

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

A Groundbreaking Christian Ministry Study on The Authority of God Among Independent Churches in Mid-Atlantic America

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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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The commandments and covenants in the Bible are important in Christian ministry. Defining these aspects may cultivate Christian organizations such as Christian citizenship and Christian organizational is vital in addressing the fabric of designing a loving and ethical culture built on the commandments and covenants. This includes love God, love one's neighbor or love one another. Designing a strong and integrity driven culture and showing how love should be put in operation in the church such as how a Christian leader views the actions and policies of the church. In return, this can create a love God design for churches that is based on the great commandment. This thesis will introduce multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry in defining and attempting to discover the key elements of becoming and maintaining the commandments and covenants in the modern-day church.

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Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

God the Father sets forth commandments and covenants in the Bible and gives specific direction for the world through scripture. But there are multiple perspectives in the world that challenge biblical canon or scripture including challenging the Christian belief system on how people should live in the world. In the modern world, there are multiple perspectives inside and outside of ministry, but should the church take the approach of bringing in outside perspectives into the church? The challenge to scripture is in the very existence of certain laws of the land and the Christian needs to understand the authority of God through the use of scripture. This includes the influencing of laws through various means and the influence that the Christian can have in the modern world. On one hand, biblical canon or scripture gives love-specific commandments to love God as the first and great commandment, and to love one's neighbor or one another as the second commandment. On the other hand, the modern world focuses more on self. In many ways the Christian belief system challenges modern laws and Christianity finds itself in modern discourse such as debating the application of the Bible to modern society. Modern discourse is the multiple factions of society that is attempting to create alternative viewpoints in the present existence of the world such as legal, business, political, and other related environments. Many times, the Christian belief system finds itself in the middle of conflict and much discourse on what is right or wrong. Some environments that claim to be Christian argue how scripture should be implemented. Non-Christian environments argue whether any scripture should be allowed in the public and professional world. This includes modern laws which are considered the governing law instead of scripture as the law of the land. So, the authority of God in scripture is

the focal point on how and why biblical canon has a place in modern society. The discussion on the authority and truthfulness of scripture lays the groundwork for what is acceptable or unacceptable in the public and professional world and how this applies to one's spirit in the Christian belief system. For example, when a Christian works in a non-Christian environment he or she is expected to operate from the perspective of the employer and the employer may not be Christian. The Christian may be expected to do things from the non-Christian perspective in the daily responsibilities of the person's work-related activities that may be viewed as non-Christian from the perspective of the Bible. This applies to what is acceptable or unacceptable in the public and professional world because the Christian is charged with the commandment to love God. God in the Bible is described as a spirit. The Christian needs to connect to the spirit of God through love. The Christian is commanded to love God over all things and that includes loving God over those who are considered employers of Christians or in a position of authority over a person, so the authority and truthfulness of scripture needs to be in the way the Christian conducts oneself in one's own spirit in the Christian belief system.

Action Research

This action research is the process of focusing on a Christian theme in which participants are given the opportunity to focus in on their own practices, and specific to the researcher to set an inquiry and to examine, and to search for a solution or solutions to a problem for one's own context of practicing ministry in the modern context. This research will be applied to the divinity studies which includes ministry, theology, and apologetics, to name some, and this will be linked to critical reflection of ministry. For example, *Action Research* by Ernest T. Stringer mentions, that there is a tendency to incorporate the values and agendas of the corporate world and this in turn can lead to social, cultural, emotional, and spiritual issues fading into obscurity in the

world.¹ Incorporating the values and agendas of the world into the church may lead to conflict in the church. The truth and love that exists in Jesus Christ is the way of the Christian. This includes the Christian withstanding challenges from those inside and those outside of the church.

Stringer explains regarding thinking, reflecting, and analysis that a person needs to be allowed to think about all of the aspects of a situation that relates to their own situation and that the person needs to be able to critically examine all of the features of their own setting so that they can fashion effective solutions to the problems that they may have to confront.² On the other hand, *Action Research* by Eileen Ferrance mentions, that in most cases, action research refers to a disciplined inquiry that is done by a teacher with the purpose that the research will be included in his or her practices in the future.³ Ferrance shows steps in action research and they are (1) Identification of problem area, (2) Collection and organization of data, (3) Interpretation of data, (4) Action based on data, and (5) Reflection.⁴ In the case of one's own thesis, action research is specific to teaching and preaching in ministry on the commandments and covenants set forth in the Bible. The research inquiry of this thesis is to engage the academic community on the commandments and covenants in the Bible. The focus of the thesis is the great commandment to love God and the second commandment to love one's neighbor or one another mentioned by Jesus Christ in the biblical canon or sixty-six books in the Bible. This includes setting forth actions for the Christian to follow the scripture in the modern world when the commandments and covenants are challenged in multiple contexts in one's own life.

¹ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2014), 29.

² Stringer, 135.

³ Eileen Ferrance, *Action Research* (Providence: The Education Alliance at Brown University, 2000), 1.

⁴ Ferrance, 9-14.

Action research can be used in the context of institutional and organizational roles such as that of administrators, teachers, social workers, and other types of practitioners when setting controls and rules where they may not understand that every participant will see the texts according to their own framework of understanding. For example, rules may be set but people will understand and have their own perspective of the rules according to their own life or framework and that is why it is important to give clear guidance on what the researcher intends to do. The role of this action research is to attach the context of ministry and academic to understanding the multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry.

In ministry, people can become normalized to doing something a certain way, but this action research is to challenge those in ministry to become more focused and more in tune with God by practicing what Jesus Christ commanded one to do and that is to love God. Some of those in the Christian community can become stagnate and follow others instead of following God. People in the modern world have many interpretations on how the world should operate and this leads to disharmonious relationships which can turn out to be unproductive and this includes many interpretations between Christian communities and outside communities who do not necessarily adhere to Christianity.

One would say that rather researching in professional or public life, that one needs to address and work to provide solutions that are valuable to one's own local ministry. Biblical solutions are integral in this research to build a community that focuses in on God and centers in on why Jesus Christ commanded the world to love God. A dialogue is needed to bridge a divide within the Christian community that centers around the biblical canon and to document why some Christian communities may not view scripture as authoritative. This is important to construct a research project that is designed to maintain a Christian community that views the

Bible as authoritative. The modern Christian has been influenced by contemporary culture and the church is significant in leading people to Jesus Christ so starting a dialogue is important for the Christian community.

Ministry Context

The ministry context will be researched and conducted in an independent church community within one's own ministry context. This will be within a smaller group of independent local ministry that may include more than one state across the United States of America. The churches will be independent. The importance of the ministry is for the church to identify what outside factors may be contributing to the church and if any outside factors are contributing to the church how does those outside factors align with biblical canon in truth and love of the sixty-six books of the Bible. So, the direction that this ministry context will take on how is the local church operating based on the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture.

For one's own study, one of the key stakeholders are those inside the church who call themselves Christians. One plans to observe this through the social context through action research and academic research in combination and individually. One core aspect is to look at this through the perspective of pastors, chaplains, or congregants who serve in ministry, theology, and apologetics related positions involved in the church and in academia. This lens provides a combination and individual perspective of reflective journaling that can identify ways to address multiple perspectives of ministry. This includes how the first and great commandment and second commandment can influence the lives of modern-day Christians. A significant ministry context is deciding on if the questions are something that may have a significant impact in ministry and on the participants. How does a pastor influence congregants and non-

congregants? The Christian environment is a ministry context, which may create a sense of multiple perspectives in multiple environments and contexts including in academia, but it is worth the reflection and it is worth searching for biblical solutions. For example, a pastor who is looked upon by a small group of Christians may utilize all types of teaching perspectives, but how does one in ministry utilize the importance of love God and love one's neighbor or love one another when the two commandments may conflict with each other at different times?

One's own ministry context in most cases cannot mean the United States unless one is directly leading a nationwide ministry. In this case, one's own ministry is referring to delivering the authority of God in scripture to people across state lines that may be in the form of Bibles, sermons, or written messages that a congregation or in a circle of Christians targeting a nationwide audience. The United States is broad, but this does not mean this research cannot apply to an issue that the United States is facing or internationally. Hence, one is looking to research a problem in the contemporary church, which means this researcher will attempt to reach out to churches or those who identify as a Christian and these people may or may not be in a different state, and this research will create a framework that outside nations may choose to follow in following the commandments of God in the Bible. This researcher will reach out to those claiming Christianity and then present how this research can be applied to the United States as a whole and beyond. Thus, this research will speak to a broader research problem and apply it to the local church and speak to pastors, chaplains, congregants in churches, organizations, or fellowships, that may or may not be in other states. For example, if one church or Christian organization provides multiple perspectives from different participants then this may be suitable to apply to the whole research as it may provide enough information on multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry for this thesis project.

