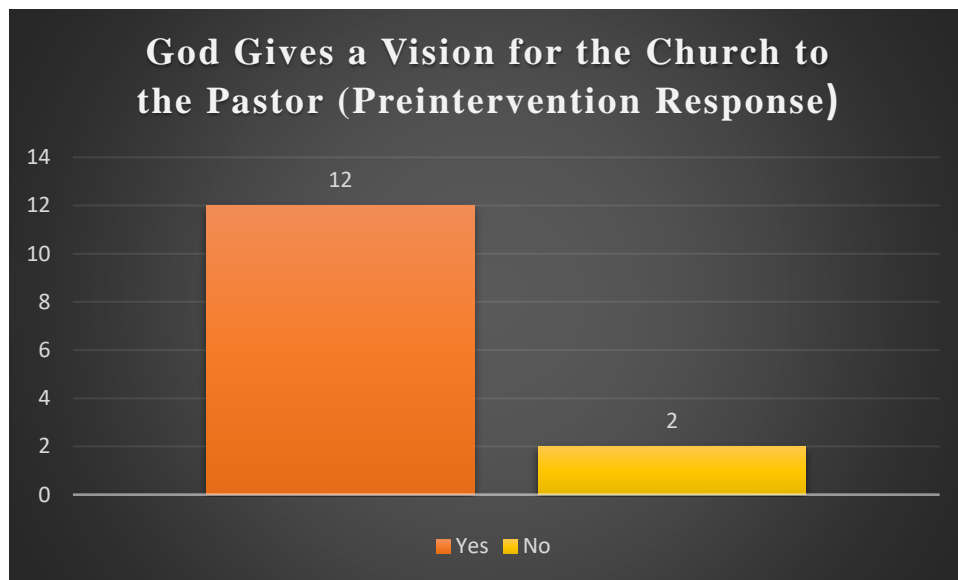


Figure 3, Preintervention Questionnaire: Question #7

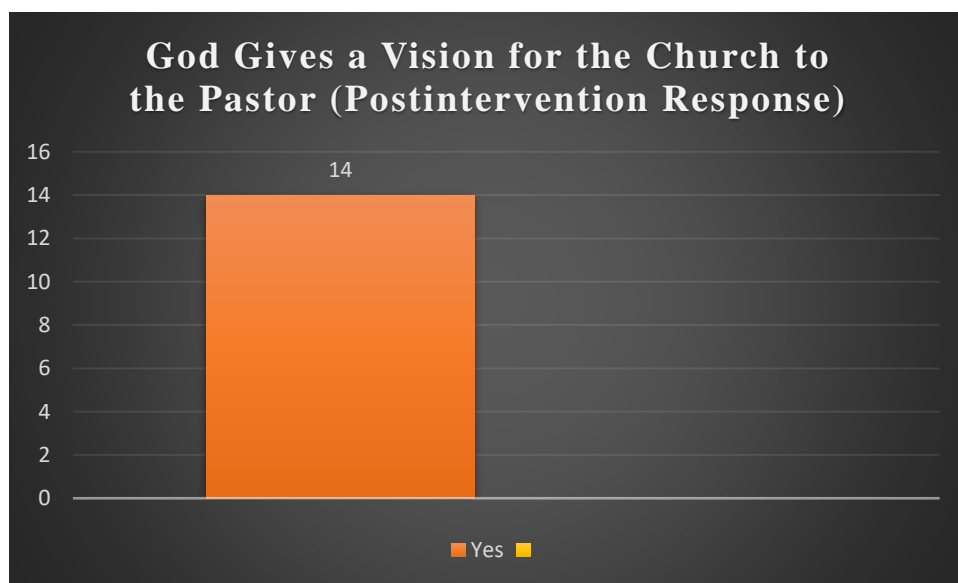


Figure 4. Postintervention Questionnaire: Question #7

Upon collecting the preintervention questionnaire, it was discovered that one participant asserted visions are only necessary for the world or corporate America. During the class, the researcher provided various examples of the biblical and ecclesiastical benefits of vision. Thus, following the intervention, a review of the completed post-intervention questionnaires revealed

that all participants currently maintain that visions are beneficial to the world or corporate America and they are beneficial to church bodies.

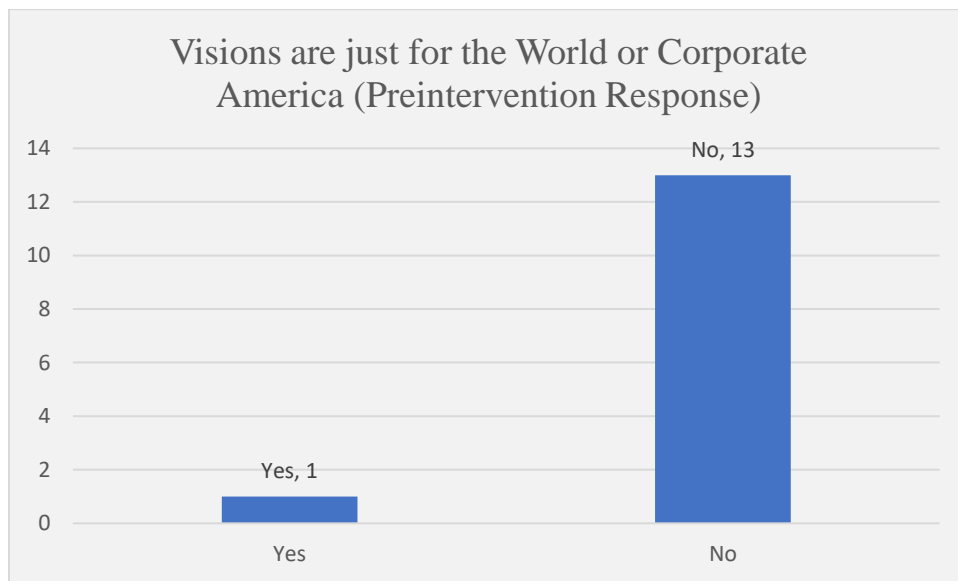


Figure 5. Preintervention Questionnaire: Question #6

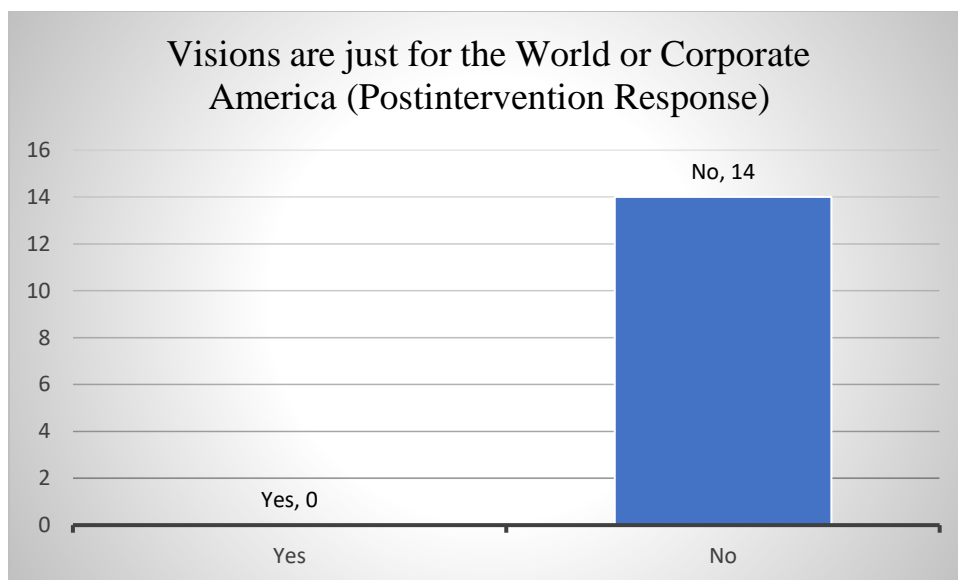


Figure 6. Postintervention Questionnaire: Question #6

The second session of the intervention was entitled, “Biblical Foundations: Examples of Vision in the Bible.” The researcher expounded on the visions that God gave Abraham, Nehemiah, and Moses. She read the biblical account of each vision’s inception. The fact that

God chose imperfect people was highlighted. Each of these men displayed traits that can encourage people today to walk in their God-given vision. For example, Abraham displayed faith and trust in God. Nehemiah was a person of integrity who did what God told him even when he was afraid. Lastly, Moses was living proof that God can do through a person what he thought he could not do himself. The presenter highlighted several lessons that one can learn from each of these biblical leaders. The following were the results from the pre and post-intervention questionnaires when the participants were instructed to answer true or false concerning God giving Abraham, Nehemiah, and Moses a vision.

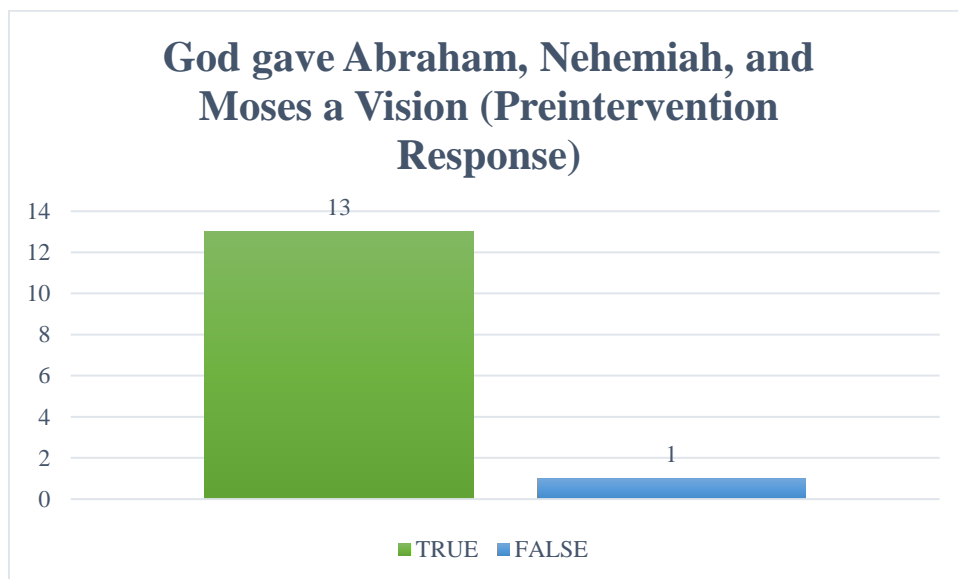


Figure 7. Preintervention Questionnaire: Question #9



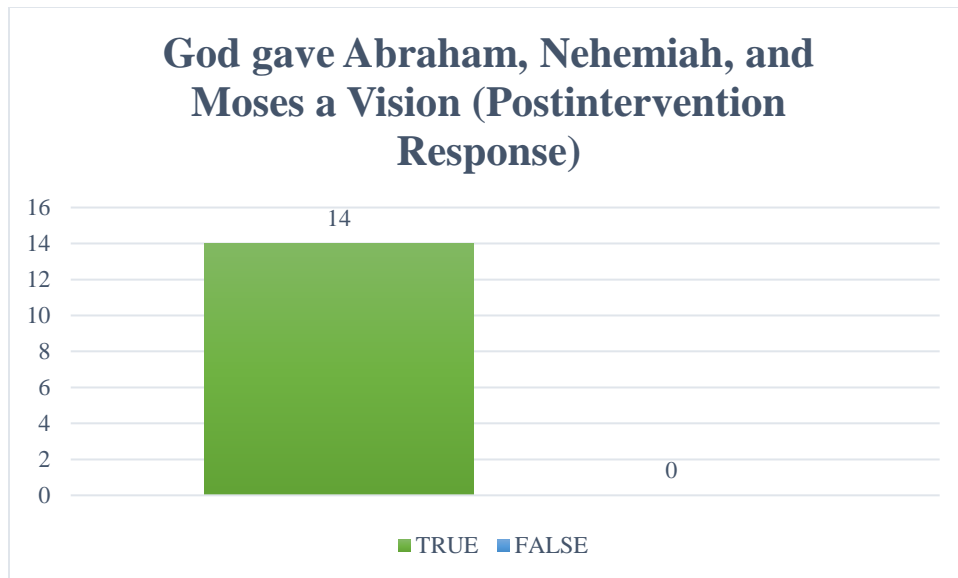


Figure 8. Postintervention Questionnaire: Question #9

Table 2. Summary of Highlighted Questionnaire Results

	Preintervention	Postintervention
I know the meaning of a vision statement.	93% Yes	100% Yes
God gives a vision for the church to the pastor.	86% Yes	100% Yes
Visions are just for the world or corporate America.	93% No	100% No
God gave Abraham, Nehemiah, and Moses, a vision.	93% True	100% True

### Themes

One of the themes that the researcher repeatedly expressed during the intervention was “ask.” She reminded the listeners that there is nothing that God has assigned them to do for which they are prohibited from asking him for help bringing it to pass. Moreover, it was explained that an assignment from God is not likened unto a test for which one is prevented from asking questions. His assistance and guidance can always be solicited. Furthermore, she impressed upon the church members their responsibility to ask their ministry leaders what their

role is in their local church's vision instead of merely waiting to be informed of every step they need to take to help.

Several attendees expressed the desire to see this class taught in their local churches and abroad. For example, one participant stated, “This needs to be talked about in every church. I feel like the pastors will see a change in the motivation and drive in their members if they allow you to teach this fully to their congregation.”<sup>252</sup> Another participant asserted, “This was a fantastic workshop. Very satisfied with the entire experience. First Lady Hodge, you did a professional, remarkable presentation. Present this to the entire local churches!”<sup>253</sup> During the postintervention interview, a participant passionately expressed the need for this training for a larger audience. She said, “It would be a disservice for this information to only be taught to a handful of people, even if you have to train people to do what you do.”<sup>254</sup>

The majority of church members (79%) who attended expressed in the postintervention questionnaire that the information presented during the intervention changed their perception of vision. One person wrote, “I learned more about the vision; it’s for the future and what steps are needed for us to accomplish it.”<sup>255</sup> Another individual wrote, “It encouraged me to do more.”<sup>256</sup> Additionally, an attendee communicated that the information clarified and reinforced her understanding. She stated, “Today’s information helped and encouraged the spirit of serving with

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<sup>252</sup> Anonymous, postintervention questionnaire created by researcher, Bingham Farms, Michigan, October 10, 2020.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Virtual interview with study participant, Zoom, October 13, 2020.

<sup>255</sup> Anonymous, postintervention questionnaire created by researcher, Bingham Farms, October 10, 2020.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

vision in mind; to fight daily to focus on God's work."<sup>257</sup> Furthermore, a participant declared, "I have a place in the vision of the church God has sent me to."<sup>258</sup>

During the postintervention interview, participants were asked if they had given any feedback to their pastors concerning the intervention. Most had not provided feedback to their pastors due to the brief period between the intervention and the postintervention interview, in addition to the lack of in-person church services because of the pandemic. However, one who had the opportunity to give her pastor feedback reported that he responded favorably. After giving him an overview of the intervention, including referencing some of the scriptures presented during the class, the attendee's pastor told her that he was glad she attended. The researcher received a phone call from a pastor's wife, whose husband permitted five members to participate in the study. She exhibited excitement that so many people expressed positive sentiments about the class.

There was an atmosphere of reinvigoration in the room where the intervention occurred. During the postintervention interview, an interviewee disclosed that her excitement about the church vision decreased before the intervention due to the pandemic. Now, the participant declares that she is more excited and more cooperative. Another member answered that her level of excitement concerning vision had increased as well. The intervention sparked a desire to write a list of questions that she has for her pastor and ask God through prayer about what she can contribute to her local church's vision. An additional participant described how her level of excitement concerning vision has increased by saying that the intervention planted a seed in her

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<sup>257</sup> Anonymous, postintervention questionnaire created by researcher, Bingham Farms, October 10, 2020.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

mind to do more. When asked the question about excitement level, one participant said wholeheartedly, “Increased. Definitely!”

Moreover, she said, “The need is there. You feel that urgency.”<sup>259</sup> While explaining the rise in her excitement level, one participant communicated the vision could bring church members together. One of the church mothers (an honorable label given to some senior women in the church) stated, “There were a lot of things I did not know. I never really thought about the vision. You made it plain and clear.”<sup>260</sup> A different participant expressed that he is going to try to earn more money working so that he can present a monetary gift to the church to help the vision come to fruition. During the postintervention interview, an interviewee said, “Now, I’m equipped with more information. You have encouraged me in the conference to continue on no matter what.”<sup>261</sup> Overall, 86% of participants responded that their excitement level has increased concerning church vision in the postintervention interviews.

Some participants noted that the information in the intervention is transferrable to various settings. For example, an attendee said, “Certain things from the class can be attributed to, not only the church, but to team building, communities, and coming together as a group.”<sup>262</sup> Another participant excitedly said, “My pastor and first lady don’t keep vision for corporate America. I am excited.”<sup>263</sup> Some attendees began to also focus on their personal vision, along with their church’s vision.

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<sup>259</sup> Anonymous, postintervention questionnaire created by researcher, Bingham Farms, October 10, 2020.

<sup>260</sup> Virtual interview with study participant, Zoom, October 19, 2020.

<sup>261</sup> Virtual interview with study participant, Zoom, October 24, 2020.

<sup>262</sup> Virtual interview with study participant, Zoom, October 22, 2020.

<sup>263</sup> Virtual interview with study participant, Zoom, October 12, 2020.

## **Increase in Scriptural Knowledge of Vision**

The second and third sections of the intervention were chockfull of scriptural references and characterizations of vision and verses of encouragement and empowerment for believers. Some of the scriptures included were Genesis 12:1-3, Nehemiah 2:1-3, 6-7, 17-18, Exodus 3:7-8, 11-14, and Matthew 19:16. The participants were educated, inspired, and challenged. While the researcher spoke about how Nehemiah carried out the vision even while he was afraid and that fear and faith are mutually exclusive, the participants listened intently in quiet self reflection. Many left the meeting with a heightened dedication to follow the examples of Moses, Nehemiah, Abraham. They were motivated to execute their God-given assignments because, like Moses's case, God can do through them what they cannot do alone. Even if they are afraid, attendees finished the intervention ready to be intentional about helping their local churches fulfill the vision. One participant affirmed that the information presented would help their local church because the congregation would understand that you cannot mix fear with faith. Another participant expressed during the postintervention interview that she found it helpful that the researcher explained everything during the intervention and supported it with scripture.<sup>264</sup>

## **The People are Equipped for Vision Manifestation**

Following the intervention, several participants commented in their postintervention questionnaires that they are now equipped to help their church fulfill the vision and mission. Numerous attendees conveyed appreciation for giving them the tools they needed to support their church's vision and personal vision. A person stated in the postintervention questionnaire, "I

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<sup>264</sup> Virtual interview with study participant, Zoom, October 15, 2020.

have gotten the tools and encouragement to be faithful to my church's mission and vision."<sup>265</sup>

When asked about what she found helpful from the intervention during the postintervention interview, one young lady said, "I'm delighted that I participated. I appreciate it. It brought clarity."<sup>266</sup> Another individual found the way the presenter explained the information and supported it with scripture beneficial. She said, "It gives me ideas on what I need to accomplish myself."<sup>267</sup> They were thankful for being given the tools to be a blessing to the ministries they serve. The scriptures provided them with a basis for carrying out the vision. Many took comfort in knowing that God will never leave them nor forsake them (Deut 31:6 and Heb 13:5), that they can go to him for help and understanding concerning what they should do in regards to church vision.