Problem Presented

The problem is that the modern person is challenged with multiple perspectives on biblical canon. The problem being discussed will be how the modern Christian person has been influenced by contemporary culture and how can the Christian community influence Christians and non-Christians. The modern-day Christian needs a biblical perspective in a contemporary life of multiple perspectives. The Christian is faced with multiple perspectives and the modern-day Christian is constantly challenged by unbelieving communities and in some cases the Christian is faced with challenges from those who claim to be a member of the Christian community on different issues affecting the church. The church is faced with multiple perspectives in a contemporary Christian community in which the sixty-six books of the Bible are not viewed authoritatively by multiple communities. The modern-day Christian needs to understand how to maintain the Christian belief system from biblical canon in a contemporary time of multiple perspectives on the sixty-six books of the Bible. This will address working together in the contemporary church in achieving a stronger and healthier Christian community. This will be narrowed down to a local group of Christians in an independent church community within one's church ministry context. This will be within a smaller group of independent local ministry.

One of the target areas of the problem presented is to identify the problem. This specific thesis is to set a theme in Christian academia as an aspect of society that is in the position to address the problem. Breaking ground on this research and starting to research and discuss the relevance of love God in modern society needs to influence the Christian community to focus in on God. Academia is one of the environments where multiple perspectives are encouraged. The differing opinions can lead to different opinions or approaches on a subject matter. Academia is a

community and environment that pursues research, education, and scholarship in different themes in education. In this case, since this thesis will originate from the Christian academic world, it would be an ideal place to receive responses from pastors, chaplains, or congregants in a local church or churches. One pursued DMIN research at Liberty University in pursuit of research, education, and scholarship and this research will be applied to addressing this topic.

In the modern world, it is encouraged for one to think the way that he or she wants, and this causes conflict in ministry. For the Christian educator or teacher, the Bible should be the guide to reflection in one's own life. The target population for this thesis is the seeking of answers to the questions from one's own contemporary pastors, chaplains, or congregants who operate in a local church. The surveys will be assigned individually and independently through the participants association with the chosen Christian community which will be seeking responses from one's own local church including Christian fellowships and this research will be applied to the research in the Doctor of Ministry courses including in the theology and apologetics cognate, and who are or were in ministry or still in some form of ministry leadership. The topic will be centered on the first and great commandment to love God and the second commandment to love one's neighbor or one another. This will be considered the convenient sample.

The target area of the problem is to provide a random sample. The surveys will be assigned individually and independently through the participants association with the chosen Christian community which will be seeking responses from those in Christian ministry and may not be in one's own Christian associations, and who are or were in ministry or still some form of ministry leadership. The theme will be centered on the first and great commandment to love God

and the second commandment to love one's neighbor or one another. This will be considered the random sample.

These sampling steps are designed to receive multiple perspectives on ministry regarding the first and great commandment and the second commandment and to collect, organize, interpret, and gather data designed for reflection. These mechanisms are provided to implement a Christian ethical system that will address the core of the thesis and explaining the problem through biblical solutions. This research will be a culmination of one's own study at Liberty University to have collective responses from those in ministry and applied to academia and for this researcher to develop a systematic and strong process of research to understand the gap in information and application on multiple perspectives in ministry literature and information.

The process that one has designed will provide reflection on loving God including focusing in on the love of God. Through this research, this researcher plans on creating and developing new strategies for the benefit of the church. This includes the Christian community that this researcher lives in. The Christian academic environment is important in attaching directly to the church in formulating and implementing strategy on the first and great commandment to love God and the second commandment to love one's neighbor or love one another. For ministry, appropriately applying scripture to life and teaching and preaching to others correctly is a true method of love God and love one's neighbor or love one another. For example, *Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Human Subject Research* by Lawrence O. Gostin mentions in discussing justice, that researchers need to consider the advantages of equitable distribution to research subjects and others who may benefit from the knowledge gained from the

research.⁵ This research is designed to address a problem in Christian ministry and to break ground on a problem and apply research that may benefit this problem presented inside and outside of the church.

Purpose Statement

The purpose for this DMIN action research thesis is to address common multiple perspectives facing the Christian community and how to constructively maintain a Christian community that views the biblical canon or the sixty-six books of the Bible as authoritative. Biblical tradition is important for one's own community. This will be applied to local ministry in addressing a problem in the theology and apologetics discipline within the church from a Christian perspective. For example, *From Topic to Thesis* by Michael Kibbe mentions his sources suggested two specific texts. The texts are, the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1 for its many parallels with the crucifixion narrative, and the conflict between Jesus and the temple authorities in Mark 12-13 (with the tearing of the temple veil as the climax of that conflict).⁶ These are some biblical canon highlighted in the literature on this subject matter. In addition, *Qualitative Research* by Tim Sensing explains do not dismiss other perspectives as not applicable and to concentrate on making one's stated position persuasive.⁷ This will be approached from the action research approach with practical theology and contextual theology. Contextual theology in the fact that the church in all the ages has adapted to the culture in which it finds itself existing. In this case, the church existing in contemporary culture in which certain laws of the land have been

⁵ Lawrence O. Gostin, "Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Human Subject Research: Population-Based Research and Ethics," *Law, Medicine & Health Care*, vol. 19(3-4) (1991): 191.

⁶ Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 81.

⁷ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for the Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 149.

enacted in defining and determining the actions of the church and the influence of the church. This includes the influence in which ministry is constrained or challenged. Practical theology in the light of the influence that is based on the influence that contemporary culture has had on a local ministry and the influence that one's Christian community can have locally and worldwide.⁸ One of the many examples that addressed multiple perspectives is that of Ephesians 4:14-15 when speaking truth in love.⁹ The other positions will be viewed from the literature and application of some who have multiple perspectives that at times provide multiple perspectives on and with the biblical canon in the contemporary day life.

Basic Assumptions

Assumptions are usually looked at as true but there is no concrete evidence or truth that the assumption may be true. For example, sometimes when a researcher uses a certain population, they may assume this will make the study more accurate, but it does not necessarily mean that the study is more accurate because a certain population was used. *Making Disciples Across Cultures* by Charles A. Davis mentions, that what is needed is a set of universal disciple-making principles on which the cultural and theological assumptions can precipitate the patterns and methods of common behavior in church and by the church leaders and explains that this needs to be true for all cultures although the methods may be carried out differently.¹⁰ Universal principles could be looked at as fundamental truth that serves as a foundation and in this case

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages or biblical scripture references in this thesis project will be from the King James Version of the Bible.

⁹ Ephesians 4:14-15. This book explains that the body of Christ should walk in unity, and the children should no longer be tossed to and from and carried about with every wind and doctrine by the cunningness and craftiness of deceitfulness and that by speaking in truth in love may grow up in all things who is the head, Christ.

¹⁰ Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 22.

Christianity within a system for adherence to set commandments and covenants made by God. There is much debate what truth is the truth that should be followed and what perspective out of multiple perspectives is the correct perspective. This is a discussion between cultural and theological and even apologetic assumptions and approaches. It is assumed that each group rather Christian or not believes that their truth is the truth although the specified truth may be misguided in some form or fashion when it conflicts with biblical canon or scripture. When it comes to different independent Christian groups, some belief systems may be founded on historical background of the church or its church founders, while other Christian groups may have formed a more modern approach to the current freedoms expressed in contemporary life. Upbringing, sometimes academic teaching, or philosophy may be ingrained in those who lead different ministries and there are different realities and philosophies that are associated with independent Christian groups. For example, the academic world teaches from multiple perspectives. The academic world mostly teaches from a perspective that is inclusive of all groups and societies. On the other hand, Christian universities teach from a Christian perspective although different Christian universities have different philosophies.

In some cases, the local church becomes what a person has been taught outside of the church such as in his or her church or in an academic setting, which may form what ministers teaches in ministry. This becomes his or her truth in which they believe as their own truth. So, it may be assumed that in some cases the outside world can connect to the inside of the church. This can also be applied to other social contexts including legal and business environments which sometimes find themselves at odds with the church. The multiple belief systems can focus on what ministers has seen or has been taught in life which may determine how ministers interprets the scripture. The modern world is built on the fundamental belief of incorporating

multiple ethics into different parts of life. This includes combining what some say are the best parts of multiple systems in the management of the multicultural world to make and enact a system built on multiple perspectives and ethics. This can be seen in the academic world, the business world, the legal world, and even in the multiple Christian perspectives. So, the theory and practice of the church needs to be fundamentally built into a higher purpose. The modern world assumes that multiple perspectives is a way of the intellectual from a philosophical approach, but the church cannot take for granted or make assumptions on the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. Multiple perspectives in ministry causes for doubts to be raised in the Christian community and leads to conflicting ideals. Therefore, multiple perspectives, philosophies, and belief systems internally and externally of the church needs to be addressed.