Table 3. Summary of Themes

Summary of Themes	
Ask	The participants were reminded repeatedly to ask questions when they do not understand or have any idea of what to do. They can always ask their leaders and God for direction.
Spread the word	After the intervention, several participants commented that the information they received needs to be taught in their local churches and abroad.
Changed perception of vision	Participants began to see themselves as part of the vision for their local church. They realized that they have a role to play and it is their responsibility to act. 79% reported that their perception of vision changed due to the intervention.

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<sup>265</sup> Anonymous, postintervention questionnaire created by researcher, Bingham Farms, October 10, 2020.

<sup>266</sup> Virtual postintervention interview with study participant, Zoom, October 16, 2020.

<sup>267</sup> Virtual postintervention interview with study participant, Zoom, October 15, 2020.

Reinvigoration	86% of the participants reported an increase in their excitement for church vision in the postintervention interviews.
Transferrable Knowledge	Attendees expressed that the intervention's information can be employed in the church corporately and in their lives personally.
Equipped	A substantial number of participants disclosed in their postintervention questionnaires that they are now equipped to help their local church fulfill its mission and vision.

### **They Came to Support and Left Supported**

Most of the people made plans to attend the intervention just to support the researcher. Especially during this pandemic period, many “pressed their way” to attend, not expecting to gain anything. Still, they knew that the researcher needed help with finishing her project to earn her degree. However, it did not take long for them to realize that they were not only present to participate; they were there to receive the knowledge and encouragement that they needed and desired to be a blessing to the church where their membership resides and themselves. Participants were able to share ideas and safely work with others without fear of judgment or ridicule. The attendees received foundational teaching on vision, scriptural references of vision in action, practical personal anecdotes, an abundance of encouragement, and gentle nudging to go forward with supporting their church’s vision.

### **Location**

The intervention was held in the conference center in a professional office building. Except for one participant who had major COVID-19 concerns, the attendees were at ease. They were able to distance themselves comfortably socially, and everyone wore masks. It was clean

and organized with audio/visual technology and easily accessible lavatories. Following the intervention, while one of the participants expressed how much she enjoyed the class, she also mentioned that she would like to see the researcher teach more classes in the same location.

## Interpretations of Observers

### **Insider Observer**

The insider observer was a participant in the study. She completed all questionnaires, attended the intervention, and participated in the post-intervention interview. This observer is a member of one of the churches in the district. The following statements (verbatim) are her observations on the day of the intervention.

1. The engagement was high from the moment I stepped in... The speaker held the participants' attention. They did not turn to acknowledge us until she did.
2. During the end of the first session and second session, many notes were being taken... that told me that the information was new, essential, and had pull.
3. In session two, that referenced Abraham's vision, Nehemiah and Moses received the most verbal agreement from the participants. Mostly when personal accounts were brought before them, energy filled the room.
4. Unfortunately, during the second session, I also noticed a lack of participation. The question was not being answered. There seemed to be a sense of "I don't want to be wrong." from the attendees.
5. The third session brought a new atmosphere to the room as different scriptures of encouragement and the pitfalls were brought forth. There seemed to be a moment of "how do I get free" in the room. I watched as bodies leaned in and shifted. I observed the participants go through some moments of reflection during this session.
6. The Case Study session allowed me to observe how the participants responded to each other, which yielded some very thought-provoking and detailed information. During this time, the participants (without the facilitator's prompting) grouped themselves up and went over three different case studies. Team 1 finished early and talked about life. Team 2 took a minute to come together but, when they did, brought a detailed response. Team 3 talked and wrote until the last moment and worked well together. Team 4 talked right up to the end and was excited about presenting their findings. Team 5 was excited to present their findings and presented a detailed report.



7. The class ended with everyone excited about the information given. Statements of “This was so good;” “More people needed to be here;” and “This was beautiful, you did an outstanding job;” was said directly to the facilitator.<sup>268</sup>

### **Disinterested/Third Party Observer**

The disinterested third party attended the intervention. She quietly took notes from her seat. When participants were doing group case studies, she walked around the room to hear the various conversations. She participated in an after-action meeting immediately after the intervention and shared her findings with the researcher and the insider observer. The following statements include her observations on the day of the intervention.

#### **Session 1**

Six minutes into the presentation, one of the participants left out and then returned five minutes later.

Seven minutes into the presentation, one participant moved closer to the front.

Seventy percent of the participants were engaged in taking notes and listening.

Participants were mostly listening.

When talking about the challenge, most stopped writing and listened intently.

At the 22-minute mark, participants were still listening intently—no side conversations.

At 10:55 am, four (4) additional participants arrived.

The personal account shared (cashier at the gas station) galvanized the participants and a verbalized agreement was shared (“Amen”).

#### **Session 2**

The second personal account shared in the context of God’s promise to Abraham (“carrier of the blessing”) once again galvanized the participants, and they again verbalized agreement (“Amen”).

One (1) Participant left during the second break and did not return

#### **Session 3**

##### **Case Study Review**

##### **Group 1 – Case Study 1**

- During the discussion group was very engaged with one another.

##### **Group 2 – Case Study 1**

- Group discussion was good; eventually, they started discussing something unrelated “Little is much when God is in it.”

##### **Group 3 – Case Study 2**

- As a people group, this group started as individual silos, got the assignment completed as a group, and then returned to their silos. Their presentation had thought

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<sup>268</sup> Insider Observer (identity of insider observer is confidential per consent agree), Bingham Farms, October 10, 2020.

associated with it.

Group 4 – Case Study 3

- Mixed people group; Very engaged in the discussion. The presentation was marked with a passion for souls.

Group 5 – Case Study 3

- Unbelievably detailed about what may be causing ministry leaders to be stagnant in advancing in the vision of the Pastor.<sup>269</sup>

## **Researcher Observations**

Everyone appeared engaged in the presented information except for one participant who informed the researcher prior to attending that she would be leaving early. Initially, the two men in the audience did not seem engaged. However, when they spoke about the information, it was evident that they were attentive. One participant abandoned her original seat and moved closer to the front of the room. The researcher was pleasantly surprised by the diligent notetaking that she observed. Participants voluntarily distributed pens and pads of paper supplied by the facilitator. Attendees were exceptionally attentive. There were no side conversations. When a new bullet point appeared on the screen, participants quickly recorded the information in their notes.

There were moments of laughter and clapping, especially when the researcher shared her testimonies of how she operated in faith even when she was afraid. God blessed her to emerge from situations victoriously. The audience was encouraged by practical applications of God's Word and the blessings that resulted.

When a few general results from the preintervention questionnaire were presented, people were quiet. They were reflecting on the answers they gave or were afraid that they provided the wrong answer. However, the researcher assured the audience that all the answers were acceptable because they were in the class to learn.

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<sup>269</sup> Twigg, Sharisse, Disinterested/Third Party Observer, Bingham Farms, October 10, 2020.

Many participants expressed their happiness with being invited as they were exiting. Some people directly thanked the researcher for the invitation. One participant exclaimed, “Everyone needs to be here.” A few attendees requested a video of the presentation.

Table 4. Summary of Insider Observations

Areas Observed	Description
Engagement	Engagement was high. The researcher held the audience’s attention.
Notetaking	Participants were taking many notes at the end of the first two sessions.
Verbal Agreement	Many participants verbally agreed with the segment on Moses, Abraham, and Nehemiah. They especially liked the related personal accounts.
Participation	Participants seemed to be afraid of answering questions aloud at the end of the second session.
Nonverbal Gestures	Participants were observed leaning in and shifting. They appeared reflective.
Case Study Observations	The teams organically got into groups, worked well together, and were excited to present.
Excitement	Everyone was excited about the information. Many people shared positive comments with the facilitator at the end.

Table 5. Summary of Disinterested/Third Party Observations

<u>Areas Observed</u>	<u>Description</u>
Movement	A few minutes into the session, 1 participant left for five minutes, and another moved closer to the front.
Engagement	70% of the audience were engaged and taking notes. Most of the people were listening.
Challenge	When the information was challenging, people stopped writing and listened.
Listening	People listened intently to the presenter.
Personal Accounts	The personal accounts galvanized participants, and they were heard saying, “Amen” after each one.
Case Study Observations	All the group presentations were very thoughtful. Some were extremely detailed. The discussions surrounding the case studies were promising.

Table 6. Summary of Researcher Observations

<u>Areas Observed</u>	<u>Description</u>
Engagement	The audience appeared engaged. There was a diligent notetaking. No one was having side conversations while the researcher was presenting.
Laughter and Applause	There were periods of laughter and clapping when the researcher shared her testimonies of deliverance and victory.
Quiet Moments	The audience was quiet when the researcher presented a few preintervention results.
Gratitude and Happiness	Participants were happy that they attended. Some of them verbally expressed their gratitude for being invited to the researcher.

## How Teaching about Vision Impacted the Researcher

Teaching about the vision was exhilarating! All the preparation and monetary outlay required for the intervention to succeed was worth every minute and penny spent. The researcher was thankful for the opportunity to invest her time and money in God's people through this study on vision. People were spiritually nourished and revitalized with passages of scripture and God's principles. The appetite that the attendees possessed for learning the Word of God concerning vision reminds one of the Ethiopian Eunuch whom Philip encountered on his journey toward Gaza (Acts 8:26-10). Like the Eunuch, God had prepared the participants' hearts and minds. They were active members of their respective churches willing to venture out of their homes during a pandemic to learn how to serve God through ministry better while supporting the researcher's academic pursuit.

The researcher is encouraged by the impact that the intervention made on the attendees and positive feedback. The participants proclaimed that it was time well spent. Many were seen taking notes diligently. Nonverbal gestures such as affirmative head nods, smiles, and appropriately placed laughter informed the researcher that she had captured their attention. They were thankful for being included in the endeavor. Many district members were so motivated by the intervention that they voluntarily shared the information with members who did not attend. It was encouraging to receive an exuberant phone call from a church leader who did not attend the intervention informing the researcher that several people told her that the class was excellent.

Conducting the intervention confirmed the researcher's beliefs concerning why some church visions are stagnant. The audience was filled with people who wanted to promote their local church vision actively, but they did not know what to do or the right questions. The power information possesses to restore hope was evident during the intervention. The participants were

relieved by the realization that they do not need to automatically know what to do because they are free to ask. The Bible admonishes believers to get an understanding (Prov 4:7). They can ask their leadership and, more importantly, they can ask God, who simply desires for his children to be willing and obedient (Isa 1:19).

Teaching the class on vision left the researcher feeling accomplished. By having the privilege of teaching a few members from each church in the district, of which the majority were a part of church leadership, she can positively impact the churches, which will enhance the district. As a teacher, the researcher could impart what the Lord had given her through praying, studying, and searching the scriptures. Participants exited the intervention equipped with two things that they could do immediately, ask and pray. They know that they can ask their pastor what he sees as their role in supporting the church vision.

Moreover, attendees know that they can pray and ask God to reveal to them the actions that they should take to be a blessing to the church to which He has assigned them. They are aware that it is their responsibility to act. The onus is not on the pastors to cast the vision and implement it by themselves.

Teaching the class on vision inspired the researcher in several ways. For example, she is inspired to do more teaching on the subject. She desires to create a curriculum with a foundational vision basics class and a master class where leaders will understand the vision. Furthermore, she wants to incorporate a mission curriculum. Church leaders and members need to know about mission and mission statements and the relationship between mission and vision. Following the pandemic, the researcher aspires to have a mission and vision conference that will not be confined to the district in this study. It will be open to all churches. A team of volunteers will be trained to teach various classes on mission and vision and conduct case studies. It will be

an extension of the intervention. A vision casting seminar for pastors will also be included. Pastors will be taught techniques for keeping their congregations excited about the vision that God has given them. Tips will be shared concerning how to motivate church members and avoid overwhelming them. People will leave the conference filled with inspiration and equipped with action plans. Additionally, she wants to make vision intensives available to churches to go into the local church to teach on the vision for five days or another specified timeframe. Intensives will allow the teaching to be tailored to the individual church to address specific issues or hindrances to vision manifestation.

Teaching about vision provided the researcher with fulfillment. The intervention was the turning point on the path towards her doctoral degree completion, a degree that she has steadily worked to attain since 2017. Each person must run with endurance the race that is placed before him/her (Heb 12:1). Since the first semester of Thesis Project Writing, all roads led to the intervention. The intervention is the event that paves the way for the final chapters of the project to be written. Going through the process of obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board enabled the intervention to occur. Permission letters, recruitment emails, consent forms, preintervention questionnaires, gift cards, and event reminders were all components needed to reach intervention day. When the day finally arrived, and the researcher heard herself proficiently teaching on a subject that she has been writing about for the last twelve months, there was a deep sense of fulfillment.

The realization that God assigned, gifted, and graced her to teach a remnant of his people made the researcher feel grateful. Witnessing how the personal testimonies she shared illuminated the audience's understanding and increased engagement, provided the researcher with a heightened level of thankfulness to God for every situation that she had endured and

overcame. While looking out into more than a dozen pleasant faces, teaching on vision reminded the researcher of the faithfulness of God. She reflected upon the various challenges that arose while preparing for the class and how God blessed her to overcome each obstacle. One of her favorite scriptures is Psalm 34:19 (KJV), “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” Intervention Day was the day that she prayed for many nights. She prayed that people would attend and be blessed by the information being presented. James 5:16b remains true; “The effectual, fervent prayers of the righteous availeth much.” The Intervention Day was another example of God perfecting that which concerned her (Ps 138:8). She was disheartened when certain district members did not respond or chose to decline her invitation to participate in the study. However, when the day of the intervention arrived, there was no lack; no void that needed filling. God knew how many people should be there and selected whom he wanted to attend. He knew whose hearts were ripe and ready to receive the teaching on vision. Thus, the researcher is replete with gratefulness.

Table 7. Summary of Intervention Impact on Researcher

Exhilarated	The teaching experience was exhilarating because she could impart spiritually nourishing information, revitalizing believers for vision work.
Encouraged	She is encouraged by the imprint that the intervention made on the attendees and from the positive feedback.
Confirmed	The intervention confirmed the researcher’s beliefs as to why church visions can become stagnant.
Accomplished	She felt accomplished as she was able to teach members representing every church in the district effectively.
Inspired	In conjunction with post-intervention activities, the intervention inspired the



	researcher to teach on church vision, create a mission curriculum, and organize a mission and vision conference.
Fulfilled	The intervention was pivotal on the road to completing the doctoral degree. Having completed this step in the process provided great fulfillment.
Grateful	The researcher is grateful that God assigned, gifted, and graced her to teach a portion of his people.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to increase awareness within the four churches in the district concerning the value and function of having a vision. The study's goal was fulfilled through a class-style intervention where the participants were taught the differences between mission and vision, shown examples of vision being activated in the Bible, and provided with scriptures of encouragement and empowerment that would build their faith and help them actively support the vision of their local church, thereby positively affecting the district.

### Researcher Findings in Relation to the Literature Review

The study results complement the assertions of Youngju Kwon in “Cacophony or Symphony: Paul’s Grand Vision of the Church in 1 Cor 12.” He believes that having accurate knowledge of God, according to Paul, is the theological basis for redirecting the Corinthians’ thoughts and actions in a way that would motivate them to engage in being a united community.<sup>270</sup> Likewise, the postintervention results and interviews demonstrate the usefulness of providing church members with biblical examples of God working through people for vision manifestation can increase their enthusiasm and stimulates them to unite with their church leaders to do more for vision realization.

The findings in this action research project also endorse the arguments of John Maxwell in *Be a People Person: Effective Leadership Through Effective Relationships*. He asserts that

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<sup>270</sup> Kwon., 79.

exceptional leaders communicate the vision creatively in a coherent manner so the people can grasp the concept.<sup>271</sup> During interviews with the district pastors, the researcher found that every pastor in the district stated they have a church vision that has been articulated to the congregation. However, the preintervention questionnaires show that 33% of the church members in the district who participated in the intervention do not know if the church in which their membership resides has a vision or they do not know what they need to do to help the vision become a reality. These findings also confirm the argument of Jane Sparrow, author of *The Culture Builders: Leadership Strategies for Employee Performance*, who believes that the senior leader must supply a straightforward strategic narrative of the past, present, and future of the organization and exhibit alignment between role assignments and direction to drive engagement.<sup>272</sup>

Ian Parkinson and Rob Peabody maintain in *Reignite: Seeing God Rekindle Life and Purpose in Your Church* that leaders need to be merchants of hope during this period.<sup>273</sup> This project's findings confirm that hope is a crucial ingredient for effective vision implementation, especially during a time in the world that is difficult for millions of people. During the postintervention interview, one of the participants was asked if her excitement level concerning vision has increased, decreased, or remained the same since the vision intervention. It was evident that before the class on vision, she was losing hope. She replied that she is more excited now. She explained that she was not excited before, primarily because of the pandemic. Even

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<sup>271</sup> Maxwell, 73.

<sup>272</sup> Sparrow, 19.

<sup>273</sup> Parkinson and Peabody, 63.

though COVID-19 still exists, she expressed being more excited and cooperative concerning her local church's vision since taking part in the study.

Findings in this action research study complement writings of authors who contend that empowerment increases engagement. One such author is Michael Williams. He maintains that leaders who enjoy high engagement notice, interpret themselves and other people's feelings and emotions well employing a generous amount of empathy and understanding.<sup>274</sup> During the postintervention interview, when asked about what she thinks is essential to casting and following a vision, the participant responded, “Empower your people.”<sup>275</sup> Furthermore, she expressed that a leader should not criticize or degrade someone and expect them to continue working. This participant believes leaders should empower and uplift people instead of discouraging and belittling them, aligning with Matt Tenney’s contention in *Serve to Be Great: Leadership Lessons from a Prison, a Monastery, and a Boardroom*. Tenney believes that molding an enjoyable team culture leads to heightened output, more innovation, and a significant effect on an organization’s ability to attract and maintain expertly skilled people.<sup>276</sup>

The questionnaires, intervention, and interviews confirm the writings of Lorin Woolfe and Bruce Avolio concerning the necessity for intentional leadership development. Woolfe asserts that prosperous institutions with longevity deliberately develop leaders in all generations.<sup>277</sup> Avolio maintains that leaders must take time for leadership development themselves, or else they risk stifling their progress and the growth of the people they lead.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Michael Williams, 90.

<sup>275</sup> Virtual postintervention interview with study participant, Zoom, October 14, 2020.

<sup>276</sup> Tenney, 132.

<sup>277</sup> Woolfe, 196.

<sup>278</sup> Avolio, 3-4.

Most of the participants in the study happen to be leaders in their local churches. Because they dedicated a few hours toward their leadership development through attending the intervention, they are better equipped to assist with vision fulfillment in their churches with vigor. A side-by-side comparison of results from the pre-and post-intervention displays the positive effect of training leaders to cast their vision. Moreover, when the student-researcher conducted post-intervention interviews, she could see and hear the excitement along with the confidence and responsibility that they now possessed regarding the vision of their local church.

### Limitations

As noted earlier, participation in the district fellowship has declined due to the change in leadership. One of the study's potential limitations was participants leaving the study before it was complete, resulting in the researcher not having an adequate sample size. On the day of the intervention, two of the people who completed the questionnaire did not attend. However, enough participants attended for the study to proceed.