The participants will be male and female, although there is no way one can tell the gender of a person by name, looks, profession, or other characteristics because these factors are not conclusive evidence that a person is the gender that they identify with in modern time. In some cases, this can be considered inconclusive based on the multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. For example, in modern time, the genetics of a person and the biology of people is a matter of opinion in contrast to traditional methods of how a person may have been born such as male and female or how someone may be named or in another way of looking at this assumption is if someone can physically give birth to a child or cannot physically give birth to a child. These are some factors that contribute to the discussion of male and female and there are many factors that contribute to the discussion of who is male and female in the modern world. The Bible is the measuring stick for this thesis. Genesis 1:27 says that God created man in his own image and that

he created male and female.¹¹ One of the characteristics of how the Bible depicts male and female is in Genesis 4:1-2 and Genesis 4:25.¹² This scripture explains that the wife of Adam named Eve who is identified as she gave birth. This researcher only had male professors at Liberty University and one only saw male video presenters and video lecturers in the Doctor of Ministry program with masculine names at Liberty University, but the small group will be simplified to pastors, chaplains, congregants who choose to participate in one's own research questions without the conclusive evidence of what the gender of someone may be. This researcher had male and female cohorts or fellow students in the Doctor of Ministry program with masculine and feminine names at Liberty University, so the small group will not be Liberty University School of Divinity, but will be simplified to pastors, chaplains, congregants, who choose to participate in one's own research questions without the conclusive evidence of what the gender of someone may be.

In the case of one's own studies in the Doctor of Ministry program in Theology and Apologetics, this researcher only had male professors at Liberty University and one only saw male video presenters and video lecturers in the DMIN program with masculine names but one had fellow students who had male and female names and when this project is applied to a local ministry the small group may be male and female providing multiple perspectives that may be simplified to those who are males and females but this researcher does not have conclusive evidence of what the gender of someone may be. These assumptions had to be addressed

¹¹ Genesis 1:27. This book outlines the biblical narrative of God creating man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.

¹² Genesis 4:1-2, Genesis 4:25. This book in Genesis chapter 4 outlines the biblical narrative and explains that the wife of Adam named Eve who is identified as she gave birth and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, Abel, and later on she gave birth to Seth and the wife of Adam who was Eve said God appointed her another seed instead of Abel, who Cain slew (killed) shown in the Bible.

regarding this research study to address any outside perspectives that may arise regarding this thesis.

Definitions

This section identifies key terms that are used in this DMIN thesis research project. The definitions provide an understanding to the terms used the most in this thesis to direct the reader on the key terms.

Biblical Canon

Biblical canon refers to the sixty-six books in the Bible that have passed the test. Canon means rule. To be specific, when biblical canon is stated in this thesis paper, this means the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament consists of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The New Testament consists of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

Christian

Christian is a broad term that identifies someone who claims to believe in the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ. Acts 11:25-26 shows when the disciples became known as Christians.¹³ This scripture shows the disciples assembling themselves the whole year with the

¹³ Acts 11:25-26. This book explains that when Barnabas was seeking Saul and when he found him, he brought him unto Antioch and they assembled themselves that whole year with the church and taught many people and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

church and teaching many people just as Jesus Christ did and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch as scripture says.

How do some define Christian? In contemporary time, some people say that they are a Christian, but they may profess and proclaim alternative viewpoints when it comes to their own public life, professional life, and private life. For example, in politics, someone may claim that they are a Christian but when it comes to enacting laws and/or supporting laws, they do not enact and support the commandments and covenants of God but instead they enact laws and support laws that separate people from the laws of God. In other words, some who claim to be a Christian go against what the Bible says and some in modern day refuse to accept certain parts of the Bible as truth and some enact laws and/or support laws that clearly go against scripture while at the same time claiming to be a Christian. As the scripture explains, a Christian is someone assembling themselves for the purpose of Jesus Christ and if someone is assembling themselves or claiming Christianity, that person will adhere to the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ and the Bible in its entirety.

In a modern world, where some use human arbitration to settle disputes outside the courts, the Christian alternatively will ask God for guidance in settling disputes and the Christian will seek direction from God to provide leadership to respond to opposers of the faith. The Christian does not give away one's faith through agreeance, the Christian loves God and holds on to God. The one that a Christian should trust with the responsibility of guiding them through life is the God who sent Jesus Christ to save the world so that the world would not perish but have everlasting life.¹⁴

¹⁴ John 3:16. This book explains that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life.

The definition of Christian requires a serious commitment to living a life committed to God. The Christian is challenged to follow the model that God enacted through Jesus Christ. In Christianity, the Christian is held to the commandments and covenants that God enacted and put in place and the Christian is challenged to support the commandments and covenants of God and place them into one's own life and to turn away from anything that challenges the scripture. There is a personal obligation called obedience that comes with calling oneself a Christian. The true Christian does not concede in their own identity to others who oppose the faith when it comes to professing and proclaiming Jesus Christ. The identity of the true Christian is not their own individual identity connected to their own pursuits, but their identity is the identity created in existence with the love of God and model of Jesus Christ proclaiming and professing God in their whole existence.

The true Christian lovingly proclaims the name of God even when faced with adversity while not deviating from scripture regardless of the threat that may come to that specific person. This is what Jesus Christ did when he knew he had to go to the cross. Jesus Christ did not run, he did not make up an excuse to not do what God sent him to do, and he did not change his belief system so that the authorities of his time would not crucify him and send him to the cross. Jesus Christ knew that God was his saving force, and the Christian is placed in the same position in modern time to love God regardless of the physical outcome or bodily harm. For example, Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:4-5 shows that one should not fear those who can kill the body because they are not able to take the soul and one should fear the one who can take both.¹⁵ The outline of Christianity is in scripture. Also, Matthew 10:38 and Luke 14:27 show that the one

¹⁵ Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:4-5. These books show that one should not fear those who can kill the body because they are not able to take the soul, but one should fear the one who can take both.

who does not take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ is not worthy of Jesus Christ and cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ.¹⁶ This includes the modern-day Christian supporting Jesus Christ in their own public life, professional life, and private life and not going against scripture including supporting the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture. The model of Jesus Christ is the ultimate model for all Christians to join with God and to take comfort in him even when faced with aspects of life that may place one in uncomfortable positions. This leads to the coming together of the church in the modern day to love God and accept scripture as it has been written trusting in the revelation that God laid for the Christian to follow. Essentially, the Christian is put in place to enlist in the community of God and be as one with God and Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit comforting the Christian.

Church

Church throughout this paper refers to a group of born again baptized believers. This is a community of believers who assemble to publicly worship God no matter the territory, region, place, or system.

Conflict

There is no universally agreed upon definition for conflict. For this thesis, conflict will be defined as having an alternative perspective to someone else and regarding the church or ministry, having multiple perspectives within a ministry, or having an alternative perspective to that of the Bible. There are many scriptures that addresses conflict in some form or fashion. Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 shows the Lord's prayer, that identifies specific forms of

¹⁶ Matthew 10:38, Luke 14:27. These books show that the one who does not take up the cross for Jesus Christ is not worthy of him and cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

conflict and that is of debt, debtors, trespasses, and temptation, in pointing out these in the prayer that Jesus directed on how and what to pray.¹⁷

Another scripture that shows how to deal with conflict is in Psalm 71:3, which shows God is the one who protects someone from conflict.¹⁸ The only way to be delivered from conflict is through God himself. Conflict is found in the Bible and the source of deliverance is associated with God. The Old Testament and the New Testament identifies God as universally the source of deliverance from conflict and that is through seeking refuge in God. At times, someone may feel overwhelmed with the amount of conflict that they may see around them, but their own strong confidence comes in them joining with God not in them believing in oneself or conforming to social contexts that exist around them. There is importance in communicating with God through seeking him which can take the form of prayer to God and worship of God. Nobody can stand in the place of God, only God can be God. Deuteronomy 32:4 says that God is the rock, his work is perfect, his ways are judgment and truth without iniquity, and that he is just and right.¹⁹ The cross can be examined as an example of conflict. Going to the cross for Jesus Christ entailed extreme pain and suffering for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ loved God with all his heart, all his soul, all his might, and he went to the cross willingly.

Teamwork is a way of combatting conflict from an organizational perspective. A way of looking at conflict from an organizational perspective is to engage people and to see how people

¹⁷ Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4. These books show the Lord's prayer. In the Lord's prayer it is very specific when it says to pray that the will of the Father be done and the prayer mentions forgiveness of debts, those who trespass against others and not to lead someone into temptation. In addition, the Lord's prayer mention to deliver one from evil. This shows how to pray against conflict and sin that may arise in the lives of people.