Everyone in the district is African American. There is no possibility for a racially diverse sample size. While the study was able to survey various viewpoints concerning vision, it could not obtain preliminary information from within the district about various cultures and their thoughts concerning vision. Although it was unintentional, most of the expert information shared with participants was gathered from non-African American authors, which gave attendees access to perspectives outside of their ethnic group. The researcher endeavors to expand her vision outreach by conducting vision intensives and conferences in venues that will include churches outside of her district and denomination, giving her immediate access to other cultures' views of vision.

An additional limitation noted before doing the study was the nature of self-reporting during one-on-one interviews. The concern was that participants might feel compelled to pretend like they are entirely on board with the idea of a church vision when speaking with the researcher face-to-face. As a result, their responses will not be factual, which would adversely affect the study. As a remedy, anonymous questionnaires were collected. These questionnaires were examined along with the interviews to reveal incongruencies. However, the researcher did not get the impression that participants felt pressured to pretend as if they were fully engaged in the notion of church vision. Participant interviews happened following the face-to-face intervention. The interviewees were very forthright in their answers. They were comfortable with the researcher and exhibited no hesitation about sharing their views on the subject.

The limitation of survey instruments was another issue for consideration. If participants felt pressured by the survey's time constraints, their answer choices towards the end of the questionnaire may not have been what they would choose if they had more time. Furthermore, their answer may not be included in the available answer choices. Interviews were planned to minimize this problem and allow the participants to speak freely and ask clarifying questions. Due to the class ending early, the participants had an ample amount of time to complete their questionnaires, and space was provided for additional comments along with several open-ended questions.

### Suggested Next Steps for Research Regarding this Problem

Although the results indicate a substantial increase in awareness concerning the vision and significantly increased church members' perception of and focus on the vision, which motivated them to express their commitment to the vision in their local churches, a comprehensive study from vision creation to vision implementation would be quite beneficial. In

this study, the researcher would work closely with the pastors educating and assisting them with writing and casting the vision that God has given them for the churches they serve. Additionally, she would provide general vision education for the members including its scriptural basis. The researcher would do periodic follow-ups to gauge vision execution and ascertain why the vision is or is not progressing. For example, the researcher could follow-up with the pastor and members of a church via interviews and questionnaires at the three, six, and twelve-month marks following the intervention to uncover pertinent information concerning vision progression and member motivation in addition to what resources the pastor needs if the vision has become dormant. The researcher believes that intervening during the vision's inception will provide a greater likelihood for its success.

#### Emergent Matters that Merits Future Research

This study was done during an international outbreak of a deadly virus known as COVID-19. To date (Nov 2020), over 250,000 people have died from this virus in the United States. It has been approximately one hundred years since the last pandemic, known as the 1918 flu pandemic.

One of the issues that emerged is knowing how to keep the vision alive during a crisis; specifically, a pandemic. A pastor's wife, who participated in the study, disclosed that she had lost her motivation for church vision due to the church building's closure because of the pandemic. Thankfully, she left the intervention feeling encouraged, but how is inspiration maintained and placed into action during a pandemic? How does the vision stay alive?

When most of the participants left the intervention, they were excited. During the postintervention interviews, several of them had not shared the information they learned with their pastors yet because they no longer see him regularly. Most church services are held online.

One church involved in the study has in-person services twice monthly. However, they are instructed to leave immediately following services for health safety.

A study should be done on the impact of vision during a pandemic. The pandemic was not a surprise to God. He knew that this would happen before he gave the pastors visions for their churches. 1 John 3:20 informs readers that God knows everything. A study can examine best practices for keeping a vision alive during a crisis. A comparison can be made between churches that continued to focus on the vision and those that chose to wait until the pandemic was over to reactivate the vision.

### Applicability of Research

While this social action research study focused on churches, the concept of vision can be applied anywhere. Governments, businesses, religious institutions, families, and individuals benefit from establishing and adhering to a vision. For instance, presidential candidates express their vision for the country that they desire to lead. Their votes derive from people inspired by a candidate's vision of the future with him as the president. The winning candidate compellingly casted his vision, which led to action that resulted in earning the highest number of votes. Skillfully casting a vision with passion will attract others to it.

This action research study has shown that vision is not confined to corporate America. The United States Air Force is an example of a government entity with applied vision and strategic planning, and goal setting. In 1996, the Air Force chief of staff, General Ronald Fogelman, brought together all the four-star generals in the Air Force to develop a long-term vision through a collaborative process.<sup>279</sup> Afterward, General Fogelman utilized the three-star

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<sup>279</sup> Mark A. Abramson, Daniel J. Chenok, and John M. Kamensky, *Government for the Future: Reflection and Vision for Tomorrow's Leaders* (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018), 67.



generals in the formation of a Board of Directors for plan development. The engagement of key stakeholders and striving to be collaborative help to ensure successful outcomes.<sup>280</sup>

Businesses need a vision. Most job applicants do not strive to find a dead-end job, one with no future or room for upward mobility. A company with a vision can increase employee loyalty and engagement while decreasing employee attrition. People are captivated by leaders who express a viable future in a manner that speaks to them and includes them.<sup>281</sup> Similar to the example above of the presidential candidate, people are inspired to join in and be a part of a company's success with a well-casted vision. Vision has the power to extract people from shortsightedness or fear into a sense of purpose and hopefulness.<sup>282</sup>

Religious institutions, not just churches, prosper from having a vision. Congregants gain security from knowing that they have a leader who looks beyond today with a master plan to help them endure whatever tribulations or trials emerge.<sup>283</sup> J.M. Price was a visionary leader with a “pioneering vision” to organize a Christian school that would equip men and women to communicate the “unchanging gospel of Christ with a rapidly changing world.”<sup>284</sup> The School of Educational Ministries at Southwestern began with one student in 1915. Although Price died at the age of 91 on January 12, 1976, the religious institution continues to thrive on his vision's legacy. Thousands of students worldwide have surrendered their lives to Christ and dedicated

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<sup>280</sup> Abramson, Chenok, and Kamensky, 67.

<sup>281</sup> Andersen, 23.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Briggs and Smith, 20-21.

themselves to fulfilling the Great Commission while attending the oldest continuing religious school in the world.<sup>285</sup>

Families benefit from vision also. Psalm 29:18a informs readers that people run wild and perish without vision. However, a family guided by God's vision can unitedly explore and enact his calling.<sup>286</sup> Family members know that they are a part of something greater than themselves and that their actions or lack thereof can positively or negatively impact the family unit and its calling. Vision supplies concentration and gratification to how a family thinks and what they do.<sup>287</sup> A family vision cultivates an atmosphere where each member can recognize his or her capability in God. The parents or guardians are engaged in not only achieving their own goals or dreams, but they are excited about helping the members of their family see and achieve their God-given potential. A family driven by a divine vision changes their world by establishing group goals and accomplishing them.<sup>288</sup> God's institution of family vision can be seen throughout the Bible. In Genesis, God created Adam and Eve to be a family (Gen 2:21-25). In the Garden of Eden, they had a divine vision for their mission.<sup>289</sup> God has a reason for every family's existence and a mission for them to perform. Thriving families commonly uphold a vision. The vision of a flourishing family includes a place of acceptance and growth where individuals know that they are protected, nurtured, and loved.<sup>290</sup> Their family supports them in developing themselves for

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<sup>285</sup> Briggs and Smith, 21.

<sup>286</sup> Martha Singleton and Greg Singleton, *The View Through Your Window: Finding God's Vision for your Family* (San Francisco: Leafwood Publishers, 2017), 16.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>290</sup> Mark Scandrette and Lisa Scandrette, *Belonging and Becoming: Creating a Thriving Family Culture* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 16.

the good of humanity. The vision for family life can be soulful, creative, intentional, globally aware, and imaginative.<sup>291</sup>

In addition to corporate vision, God also blesses every individual with a personal vision. The prophet Jeremiah's life exemplifies one who was bestowed a God-given vision. Jeremiah was born into a priestly family that possessed spiritual roots going back at least three centuries. God speaks to the prophet in Jeremiah 1:5, informing Jeremiah that he knew him before implanting him into his mother's womb. Four distinct verbs reflect God's work in Jeremiah's life; formed, knew, set, and appointed. "God formed him, knew him, set him apart, and appointed him."<sup>292</sup> God's involvement in the life of individuals is not confined to Jeremiah. God intricately forms and shapes all humans in the womb.

When an individual applies vision to his personal life, he can see a bigger picture and not be consumed by daily activities' routines. Being aware of his life's divine vision, he is less likely to be distracted by others' plans for his future that do not align with what God has told him. Instead of living in the doldrums, a visionary's life is filled with purpose even when facing challenges or setbacks. Vision motivates a person to proceed and not give up when life gets hard. For example, for a person who believes that their destiny is to serve God through traveling the world and ministering to the sick while performing life-changing operations, they will first need to go to college and obtain a medical degree. While the student is in college, there may be times that he does not have much money and feels tired and overwhelmed due to the workload. However, if he spends just a few minutes remembering the vision that God has given him for his life, he can gather enough energy to persevere. Philippians 3:14 reminds believers to press

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<sup>291</sup> Scandrette and Scandrette, 18.

<sup>292</sup> Wood and McLaren, 27.

toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The author, Steve Chandler, believes that a person can motivate himself by learning visioneering, which is a concept that he learned from Dennis Deaton, who defines visioneering as “engineering dreams into reality” by practicing active mental imaging.<sup>293</sup> Visioneering is simply a person picturing himself. Chandler contends that an individual will never do what he cannot see himself doing.<sup>294</sup>

Luke 18:1 (HCSB) instructs one always to pray and do not be discouraged. Persons who have yet to employ vision in their personal lives should pray and ask God for revelation. He has a vision for all creation collectively and individually.