¹⁸ Psalm 71:3. This verse shows that God is one's strong habitation, where one can continually resort, and that God has given the commandment to save one, for God is one's rock and fortress.

¹⁹ Deuteronomy 32:4. This verse shows that God is the rock, his work is perfect, his ways are judgment and truth without iniquity, and that he is just and right.

are getting along with each other. *Four Bible Passages About Teamwork* by Rick Warren mentions, four Bible passages about teamwork and explains that everybody is important in ministry not just one person.²⁰ For example, Warren mentions, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Nehemiah 4, Mark 6:7, and Acts 24, as examples of teamwork.²¹ This finds its way into many environments from encouraging people to work together. But how does the Christian approach this locally and worldwide when the Christian belief system is challenged in their own personal, professional, and private lives. In contemporary culture, there is a history of conflict between people across different belief systems on how scripture applies in the modern context. It is an ongoing debate on how biblical canon plays in with overall society and this is a modern issue that has come through the engagement of multiple perspectives in the modern world.

Multiple Perspectives

Multiple perspectives for the purpose of this thesis will be defined as the appreciation, acceptance, or critical thinking of multiple perspectives in life and how that may apply to one's own life. 2 Timothy 2:15 says to the believer to study and not to be ashamed of the word rightly dividing the word of truth.²² In the modern world, people may not study the word of truth or can become ashamed of truth and in the process, they may not prepare themselves to rightly divide the word of truth when multiple perspectives arise in ministry. This involves studying and praying to the Father as Jesus points out in the Lord's prayer and these scriptures show in

²⁰ Rick Warren, "Four Bible Passages About Teamwork," *Pastors.com*, Fall (2012), accessed October 14, 2020, <https://pastors.com/four-bible-passages-about-teamwork/>.

²¹ Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Nehemiah 4, Mark 6:7, Acts 24. These scriptures show examples of teamwork in the Bible and the necessity of people working together for God.

²² 2 Timothy 2:15. This book shows that a person needs to study the word of truth and to not be ashamed of the word of truth rightly dividing the word of truth.

Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 for the Father to not lead one into temptation but to deliver one from evil and forgive those who trespass against others.

Multiple perspectives in relation to one's own study seeks to address the conflict that can be found in ministry and research why people take the stance that they do in contrast to biblical canon when they are in ministry. Rather this is politically or personally driven or something else regarding the person, what is the reasoning behind their own belief system and why do they feel that certain parts of scripture is relevant while others do not apply to them. There are many interest groups and politics including political processes that may become a source of conflict through a Christians life on how scripture relates to the modern world. In this research process, it is important for one to remain neutral at least to the fact of addressing and working to address the problem to create solutions.

In many situations including organizational settings and Christian settings, friends and enemies can very much be seen in the modern world on how people interact with each other through various ways. This can show itself in many ways from having friends and enemies or those someone socializes with or not, which is considered a normal part of social development for all groups and is a study point in the social science. This relates to love one another or love one's neighbor, which was the second commandment cited by Jesus Christ in the Bible. Friends and enemies are usually associated with children but also finds its way into the adult population with multiple perspectives even inside of Christian environments.

One of the keys to addressing multiple perspectives and achieving organizational success within the Christian environment is to build productive relationships within an organization so that the key aspects of the organization can operate efficiently. Outside of the church, organizations and community programs usually prepare action plans and implement these plans

that include all groups. For the church, creating action plans and implementing sustainable plans that contribute to growing healthy relationships by establishing the authority of God in people's lives through the teaching and preaching of scripture will be spiritually rewarding for the Christian.

By receiving a range of multiple perspectives and not omitting people who disagree creates a more in-depth understanding on one's own thesis research on multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. It is important to work on understanding the multiple perspectives and contexts and social influences in which people have incorporated into their own lives in taking steps to understand any conflict that could potentially arise in the Christian community. One's own action research process will work to build a bridge for people and provide a strong Christian resource for developing relationships and building a sense of community that focuses on the first and great commandment to love God as highlighted in the scripture. This includes following the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture. It is important to hear multiple perspectives from people to understand where they are coming from. For the modern world, multiple perspectives are looked at as positive in the modern day but when it comes to biblical canon or the authority of God in scripture, the Christian needs to understand that they must rely on the scripture as the truth from God.

Another way to bridge the gap of multiple perspectives is to provide a joint construction study to this thesis research. In this process, the role of the researcher is to bring people into a joint construction and consensus where people who may have different perspectives can work together to address the problem. By providing responses to the questions, this will allow one to think and analyze on the information and to have the Christian reflect on how to love God. This includes incorporating various aspects that can break ground on a new perspective that range in

perspectives to help clarify and define the meaning and can bring new direction to the information including surveys, questionnaires, reflections, and other types of sources. This is a way of understanding different perspectives on how someone may perceive something as it relates to his experiences.

New aspects may arise in the study where difficult positions may occur such as in this research study on multiple perspectives where conflict may arise on the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture and this has become the modern perspective of the Christian community in ministry and local and national community programs on having multiple perspectives so formulating and implementing solutions can build a framework and picture. Building a reflective picture that reflects the supreme importance of incorporating God into the everyday life of the modern Christian is the way of addressing multiple perspectives.

Limitations

There are some potential limitations that may be imposed on the researcher from an external person. A random sample would be the preferred method but in some regards some participants may fit in with the convenient sample in the small group of Christians, and this researcher will work towards a mixed-approach and combination of a convenient sample and random sample of Christian leaders within independent ministry. Social pressures may or may not limit the study as with multiple perspectives, people may be more inclined to say what they think is acceptable in the modern world and people may tend to not want to say what they feel may be unacceptable in the modern world. A way to encourage participants to be truthful is to not reveal the names of the participants and to keep their names secret as to lessen the bias and the scrutiny. In some cases, a researcher may be convinced that secrecy is important and certain projects and contexts are inclined to secrecy but for this DMIN thesis there are situations that

prevents secrecy from happening, and in this DMIN research informed consent will be provided to the participants.²³ This will include intellectual rigor and explaining to the participant how their personal information will be handled and stored, what the researcher will expect from the participant, and the time expectations, and there will be no risk to the participant and the benefits that the study will provide includes confidentiality, anonymity, and the exercise of authorial power. The study can be related to an online course and end of course study where universities ask the student how the course was. This research study will include test research questions that are based around this topic of multiple perspectives in ministry and conflict in ministry. Accessibility may also be an issue as sometimes it is not easy to get access to a certain population and those in ministry are no different to get into contact with. Sometimes, getting into contact with people is not easy as some people have busy schedules and in other cases, some people may commit and may not complete the study as seen in life where some people may change their mind so this could be another limitation. These are potential limitations that are worth noting related to this research thesis in investigating the topic of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry in the modern world.

Delimitations

This DMIN research will focus on critical reflection through a small group of participants in survey and questionnaire responses in independent ministry. This will include the investigation of the context of how the Bible is reflected on by the person in ministry. The Bible will be the main focal point of how belief system is formed in the nature of the person through the use of scripture. The goal will be to have Christians participate in surveys and questionnaires who identify as Christian and to understand the reality of the Christian. This research is looking

²³ Sensing, 32-34.

at a small group of Christians and the influence of scripture in comparison to alternative perspectives. This will be used to understand the nature of multiple perspectives as it pertains to the people who claim to be Christian and to start to draw out a clear picture of how people view the Bible to their own contemporary understanding of Christianity. The ability to reflect on why the Bible is authoritative for some Christian communities while other communities may have conflicting perspectives on the authority of scripture will allow for a social and action and theological-apologetic approach to be drawn out in response to presenting the scripture to believing and non-believing communities.

Believing and non-believing communities inside of the church and outside of the church is the population that will be included in this study. These are the target population, and the study will build around a local ministry. The age and gender will be an adult population with the target age eighteen years old and over and the gender will be both male and female to include for this study and these participants will be a small group of local Christians. If someone under eighteen years old chooses to participate, additional measures would have to be taken such as approval from their consenting parent or guardian and the Institutional Review Board at Liberty University. This research is looking at a small group of Christians and the expected numbers in this thesis are small around ten or more and if this number of ten is not possible the study may have less participants in comparison to the many people who claim in the world to be a Christian. This study will also work to provide open-ended questions and responses to all who are able to comprehend an understanding of Christianity to connect one's own ministry and to introduce the testimony of Jesus Christ to all such as children's ministry or youth ministry, young adult ministry, senior ministry, to name some populations in the church and some populations that the

church can make a focal point outside of the church. These will be used in breaking ground and understanding the multiple perspectives on the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture.

Thesis Statement

If this Christian community believes Biblical canon is authoritative, then this should show in how the Christian community influences inside and outside of the church.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

The development of the conceptual framework will be built on the elements of Christian, multiple perspectives, and conflict. Jesus Christ built upon and connected his ministry to Old Testament scriptures which in turn led to the New Testament scriptures, which are the sixty-six compiled books and are known as the Bible. This conceptual framework expands on biblical scriptures in connection with the literature review discussed in relation to the modern issues faced within the contemporary culture. The framework works to build upon a Christian ethical framework where all communities can view all biblical canon as the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. The themes will be analyzed and developed in detail to address the issue of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. The theological context and theoretical foundation project will also be expanded on in this conceptual framework.

Literature Review

Multiple Perspectives in Christian Ministry

There is a gap in information and application on multiple perspectives in ministry literature and information. Multiple perspectives for the purpose of this thesis will be defined as the appreciation, acceptance, or critical thinking of multiple perspectives in life and how that may apply to one's own life. In modern times, multiple perspectives influence the actions of a Christian. In the time of Jesus of Nazareth, having an alternative view to and of those in authority mostly led to negative consequences as seen in the lives of those who were called upon by the Father in biblical canon or scripture. Different opinions are the way of the modern world on how to do things and this includes people having multiple perspectives within the local

church. In the time of Jesus Christ, the people had the Mosaic law and the people also had outside law, for example, Roman law or government and anyone that they deemed as breaking the laws were dealt with in mostly a negative way. These people who were deemed as lawbreakers were taken to the ones who governed them in society. They were taken to what would be considered the authority in their society. But here came a man called Jesus of Nazareth calling on the Father and saying, “I am,” a title that is connected to the God of the Old Testament found in Exodus 3:14.²⁴ Jesus placed himself as an authority attaching himself to the Father which caused controversy in his time. On the other hand, in modern time, having only one perspective is looked down upon such that having only a Christian perspective can be controversial. In some ways having a blended Christian perspective with outside perspectives such as accepting what the contemporary culture views as acceptable from biblical canon and dismissing what contemporary culture views as not acceptable from scripture is considered appropriate for some Christian communities. Either way this can lead to negative consequences in modern times as some say today that a person is on the wrong side of the aisle or the wrong side of history if a person sides with scripture.

Having multiple perspectives in Christianity is unique in this contemporary time because it is promoted to be intellectual to accept and to appreciate multiple perspectives. On one hand, this can be considered a concept of loving one another. On the other hand, what does a Christian do when those ideals conflict with the first and great commandment to love God. In some alternative perspectives to Christianity, certain biblical canon is viewed as outdated or excluding to some societies internally and externally of the church. This is a modern society including within the local church that want to include all societies and groups because offending people or

²⁴ Exodus 3:14. This book outlines God in the Old Testament telling Moses “I AM THAT I AM” and telling Moses to tell the children of Israel that “I AM” has sent him.

sticking to one's Christian beliefs can bring scrutiny from outside sources or human authorities. So, no matter if someone is preaching in the pulpit or saying something in a public ministry that is supported by biblical canon, if it excludes a group or certain groups or even remotely offends a group or certain groups that leader may face negative consequences regardless of if their rights are protected in the constitution such as freedom of speech or freedom of peaceful assembly, to name some legal precedents defining freedom. Through a literature review where one looked for a conversation on the influence of multiple perspectives on biblical canon there is a gap in information and application on the problem of multiple perspectives as it pertains to ministry. Some fields such as legal, and business, to name some, are extensive in precedents in written communication on multiple perspectives in allowing different jurisdictions to make law sometimes referred to as state law. Within the legal system and business there are multiple perspectives based on the general rights of individuals. But for ministry there is a gap in addressing multiple perspectives in ministry that may lead to problems in the local church.

Bringing in multiple perspectives into that of a Christian perspective in modern-day is considered a form of lessening the bias of that Christian or person against outside perspectives and in a way looking at life from the other person's eyes or lens and stories. This even includes those with multiple perspectives within one's own Christian faith. So, in modern-day there are many people who claim to be Christians while at the same time do not adhere to every word of the scripture. This causes multiple perspectives on the authority of God in biblical canon where people take the stance to defend that they are Christians but at times or during their lifetime they may practice alternative viewpoints to their claimed Christian belief system, and they do not adhere and follow every letter or commandment or covenant of the law of God as shown in scripture. This in turn provides multiple perspectives on Christianity and presents a problem on

multiple perspectives on biblical canon on what a self-professed Christian should believe as it pertains to scripture or biblical canon.

Conflict in Christian Ministry

There are multiple perspectives on ministry in relation to biblical canon. The literature addressing on how to deal with conflict in local ministry is not as vast as it is in other fields in comparison to the legal and business fields. One may ask how one carries out the mission of the local church when faced with multiple perspectives on scripture. Conflict can arise anywhere regardless of the locale, there are multiple perspectives and differing opinions that leads to conflict. Conflict is one of the responses that can come from having multiple perspectives on biblical canon in ministry. This literature review works through multiple perspectives to form a Christian ethical perspective to achieve a common ground or break ground in the Christian community on the authority of God in scripture. As any reader of the Bible should be able to see is that followers of God and those in ministry have always experienced some form of conflict since the fall of man. The Bible identifies disobedience in the fall of man.²⁵ Some of the reasons that can be applied to multiple perspectives in local ministry is that people have multiple perspectives and conflicting beliefs on biblical canon.

From Topic to Thesis by Michael Kibbe mentions, the conflict that arose between Jesus and the temple authorities in Mark 12-13 as it pertains to the tearing of the temple veil as the climax of that conflict. Kibbe mentioned, three textual relationships in the argument of his thesis

²⁵ Genesis 3. This book in the Bible outlined the serpent who was more cunning than any other beast in the field and tells the woman that she could eat from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This leads to God placing enmity between the woman and serpent, sorrow followed, and rulership was established from God in the relationship of the man ruling over the woman (Genesis 3:15-17) and all things was lifted through Jesus Christ who came because God loved the world.

in Mark's Gospel that he accounts for which were the baptism of Jesus, the conflict between Jesus and the temple authorities, and the breathing his last at the cross.²⁶

Christ in Conflict by John Stott mentions, that the most that can be said when two divine laws are in conflict, which can sometimes happen in the fallen world, is that the law of love takes precedence as seen in the commandments given by Jesus Christ. This was explained by Stott in the divine action taken by Jesus Christ to feed the hungry, the sick and the sinful which the Pharisees believed Jesus had broken their laws such as the law of Moses.²⁷

Charitable by Choice by James T. Spivey mentions, the growing intolerance of prophetic, politically incorrect voices that call for reformation and demand uniformity that can give rise to uncontrollable conflict.²⁸ Spivey addressed the influence of churches or religious leaders. It is based on the statement by Jesus Christ to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to give to God what is God's. This question from the Pharisees and Herodians as shown in Matthew 22:16-22 and Mark 12:13-17 shows an alternative perspective in contrast to loving and worshipping the true God. This can even be applied in the context of Exodus when God was speaking to Moses and giving him the Ten Commandments for the people to follow found in Exodus 20.²⁹ The Israelites who had been freed from the Egyptians by the true God and they in turn made a golden

²⁶ Kibbe, 81.

²⁷ John Stott, *Christ in Conflict: Lessons from Jesus and His Controversies* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 149.

²⁸ James T. Spivey, "Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives," *Baptist History and Heritage*, Spring (2013): 58.

²⁹ Exodus 20. This book outlines God giving Moses the Ten Commandments for his people to follow that God freed and brought out of the house of bondage from the Egyptians.

calf found in Exodus 32:4 when Moses was not present.³⁰ When the Israelites went against the spiritual and natural order of the authority of God shows in scripture on how an alternative perspective in contradiction to biblical canon can corrupt. This example shows the direction in one's own thesis on the problem of multiple perspectives on biblical canon which relates to the authority of God in scripture. This can be applied to Matthew 22:16-22 and Mark 12:13-17 regarding multiple perspectives and the authority of God in scripture that can be applied to the modern context.³¹ The church can be influenced negatively in multiple ways. For example, the influence of the church is important but to take funds from the government or outside sources can change the whole mission of the church if not done right which Spivey argues.³² In one proposing a new direction, Jesus engaged with the naysayers in the temple on the authority issue as it relates to God and earthly leadership, for example, that of government or religious leadership. But Jesus clearly asked why they tempted him when Jesus perceived their wickedness when he saw he was dealing with hypocrisy and they brought him money found in Mark 12:15.³³ Charity can be done inside the church and charity can be done outside the church. The point is that money is a form of imagery and superscription that mostly everybody partakes in as a way

³⁰ Exodus 32:1-35. This book outlines imagery and idol worship for when the people saw that Moses was delayed to come down from the mountain they gathered themselves unto Aaron and wanted them to break of golden earrings of their wives, sons, and daughters so they could make the molten calf and there was war or conflict in the camp and the ending of the book shows God plaguing the people because they made the calf.