### Researcher Reflections

The recruitment phase was very challenging. At times, the researcher was unsure that she would have enough people to complete the project successfully. The researcher relearned a sad lesson through the actions of some people that she attempted to recruit. Those who profess salvation can be dishonest and unkind. A few of the members from the various churches in the district told the researcher they would submit their completed consent forms and preintervention questionnaires, but they never complied. Others chose to ignore the request altogether.

Thankfully, God sent the people who were needed to participate. The researcher is reminded that she does not depend on a man as her source because God is her source. Promotion does not come from the east, west, or south. According to Psalm 75:6-7, it comes from God.

The researcher realized that several people do not think that supporting the final major project required to earn her doctoral degree is essential. She had to remind people to submit the

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<sup>293</sup> Steve Chandler, *100 Ways to Motivate Yourself, Third Edition: Change Your Life Forever* (Franklin Lakes: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2012), 144.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

necessary forms regularly. The researcher drove to a few participants' homes to collect the forms and ensure they were correctly completed.

This experience reminded the researcher that those who are expected to support you often will not, and those not considered can be your most generous supporters. She was saddened by the lack of support from a person she held in high regard and had a close relationship with. However, the researcher discovered that recruitment challenges are normal. She was able to safeguard the research from the possible negative impact by recruiting more than the minimum number of people required for a successful study.

The researcher was pleasantly surprised by the abundance of support she received from someone she had not known for very long. This participant went the extra mile. She provided the researcher with a list of email addresses from church members in her local church. She recruited several members of the district to participate in the study. Additionally, she transported people to the intervention site. Moreover, she periodically sent words of encouragement to the researcher during the recruitment process. The researcher continues to be grateful for her diligent support.

God gently cautioned the researcher to avoid the temptation to develop tunnel vision during her study. People are yet facing calamities, and she has to maintain compassion, especially in the middle of a deadly world health crisis. When the researcher discovered that one of the participants had not turned in all her paperwork because her mother was ill, the researcher immediately changed the focus of her communication with the participant. She informed the lady that she was praying for her mother and sent text messages periodically to find out how her mother was doing. The researcher did not speak about the project until the lady approached the subject apologizing for the delay in submission. The researcher thanked her for what she was currently submitting and assured the participant that she understood the delay. When the family

crisis ended, the member submitted all the required documents and participated in the intervention and post-intervention interviews.

The researcher learned that asking people to sign a consent form that involved a videotaped intervention and interview repelled a few prospective participants for unknown reasons. The fact that the participants knew the researcher and the assurance that no one else would see the videos were not enough to make them feel at ease participating. Thus, they respectfully declined the invitation.

Additionally, the researcher learned that offering \$5 gift cards did nothing to prompt people to turn in the preintervention questionnaire. She believes the dollar amount was too low. She also maintains that if she could distribute higher-value gift cards to the first member of each church who submit their completed consent form and preintervention questionnaire, that would have gotten recruiting off to a fast start. However, she learned from the Institutional Review Board that giving a gift card to the first person who completed the questionnaire was unfair according to federal research guidelines. As a result, the researcher refrained from that practice.

The researcher discovered that people enjoyed coming together in a safe, socially distant environment during this time of worldwide crisis. Although they had to wear face masks, the researcher heard comments that they enjoyed the fellowship and were happy to be out of the house around other people. It confirmed the researcher's belief that virtually communicating cannot be compared to in-person contact even if the face-to-face contact occurs six feet apart.

The researcher found that members of the district appreciate the professional setting. Multiple participants stated on the postintervention questionnaires that the atmosphere established by the researcher was professional, and the presentation was well-organized. The intervention was simultaneously organized, professional, and God-focused.

Through implementing the intervention portion of this action research project, the researcher discovered that church members are hungry for information and direction. They do not want to simply be told what their church is doing. The members also want to know how they can help in ways that include financial contributions. They also need to know how their support is positively impacting the overall vision of the church. Proverbs 4:7b instructs and informs believers to get an understanding. This instruction is precisely what the participants needed; an understanding of what a vision is, how it differs from a mission, and how it applies to their church membership and personal lives. They were very eager to learn, and spiritual nourishment was much needed.

Additionally, the researcher learned that testimonies are a powerful witnessing and motivational tool, even when discussing vision. According to Revelation 12:11, believers are made free by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. A significant impact is made when Christians share their testimonies of how they did not forsake their faith in Christ amid adversity. While it was not planned, the researcher shared several testimonies of hardships that she experienced, how she sought God for help, and depended on God for victory and deliverance. These testimonies clarified the researcher's teachings, such as choosing faith over fear and pressing forward to complete your God-given assignment even if you are afraid. Through sharing various testimonies, it was evident that the participants were enlightened and inspired. Surprisingly, they even burst into applause after hearing the testimony about how God blessed the researcher to triumph in a civil case. These testimonies reminded the hearers of the power of God and that he is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34 and Rom 2:11-16). Attendees were also prompted to remember God's faithfulness towards the righteous. He will be with them always (Matt 28:20).

This action research project contributes to churches' success within the district and churches that decide to adopt its findings. It has shown that properly educating church members on vision results in a substantial increase of awareness concerning the value and function of vision. It has also shown a direct correlation between excitement about vision and one's knowledge of it. When members of an organization get excited about the vision, the possibility of them supporting it increases.

### Study Replication

The researcher suggests replicating this study. She is confident that it can be executed effectively in the same manner in churches with 250 members or less and yield favorable results. Each step in the process is a building block for meaningful study on church vision. Interviewing the pastors before the intervention, makes the researcher aware of the perception of vision within senior leadership and the type of assistance they desire to effectuate their church's divine vision. The preintervention questionnaires are an integral part of the study because it gives the researcher insight into the congregation's thoughts concerning the vision and serving in ministry within their local church. With this information, the researcher can fashion an intervention in a neutral location that will address the audience's needs regarding how they respond to church vision utilizing expert and biblical references. The post-intervention questionnaires completed immediately following the intervention provide the researcher with fresh reactions from the attendees to the presented material. The post-intervention interviews reflect the participants' thoughts after having had time, usually a few days, to reflect on what they witnessed and learned during the intervention. It also presents a setting where the researcher and the participant can have a one-to-one conversation in which free speaking is prone to commence.



This study has helped the four churches in the Greater Berea District ignite a passion for vision amongst the members. Education, inspiration, and self-reflection were integral parts of the process. The researcher is confident that replicating this study will be substantially beneficial to other churches as well.

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## Appendix A

### Preintervention Questionnaire for District Church Members

Please circle the best-fitting answer.

- |   |      |    |          |     |
|---|------|----|----------|-----|
| 1. The church I attend has a vision statement.                              | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 2. I know the meaning of a vision statement.                                | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 3. Vision is mentioned in the Bible.  | TRUE |    | FALSE    |     |
| 4. I attend or used to attend a church with a vision statement.             | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 5. I believe having a church vision is important.                           | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 6. Visions are just for the world or corporate America.                     | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 7. God gives a vision for the church to the pastor.                         | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 8. I know the direction in which my church is going.                        | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 9. God gave Abraham, Nehemiah, and Moses a vision.                          | TRUE |    | FALSE    |     |
| 10. I get excited about doing new things for the Lord.                      | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 11. The company I work for has a vision statement.                          | YES  | NO | NOT SURE | N/A |
| 12. A vision statement is the same as a mission statement.                  | TRUE |    | FALSE    |     |
| 13. My church has a vision and we know what we need to do to accomplish it. |      |    |          |     |

YES   NO   NOT SURE

## Appendix B

### Postintervention Questionnaire for Intervention Participants

Please circle the best-fitting answer and write an answer where it is appropriate.

- |   |      |    |          |     |
|---|------|----|----------|-----|
| 1. The church I attend has a vision statement.  | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 2. I know the meaning of a vision statement.  | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 3. Vision is mentioned in the Bible.  | TRUE |    | FALSE    |     |
| 4. I attend or used to attend a church with a vision statement.                               | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 5. I believe having a church vision is important.   | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 6. Visions are just for the world or corporate America.                                       | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 7. God gives a vision for the church to the pastor.   | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 8. I know the direction in which my church is going.  | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 9. God gave Abraham, Nehemiah, and Moses a vision.  | TRUE |    | FALSE    |     |
| 10. I get excited about doing new things for the Lord.  | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 11. The company I work for has a vision statement.  | YES  | NO | NOT SURE | N/A |
| 12. A vision statement is the same as a mission statement.                                    | TRUE |    | FALSE    |     |
| 13. My church has a vision and we know what we need to do to accomplish it.                   | YES  | NO | NOT SURE |     |
| 14. Has the information presented today changed your perception of vision? If so, how?        | YES  |    | NO       |     |
| 15. Do you think the information presented today would benefit your local church? If so, how? | YES  |    | NO       |     |

16. Were your questions concerning vision answered today?    YES                      NO
17. Was there an area presented in which you would have                      YES                      NO  
liked more information? If yes, which area?
18. Please use this space to write any additional comments (optional).

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions for Pastors**

1. Do you have a church vision that you have shared with the congregation?
2. Is the vision written?
3. If yes, what is the vision for the ministry that you lead?
4. Approximately what percentage of the congregation is engaged in the vision?
5. How often is the vision shared with the congregation?
6. If you have a church vision, how long have you had it? Has it changed over the years? If so, how?
7. If you have an unexpressed vision, why has it not been shared with the membership?
8. Has there been any progress made towards the realization of the vision? If yes, please explain.
9. What role does your leadership team play in advancing the church vision?
10. Do you believe at least 80% of the membership understands what a vision is and its biblical foundation?
11. What assistance do you need with increasing membership engagement in helping the vision come to fruition?