³¹ Matthew 22:16-22, Mark 12:13-17. These book outlines that Pharisees and Herodians were sent to catch Jesus in his words by claiming that they knew he was true and they said that he regarded not the person of man but teaches the way of God in truth and they asked shall they give or not give and they brought him a penny and Jesus perceiving their wickedness asked why do they tempt him by bringing him a penny and they wanted to see what he would say and Jesus said render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God the things of God and they marveled at Jesus.

³² Spivey, 62.

³³ Mark 12:15. This book outlines Jesus responding trying to catch him in his words which shows an example of how multiple perspectives even from those who claim to be true can cause conflict within or outside the church.

of survival in the business and economic world and money can be used to influence. For the most part, everything costs from food, housing, and the list can go on and on. This is a way of life that has normalized people in a way where they may see currency as a necessity to make it in life, but Jesus in the New Testament preached the authority of God in scripture that he is all one needs, and he supplies all ones needs. Also, Psalm 50:10-12 in the Old Testament shows that God owns all things.³⁴ In addition, Jesus dealt with dissension based on the sabbath and how the sabbath plays in with the authority issue. This can be found in Exodus 20:10 in the Old Testament as no work on the sabbath and Matthew 12:1-21 and Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5 in the New Testament.³⁵ The disciples of Jesus were accused of breaking the Mosaic law. Picking the ears of the grain was permitted as found in Deuteronomy 23:25 so the Pharisees did not necessarily accuse them of taking what was not theirs but of working on the sabbath.³⁶ Jesus defended his disciples by bringing to the attention of the naysayers that of David in the Bible when David was fleeing from Saul in 1 Samuel 21:1-6 that the priest gave David bread which was considered holy and for the priest alone. Jesus also acknowledges his authority including his priestly authority by pointing to himself by saying that the son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.³⁷

³⁴ Psalm 50:10-12. This book outlines God explaining to his people that he owns everything, from every beast of the field, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, he knows all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts, and if he was hungry he would not tell thee, because the world is his, and the fulness thereof.

³⁵ Exodus 20:10, Matthew 12:1-21, Mark 2:23-28, Luke 6:1-5. The book in the Old Testament shows no work to be done on the sabbath and the New Testament books shows Jesus showing his authority in scripture that he is greater than the temple and showing his understanding of the law of God and that he is Lord of the sabbath.

³⁶ Deuteronomy 23:25. This book in the Old Testament outlines that plucking the ears of the grain was permitted but the sickle cannot be removed from the neighbors standing grain.

³⁷ 1 Samuel 21:1-6. This book outlines what Jesus was referring to when David was fleeing from Saul that the priest gave David bread which was considered hallowed and for the priest alone in a discussion over common bread and hallowed bread.

Mere Christianity by Clive S. Lewis mentions, a conflict arising in an event or predicament, for example, if two instincts, the desire to help or the desire to keep out of danger are in conflict, and there is nothing in the mind of a creature except the two instincts mentioned, obviously the stronger of the two must win.³⁸ So, what is missing in building on the argument is that because of multiple perspectives in the modern world, Christians are crucified with Jesus Christ and some of those who profess adherence to Christ will experience similar conflict as shown in the Bible. Conflict is a way of life for the believer in God and follower of Jesus Christ as shown in the biblical canon so what is missing as a gap in the literature and information and needs to be addressed is multiple perspectives within the Christian belief system. This includes how can a Christian develop a Christian ethic and live in a contemporary world of multiple perspectives.

Paul's Spirituality in Galatians by Adam McClendon on the other hand makes one think of his argument, that there is conflict in Christian experience between the flesh and the spirit and that exists between the believer's desires in this age (self-sufficiency and self-indulgence) in conflict with the spirit which causes a real conflict.³⁹ McClendon used the lens of Galatians 2:20.⁴⁰ The Christian is challenged to either live by the flesh or to live by the spirit. So, what is missing in building on the argument is that the Christian is challenged on if they should accept multiple perspectives. This can lead to conflict on having multiple perspectives within a set

³⁸ Clive S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Geoffrey Bles Publisher/Harper Collins Publishers, 1952), 10.

³⁹ Adam McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians: A Critique of Contemporary Christian Spiritualities* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 96.

⁴⁰ Galatians 2:20. This book outlines Paul explaining that he has been crucified with Christ and that it is no longer him that lives but Christ that lives in him and the life lived in the flesh is the life lived by faith in the Son of God who loved and gave himself for the world.

religion such as Christianity and can challenge a Christian on if they should run away from their problems or face their problems or in stating it another way should they accept multiple perspectives even within their Christian faith. The link is to see what tells a person what the right or wrong reaction is or if they should agree or disagree with an issue that may conflict or may challenge their Christian belief system. This could relate to the flesh or the spirit. Is it a moral law or God that plays into the overall decision of a Christian on what to do when faced with conflicting ideals? The sense of conflict can be near or far away and in some cases the person reacts and responds. The Christian is no different from a non-Christian in the facing of conflict but a set of commandments and even covenants should guide the response from the Christian (i.e. biblical canon provides a set of commandments and covenants from God on how to react in conflict). Sometimes, an impulse may tell someone to run and be safe while in other cases there may be no option to run from harm.

Quantitative Research & Evaluation Methods by Michael Patton addressed conflict from a social science and program evaluation approach, that conflict is the reality of life and suspicion is the guiding principle. Patton explains that conflict is a war of all, and no one gives anyone anything for nothing, especially truth.⁴¹ One persons' believed truth may very well be false to someone else which can lead to a point of conflict. So, what is missing in building on the argument is that because once someone starts to believe their truth, they may become more inclined to lean towards or stick with that truth because that is their truth that they have convinced themselves with. The direction that this discussion should take in the future is how does the leader prepare their Christian community for interaction within the church and

⁴¹ Michael Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2002), 270.

interaction with those outside the church. The law to love God first and foremost rules as a commandment quoted by Jesus Christ in the New Testament that was built from the Old Testament because the follower of Jesus Christ has a special connection with God and understands the overall purpose of one's existence and the authority and truthfulness of scripture.

True Paradox by David Skeel, on the other hand mentions, that in a world characterized by multiple sets of values and no single agreed upon method of resolving these differences most people simply reject logical proofs of conclusions that conflict with their own intuitions.⁴² Skeel shows how the non-believer may counter the belief in the existence of God. So, what is missing in building on the argument is if a Christian apologist explains to a non-believer that the world or universe came into existence because of God, the skeptic may counter with a scientific or evolutionary conclusion or the skeptic may not be able to provide any conclusion or analysis to name some alternative counters to Christianity on how the world or universe came into existence outside the fact of a Creator and creation solution. So, what is missing that needs to fill into the gap is that this grapples with a world of truth and doubt and laws of nature on how and why the universe came into existence in the first place and who and what is the authority in a world and universe of multiple perspectives. Whose word is law and what makes that word the authority of the universe? For the Christian, that answer should be simple, God is the authority over all, and the approach should be how does one communicate that to the people wherever one may be in an effective way regardless of the conflict that may arise.

⁴² David Skeel, *True Paradox: How Christianity Makes Sense of Our Complex World* (Westmont: Varsity Press, 2014), 22.

Making Sense of God by Timothy Keller states, that the modern definition of freedom is the ability for someone to do whatever they want or in other words to do whatever they please. Therefore, how would that freedom work when someone's wants conflict with each other.⁴³ So, what is missing is that this is a modern world that grapples with the idea of what is freedom, how does one define freedom, and how does a Christian live a life of freedom in a modern context.

The Peacemaking Pastor by Alfred J. Poirier mentions that conflicts also arise over issues of authority and classifies this into three types, which are the right of authority, the abuse of authority, and the failure to exercise authority.⁴⁴ This makes one think of the connection and correlation of the issue of freedom and the issue of authority in the modern day. What needs to be addressed is that this is one of the aspects that authority can relate to, which is the issue of freedom in the context of Christians and non-Christians having the right to believe what they choose. Some people ask the question does this person have the right to tell them what they can do or not do which can be tied to an issue of authority and an issue of freedom. Some people do not necessarily see it from a biblical perspective they see it as this person is telling them what they are doing is wrong and some believe what right do they have to correct them. In addition, there can be an abuse of authority which can come in various ways. Also, people can feel that a leader is not acting quick enough to solve problems which could lead to conflict. What is missing is that the gap is what does a Christian do when the freedom of the Christian is challenged on biblical canon and how does the Christian define their own freedom when it conflicts with the outside world or multiple perspectives in a practical way. To gain freedom may require someone

⁴³ Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical* (New York: Viking, 2016), 101.