## **Appendix D**

### **Postintervention Participant Interview**

1. What did you find helpful about the intervention?
2. Do you have any lingering questions? If so, what are they?
3. Have you given your pastor any feedback concerning the intervention?
4. What do you think is important to casting and following a vision?
5. Since the intervention, has your level of excitement relating to vision increased, decreased, or remained the same? Please explain.
6. In general, what do you believe your role is concerning supporting the vision of your local church?
7. What is one way that leaders can get people excited about vision?
8. Since the intervention, has a vision been introduced or revisited at your local church?
9. Do you believe that God is currently an advocate of vision? If so, in what way?
10. Do you have any additional comments? If so, please share them.



## **Appendix E**

### **Case Study #1**

Pastor Mike believes that the Lord is leading his church to open a clinic for low- and no-income families. He is apprehensive about presenting this vision to the congregation of about fifty people.

Determine Pastor Mike's next steps. Briefly describe how Pastor Mike should present the vision to the congregation if he decides to tell them.

## **Appendix F**

### **Case Study #2**

Pastor Richardson has been teaching a series on the Great Commission. God has given him the vision to focus heavily on international outreach ministry.

How should Pastor Richardson present this vision to the congregation in a manner that would get them excited and engaged in the vision? What should he say? What should he do?

## Appendix G

### Case Study #3

It's August. In January, Pastor Hale presented a vision to the church that focused on Matthew 25:36-40.

<sup>6</sup> I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink?' <sup>38</sup> When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? <sup>39</sup> Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

However, none of the leaders in the church has taken the initiative to effect change in these areas. What could possibly be the issue? What can he do to gain support from the leadership team?

## Appendix H

### Pastor Permission Request

May 22, 2020

Pastor [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling degree. The title of my research project is Becoming Fitly Joined Together: Unifying the Church Body for Vision Manifestation and the purpose of my research is to increase awareness within the four churches in the district concerning the value and function of having a vision. Through a one-day intervention, it will show how a vision supports the work of the church which enables it to be more fruitful along with providing a biblical foundation showing that God is a proponent and encourager of vision. Vision promotes excitement and cohesiveness within a group or organization. Additionally, this study explores the impact from a church utilizing a vision versus a church not utilizing a vision. It also looks at the importance of having a vision that is properly presented by church leaders to congregants.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of your church to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to complete the attached questionnaires, attend a one-day intervention (class), and participate in an interview. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Keisha T. Hodge  
Doctor of Ministry Candidate

## Appendix I

### Pastor Verbal/Electronic Recruitment Letter

Dear Greater Berea District Pastor:

As a student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to discover the difference in the level of support that church members have for the concept of vision when they are properly educated on the term and provided with a biblical basis. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants in this portion of the study must be a pastor of a church in the Greater Berea District. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an interview – The interview will last no longer than an hour. It will be video recorded and can take place in person or via Zoom. We can schedule the interview today. If that is not feasible, please call me at [REDACTED] to schedule the interview.

Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

A consent form is attached to this document. The consent form contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent form and return it to me in person, email it to [REDACTED], or mail it to [REDACTED]. The consent form should be returned prior to the scheduled interview.

Sincerely,

Keisha T. Hodge  
Doctor of Ministry Candidate

[REDACTED]

## **Appendix J**

### **Member Verbal/Electronic Recruitment Letter**

Dear Fellow Member of the Greater Berea District:

As a student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to discover the difference in the level of support that church members have for the concept of vision when they are properly educated on the term and provided with a biblical basis. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and a member of a church within the Greater Berea District. Participants, if willing, will be asked to do the following things:

1. Answer two questionnaires – One before the intervention and the other at the conclusion of the intervention. The first questionnaire will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete and the second questionnaire will take approximately fifteen to thirty minutes to complete.
2. Attend the one-day intervention (class) on the concept of vision from 10 am to 3:15 pm. This class will provide information concerning what a vision is and its components along with a biblical basis for vision.
3. Participate in an interview – The interview will last no longer than an hour. It will be video recorded. Twenty individuals will be needed for individual postintervention interviews and will be selected on a voluntary basis at the conclusion of the one-day intervention.


Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to begin participation, please complete the attached questionnaire and return it by handing it to me, emailing it to [REDACTED], or mailing it to [REDACTED] by September 13, 2020. Interviews will be scheduled on the day of the intervention (class).

A consent form is attached to this document. The consent form contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent form and return it to me along with your completed questionnaire.

There will be a \$5 gift card given to all participants who submit a completed preintervention questionnaire before the deadline. Gift cards will immediately be given to all participants who submit their completed preintervention questionnaire in person. Gift cards will be mailed to all those who submit the preintervention questionnaire electronically or by mail. Intervention participants will be given a continental breakfast and refreshments throughout the day.

Sincerely,

Keisha T. Hodge  
Doctor of Ministry Candidate  


## Appendix K

### Pastor Consent Form

#### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Becoming Fitly Joined Together: Unifying the Church Body for Vision Manifestation

**Principal Investigator:** Keisha T. Hodge, Doctor of Ministry candidate, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old and a pastor of a church within the Greater Berea District. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to increase awareness within the four churches in the district concerning the value and function of having a vision. Through a one-day intervention, it will show how a vision supports the work of the church which enables it to be more fruitful along with providing a biblical foundation showing that God is a proponent and encourager of vision.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in an interview. The interview will last no longer than an hour. It will be video recorded.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely. Only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by using codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.



## Appendix L

### Church Member Consent Form

#### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Becoming Fitly Joined Together: Unifying the Church Body for Vision Manifestation

**Principal Investigator:** Keisha T. Hodge, Doctor of Ministry candidate, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old and a member of a church within the Greater Berea District. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to increase awareness within the four churches in the district concerning the value and function of having a vision. Through a one-day intervention, it will show how a vision supports the work of the church which enables it to be more fruitful along with providing a biblical foundation showing that God is a proponent and encourager of vision.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Answer two questionnaires – One before the intervention and the other at the conclusion of the intervention. The first questionnaire will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete and the second questionnaire will take approximately fifteen to thirty minutes to complete.
2. Attend the one-day intervention (class) on the concept of vision from 10 AM to 3:15 PM. The class will provide information concerning what a vision is and its components along with a biblical basis for vision.
3. Participate in an interview – The interview will last no longer than an hour. It will be video recorded. Twenty participants will be needed for individual postintervention interviews and will be selected on a voluntary basis at the conclusion of the one-day intervention.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are an increase in knowledge on the topic of vision and its biblical basis.

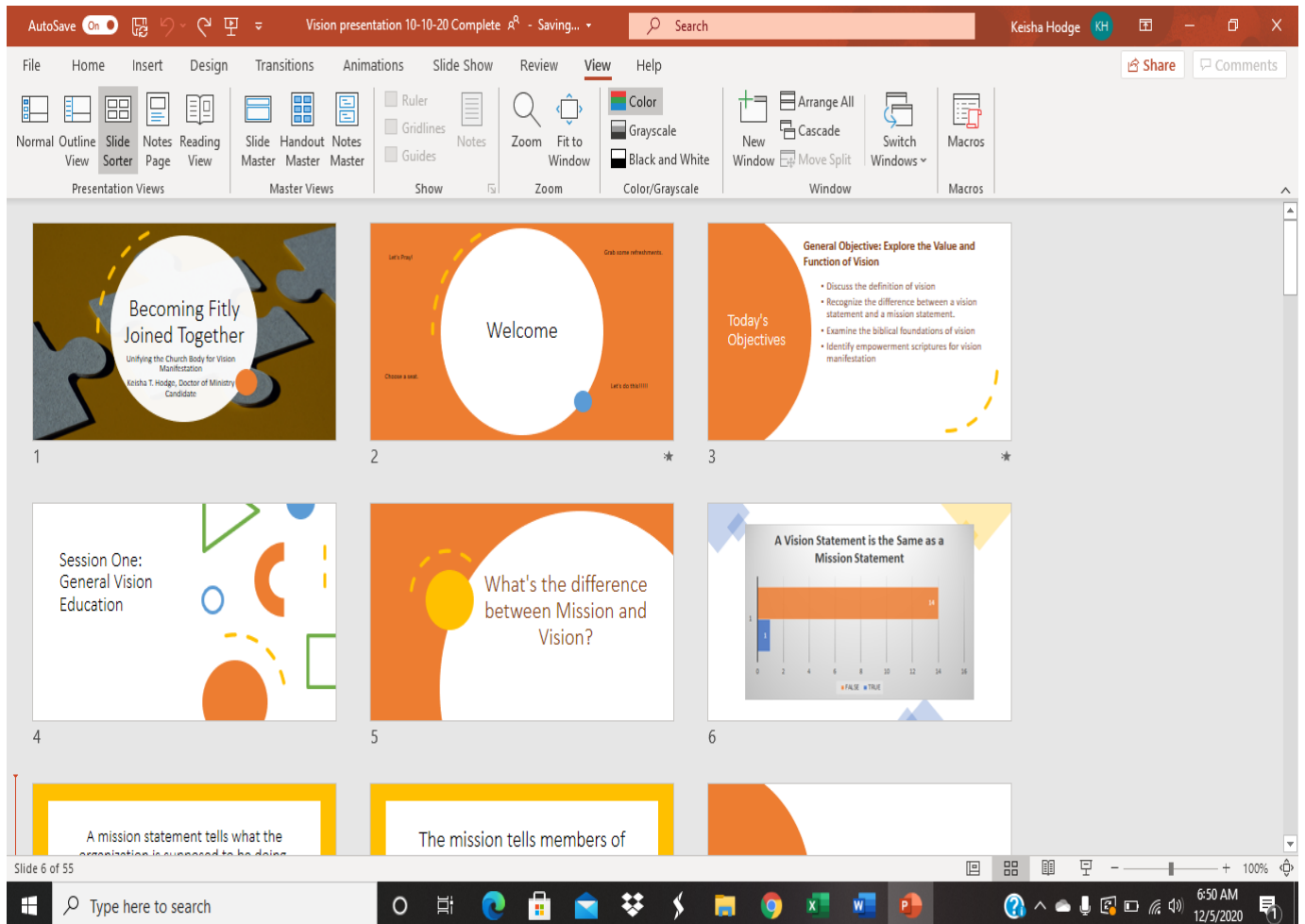
#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

## Appendix M

### Intervention PowerPoint Presentation (Pages 149-154)



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7 A mission statement tells what the organization is supposed to be doing. As the church, our overall mission is to MAKE DISCIPLES.