⁴⁴ Alfred J. Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 31-32.

to lose something, or the opposite may happen, to lose freedom may require someone to gain something which can connect to the authority issue. In a world of many people who all claim that their truth is the truth one thing that anybody can count on when it comes to belief system is that all people have not up to this point agreed upon God as the ultimate creator and Jesus Christ in one single perspective or in other words there is always somebody to contest what was said. Contest is a legal term mostly meaning to defend against something or an adverse claim usually in court proceedings by a plaintiff or a team of prosecutors to challenge a stated position in a judicial proceeding as to influence the laws of the land and the other side needs to defend their case as a defendant.

Good God by David Baggett and Jerry Walls mention, that the fact remains that human social requirements fail to cover the whole territory or entire territory of moral obligation and can conflict with each other.⁴⁵ Baggett and Walls highlighted Adams Divine Command Theory or DCT as an important contribution to that of theistic ethics and that in terms of metaphysics that God is the ultimate good and God's commands constitutes genuine moral obligations which has a normative force that is far-reaching and far beyond the merely prudential or rational.⁴⁶

The Ethics of Authenticity by Charles Taylor argues that individual ties to each other, as well as that of external and moral demands can turn into conflict with personal development.⁴⁷ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective through one's own thesis on multiple perspectives, one asks the question, how does a Christian live an ethical life? On one

⁴⁵ David Baggett, and Jerry L. Walls, *Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 118.

⁴⁶ Baggett, and Walls, 116-119.

⁴⁷ Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 57.

hand, going to church or believing in Jesus Christ can be considered a personal and spiritual decision while on the other hand how does a Christian apply that to their own professional and ethical lives or workings in the outside world. The gap is that the modern-day world promotes the acceptance of multiple perspectives, but the Bible says to love God as the first and great commandment and in many cases an outside perspective may conflict with biblical canon. Ambiguity is a perspective on the quality of having openness to more than one interpretation. For example, a Christian may go to church to hear the preached word of God and to congregate in worship of the Father while on the outside they live and work in non-religious environments and conduct business as usual. Where does one draw the line on how to live out a Christ-like life in a contemporary world of multiple perspectives when they encounter outside perspectives that conflict with their own belief on the authority of God in scripture? This is a problem that people deal with in a local modern-day church on the issues of multiple perspectives in the world. This relates to those who adhere to the Christian faith and deal with multiple perspectives as it relates to their own reality. What is missing is that Christian ethics many times may conflict with outside ethics. For example, some churches conduct church business one way while others do it a completely different way. How does a Christian operate in a world of multiple perspectives even within their own Christian community?

Fool's Talk by Os Guinness mentions that there are four features of unbelief (suppression, exploitation, inversion, and self-deception) and one way of summarizing the effect of the four features is to focus on the inescapable tension and dynamic conflict inherent in unbelief.⁴⁸ The view from an unbeliever on the existence of God conflicts with their own

⁴⁸ Os Guinness, *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 93.

existence. The gap is that if someone questions the existence of God then that same person is questioning the authority of God. The truth as it relates to the unbeliever conflicts with the authority of God in biblical canon as the unbeliever is never truly able to escape the authority of God because their disbelief does not change the fact of the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture.

Becoming the Gospel by Michael J. Gorman mentions that conflict is the order, both between humans and God and within humanity itself and that humans have turned their back on God.⁴⁹ Gorman used Romans 1:18-3:20 as an example for the human condition. The gap is that this is a common narrative that many people follow in the role of conflict in the lives of individuals. On one hand, some believe that conflict is more complex when describing good and evil or belief and unbelief. In other cases, some cannot or some refuse to see the biblical narratives including that of Paul in the writing of Romans and some see biblical canon as outdated. This could even go further back to the biblical narrative of Genesis 2:17 of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.⁵⁰ Adam and Eve disobeying God, and God telling them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not relevant for some people because the narrative is far removed from their own lives. To some Christians and even some outside the church believe this is not a reality of the story of Adam and Eve. For example, one way of looking at conflict from a biblical perspective is that of Romans 1:18-3:20.⁵¹ The biblical conflict

⁴⁹ Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2015), 173.

⁵⁰ Genesis 2:17. This book outlines the biblical narrative of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and God telling man that the day that man eats from the tree they will surely die.

⁵¹ Romans 1:18-3:20. This book outlines Paul identifying the wrath of God on the ungodly and unrighteous on those who hold the truth in unrighteousness to the judgment of God.

leads to an understanding of God blessing those who are obedient to him and punishing those who are disobedient to him, which can also be tied to covenants made by God, but some then may ask why good people also experience conflict in their own lives.

Mere Apologetics by Alister E. McGrath mentions that science and faith are sometimes presented as in conflict with each other, but it is better to think of faith as offering a deeper context to the scientific method.⁵² McGrath addressed that faith provides an explanation of why science works. The gap is that from the science perspective, someone may see science as a scientific and intellectual way of thinking on the order of the world and universe systematically. Science most often views the world from the physical structure and behaviors through observation and experiment. The sciences are just another perspective. From a Christian apologetics perspective, the Christian faith offers a spiritual and deeper knowledge and understanding on the natural and spiritual world. For example, someone may ask how Jesus Christ was able to bring someone who had died back to life. This is not considered natural for someone to come back to life without a person having done medical procedures or used medical technology on someone in relation to the modern context. For example, Jesus raised Lazarus back from the dead by calling on the Father.⁵³ Science is a way of testing knowledge and giving explanations and predictions about the universe while the Christian faith is a way of understanding the authority of God and even the existence of God through biblical canon or scripture.

⁵² Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 103.

⁵³ John 11:1-44. This book outlines Jesus Christ raising Lazarus who had lain in a grave for four days dead and Jesus even wept as described in the book showing emotions and Jesus Christ asked the Father and cried with a loud voice telling Lazarus to come forth and Lazarus came forth from the dead as described in this book.

Deep and Wide by Andy Stanley mentions that most believers assume that there is a conflict between science and faith.⁵⁴ Stanley uses the example of a medical doctor who practices medicine and gives the scientific answer on why someone may be experiencing a problem. Some believe that there is no conflict between Christian faith and science. The gap is that in a modern world of practicing multiple perspectives, it does not harm one to learn and become educated by scripture including the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ so that person rather claiming to be Christian or not can better understand the world. Having multiple perspectives is the way of the modern world but one needs to understand the order of things from a spiritual perspective and biblical canon provides that to the reader. In one way, medicine is a way of looking at reality in medicine and science. On the other hand, understanding the authority of God in the world is looking at faith in action as a strong Christian perspective. For example, Jesus Christ did not respond as a modern-day medical doctor would. If a person tells a medical doctor today in modern time that they feel sick that doctor mostly will prescribe something for that person based off the symptoms of that person no matter if the doctor is religious or not. The modern world of natural sciences including medicine rather certain medications work or not, feeling better is based on many cases as having the right prescriptions for a persons' diagnoses and the list can go on and on depending on the patient diagnoses. A medical doctor would give someone the facts based on the learned medical sciences or the doctors' medical specialty but on the other hand Jesus Christ based getting better or healing on the facts of God as the ultimate healer and Jesus challenges the individual to have faith in God.⁵⁵ So, doing better relied on simple, logical, and a

⁵⁴ Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, chapter 11.

⁵⁵ Matthew 21:21, Mark 11:23. This book outlines Jesus saying to have faith in God and someone can tell a mountain to move and it will move if the person does not have doubt in their heart, and whatever one desires pray and they shall receive it.

spiritual conclusion for Jesus Christ, which was going to the Father for all things. The contemporary world with multiple perspectives does not respond in that manner mostly looking everywhere but to God for the solution. If a Christian in modern time comes to a ministry in contemporary time the Christian may be torn between one alternative perspective on the external side of the church and the Christian perspective on the internal side of the church depending on what that church may believe as there are multiple perspectives on biblical canon and how that church applies scripture in life. With many multiple perspectives who does a Christian believe when it comes to the belief system in the authority of God. One key aspect of all of this is that God has the authority over all parts of society and God exists in all parts of society. In other words, there is not one place that God is absent from, he is present everywhere and he rules everywhere or in other words he is always in attendance everywhere and God is the one in charge no matter the territory, region, place, or system.