8 The mission tells members of an organization what they should do and the vision provides a vivid picture of it.

9 Missional Scriptures  
• Matthew 28:19-20  
• Mark 16:15  
• Luke 24:45-49  
• Acts 1:8

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

11 "...Go ye INTO ALL THE WORLD, and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature."  
St. Mark 16:15

12 What is Vision?  
How would you define it?

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13 I KNOW THE MEANING OF A VISION STATEMENT

14 "Write the *vision*; make it plain on tablets, so he may *read* who reads it. For *still* the *vision* awaits its appointed time; it *hardens* to the end—it *will not lie*. If it seems slow, *wait for it*; it will surely come; it *will not delay*."  
Habakkuk 2:2-3

15 Vision: a coherent, challenging depiction of a ministry's future, as one believes that it can and must be

16 Vision Statements  
• We're a multi-cultural church that seeks to make fully devoted followers of Christ. Christ Fellowship (Miami, FL)  
• To make and deploy mature and equipped followers of Christ for the sake of family, community and global transformation. Newborn Church (Johns Creek, GA)  
• To bring Christ to their world business. "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the oppressed and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of reparation for all. He has sent me to comfort all who grieve, and to provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bind up those who have a broken heart, to give them a crown of praise instead of the spirit of despair. They will be called righteous, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor."—Isaiah 61:1-3 (New Century Bible, Nashville)

17 Mission  
The vision supports the mission.

18 Break Time

Session 2 Biblical Foundations:

GOD GAVE ABRAHAM, NEHEMIAH, AND MOSES A VISION

Slide 6 of 55

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Session 2 Biblical Foundations: Examples of Vision in the Bible

19

GOD GAVE ABRAHAM, NEHEMIAH, AND MOSES A VISION

20

God's Vision for Abraham

The Abrahamic Covenant

21

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who curse you, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

22

Abraham showed us that living out the vision takes

- Faith (the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen)
- Trust in God
- Endurance
- Focus
- Persistence
- Action

23

God's Vision for Nehemiah

Build the Wall - Secure Jerusalem

24

During the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was set before him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had never been sad in his presence, so the king said to me, "Why are you sad, when you aren't sick? This is nothing but depression."

I was overwhelmed with fear and replied to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should I not be sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

The king, with the queen seated beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you return?" So I gave him a definite time, and it pleased the king to send me. I also said to the king: "If it pleases the king, let me have letters written to the governors of the region west of the Euphrates River, so that they will grant me safe passage until I reach Judah."

So I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned down. Come, let's rebuild Jerusalem's wall, so that we will no longer be a disgrace." I told them how the gracious hand of my God had been on me, and what the king had said to me. They said, "Let's start rebuilding," and they were encouraged to do the good work.

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Nehemiah Chapters 2:1-3

25

Nehemiah 2:6-7

26

Nehemiah 2:17-18

27

What can we learn from Nehemiah?

- Do it afraid.
- Walk in integrity. Be trustworthy.
- Ask for help.
- Favor accompanies God's vision.
- Use wisdom.
- Don't be distracted by naysayers.
- Stay focused. People will mock you and despise you, but keep building.
- Depend on and trust in God for success.

28

God's Vision for Moses

Speak for My People

29

Exodus 3:7-8

Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I know about their sufferings. I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the territory of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

30

11 But Moses asked God, "Who am I that I should go on ahead of Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?"

12 He answered, "I will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you have come out of Egypt, you will see the Lord on the mountain of Sinai."

What can we

- God uses imperfect people for vision manifestation.
- God will do through us what we thought

Slide 6 of 55

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31 Exodus 3:11-14

32 What can we learn from Moses's Experience with God?

- God uses imperfect people for vision manifestation.
- God will do through you what you thought you could not do. Remember, Moses had a speech impediment.
- As long as the I AM sent you, the vision will come to fruition.

33 Session 3 Biblical Foundations: Scriptures to Encourage and Empower the Believer

34 Has your pastor expressed a vision for the church and you think it's too BIG?

35 WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE MATTHEW 19:26

36 Fear of man and the unknown

- Deactivates faith
- Hinders progress
- Steals peace

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37 Parable of the Talents

38

39 Matt. 25:16-18 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. (17) And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. (18) But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

40 The Consequences of Being Fearfully Stagnant

- The one talent that the man had was taken away.
- The master was not pleased.
- The unprofitable, fearful servant was cast into darkness.

41 Trust in the LORD and do good Psalm 37:3

42 Faithbuilding Activities are Essential

- Listen to the Word of God.
- Speak the Word of God.
- Read the Word of God out loud.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ROMANS 10:17

Truly, truly, I say to you, He that believes on me,

My Church has a Vision and We Know What We Need to do to Accomplish It

If You're Unsure...

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43 Truly, truly, I say to you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do... —John 14:12

44 My Church has a Vision and We Know What We Need to do to Accomplish It

45 If You're Unsure... ASK

46 I've searched about the internet and can't find what I need... I can't find what I need... I can't find what I need... I can't find what I need...

47 Remember...

48 TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT YOUR PATHS. PROVERBS 3:5-6

Matthew 21:21-22 21 Jesus answered them, "I assure you: If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

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49 Matthew 21:21-22 21 Jesus answered them, "I assure you: If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

50 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Matthew 17:20

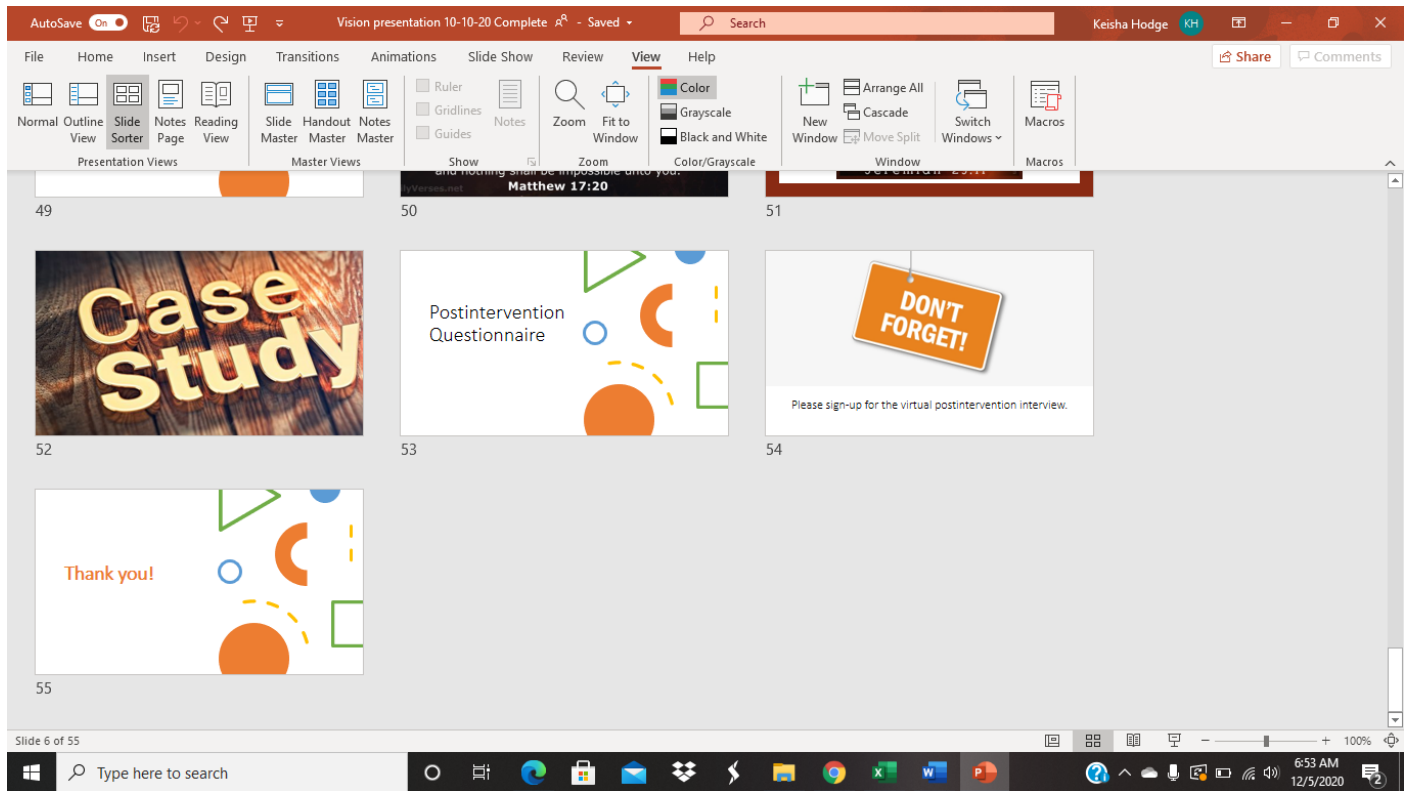
51 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Jeremiah 29:11

52 Case Study

53 Postintervention Questionnaire

54 DON'T FORGET! Please sign-up for the virtual postintervention interview.

Slide 6 of 55 Type here to search 6:53 AM 12/5/2020



## Appendix N

### IRB

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 17, 2020

Keisha Hodge

Daphne Washington

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-446 Becoming Fitly Joined Together: Unifying the Church Body for Vision Manifestation

Dear Keisha Hodge, Daphne Washington:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent forms can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. These forms should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent documents should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.



If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

**Research Ethics Office**