The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology by Mark Boda mentions that more detail is also provided at times for the conquest tradition, with some of the biblical text focusing on milk and honey and others on specific conflicts or battles.⁵⁶ Boda explains God as a redemptive God in his ability to save people and give his people gifts even through conflict. For example, Boda used Deuteronomy 6:21-23 that God brought slaves out of Egypt.⁵⁷ The connection from this to one's own thesis is the authority of God in scripture no matter what the conflicting perspective is, God is able to free people and provide them with promises that no other is able to do but God.

⁵⁶ Mark Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), chapter 2.

⁵⁷ Deuteronomy 6:21-23. This book outlines God bringing his people out of Egypt with a mighty hand through signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt upon Pharaoh and upon his household and gave them the land which he gave to his people.

So, the extension of the literature in the gap of information and application is the study of the problem of multiple perspectives on biblical canon and to provide an ethical framework showing the depiction of God in scripture having the supreme all mighty power to redeem a world in the manner he so chooses. In addition, one can look at the application and information given by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Living into the Life of Jesus by Klaus Issler explains, a conversation between Jesus Christ and Peter and how Jesus worked through conflict with Peter, first praying for his disciple Peter, then telling him the truth that first Peter would deny him and second Jesus had already prayed for Peter's strengths prior to his three denials.⁵⁸ This can be found in Luke 22:31-62.⁵⁹ Another version can be found in Matthew 26:33-44.⁶⁰ So, what is missing is that in ministry there may be categorical differences on parts of the scripture sometimes between the pastor and congregant. In correcting these problems that may arise, one needs to go to God for the answer in resolving these multiple perspectives that may arise during the time of the persons ministry.

Constrictively Managing Program-related Conflict in Local Churches by David R. Dunaetz conducted an empirical study, that worked to understand the conditions under which program related conflict in evangelical churches would lead to detrimental outcomes and those

⁵⁸ Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 171-172.

⁵⁹ Luke 22:31-62. This book outlines Jesus speaking that the enemy desires to sift those who follow God as wheat but Jesus explains to Peter who he is speaking to that he has prayed for him but he also tells Peter that he will still deny him three times.

⁶⁰ Matthew 26:33-44. This book outlines Jesus speaking to Peter and Jesus telling Peter that he will deny him three times before the cock crows and Jesus telling his disciples to sit while he goes and pray and the disciples continue to go asleep while Jesus tells them to watch but Jesus consistently prays during the hour of death including the conflict that he knows is to come.

that would lead to constructive outcomes.⁶¹ Sometimes, what is perceived as conflict can very well be a turning point to creating and developing new strategies for the benefit of the church and community that one lives in. To put this in context, the Dunaetz study used children's ministry as a focal point to addressing problems. Children's ministry is a common theme or common program within the church. In creating ministry programs, these programs can be changed or adjusted at any time such as in the midweek as explained in the study and this could cause conflict. In addressing ministry, Dunaetz mentioned content goals, social goals, relationship goals, identity goals, and process goals would be present whenever interpersonal conflicts arise.⁶² The gap is that how does the Christian community work together in cohesive ministry to address conflict within the church and outside the church regarding multiple perspectives even in children's ministry or youth ministry, young adult ministry, senior ministry, to name some, in applying Christian ethics to their lives.

The Disciple-Making Church by Bill Hull mentions, that although many modern leaders teach that a lack of conflict is the signpost of proper Christianity, the author Hull believes that conflict is effective to ministry. Hull believes that there are two ways to stir up opposition to a leader and that is to first obey God and lead the church according to God's agenda and the second is to be passive and allow the church to stagnate.⁶³ So, what is missing is the explanation of how a leader addresses the conflict that may arise and in obeying God does the leader reject multiple perspectives even at the possibility of losing one's status in the church. The questions

⁶¹ David R. Dunaetz, "Constructively Managing Program-related Conflict in Local Churches," *Christian Education Journal*, vol. 16(2) (2019): 259.

⁶² Dunaetz, 262-264

⁶³ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church: Leading a Body of Believers on a Journey of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 116.

that the leader needs to ask questions that address the conflict at hand and work towards reducing conflict, which may cause conflict because one may have to face tough decisions that may make them uncomfortable.

The Great Omission by Dallas Willard argues, a ‘Great Disparity’ between the hope for life expressed in Jesus in the Bible and the modern-day life of those who now profess adherence to Jesus.⁶⁴ Willard also addressed the contrast between the governing assumption today, among professing Christians that they can be Christians forever and never become disciples.⁶⁵ The gap is, how would this look in the modern world? Would a professing Christian be able to leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ? The next question can be, should a professing Christian leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ? For some, the answer is easy but for others the answer is not easy and for others the answer is irrelevant. This is the gap on the problem of multiple perspectives that there is no one set of spiritual and ethical standards for Christians because there are multiple perspectives and many interpretations on scripture. Each Christian community has its own set of belief systems and way of doing things. The disciples left behind their normal lives to follow Jesus Christ and they experienced conflict, but they received so much more in making a spiritual connection with the Father through Jesus Christ so how would that look for a modern person to follow Jesus Christ in a world of multiple perspectives and how can modern Christian discipleship be accomplished? As shown in scripture, some people in the time of Jesus could not bring themselves to leave their earthly possessions to follow Jesus Christ.⁶⁶ In entering this

⁶⁴ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), x.

⁶⁵ Willard, xi.

⁶⁶ Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 18:18-30. These books outline Jesus Christ instructing a rich young man to go and sell his possessions and then follow him but the rich man became sad and then Jesus Christ

discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that when multiple perspectives arise based on conflicting ideals or multiple perspectives within a local church, how does one address those problems when conflict happens such as how the church should bring in mission or conduct discipleship. Some in modern day say why should they leave behind what they have in life or what they have acquired in the world. The problem of multiple perspectives as it pertains to the Christian community requires careful, thoughtful, and prayerful application but addressing multiple perspectives allows the Christian community to work together in a world that operates and thrives on multiple perspectives. How does one spiritually and ethically follow the commandments set forth in scripture while living in the contemporary world of multiple perspectives with modern laws and issues?

Understanding the Old Testament by Bernhard Anderson explains, that the relationship between the gospel and law is clearly expressed in the covenant-renewal ceremony of Ezra's time and according to Nehemiah 9, the making of the covenant was preceded by a long prayer, which is essentially a confession of Israel's faith.⁶⁷ Anderson explains that this prayer is explanatory in that it recites the history of Israel or the history of Yahweh's dealings with the people and the shared history and its unique life-story. In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that Christians need to pray to God to understand his plan for one through an array of multiple

explained to his disciples it would be easier for a camel to enter into the kingdom of heaven than for a rich person because of the unwillingness to leave behind their possessions.

⁶⁷ Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1957), 535.

perspectives. Some multiple perspectives may seem bright and may seem as if it is putting humanity in a better position but may be placing humanity in present objection to how God commands one to live. This is essential for the Christian to follow the model of Christ in expressing one's commitment to the covenant of God.

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time by Marcus J. Borg argues, that it is the conflict between these two *imitatio deis* of holiness and compassion as qualities of God to be in the community that one sees as the central conflict in the ministry of Jesus and between two different social visions.⁶⁸ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that in the modern church, the conflict is that there are multiple perspectives that include social perspectives, in which one Christian community may set in motion to not obey a set commandment because the present culture views it as unacceptable or old-fashioned. The conflict between the multiple perspectives of the world that Jesus challenged in his time is not different from the challenges that the modern-day Christian is challenged with.

The Prophets by Abraham J. Heschel states, that the basic feature of pathos and the primary content of the prophet's consciousness is a divine attentiveness and concern and it is the concern of God for man that is at the root of the prophet's to save the people.⁶⁹ Heschel argues that the fundamental thought in the Bible is not creation but the care of God for his creation and that all men care for the world but the prophet cares for God's care, so the prophet may be driven

⁶⁸ Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 49.

⁶⁹ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 618.

to be careless about everything else.⁷⁰ In adding and proposing a new direction, this shows that the primary concern for a prophet should be God and that although there may be other concerns that present themselves to the prophet or the church, God should always be first as Jesus Christ commanded in the Bible. So, one of the major bridges from the Old Testament prophets to the New Testament evangelists and writers is that the presence of God is the source and the love for God by the Christian is a requirement to sustain everlasting life in the community of God.

Competent to Counsel by Jay E. Adams argues, nouthetic counseling which is described to have three essential elements, which implies a problem, and an obstacle that must be overcome, and that something is wrong in the life of the person being confronted.⁷¹ Adams argues, that the life in which a disciple is disciplined who endeavors to live is the same life of discipline and training for eternal holiness, which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived out perfectly, and this life lived according to God's commandments grows out of the same training that Christ put forth.⁷² In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that this approach by Adams is to confront sin in counseling. There is a debate within the Christian community and in non-Christian environments on a counselor being confrontational to the counselee on the nature of the sin of the person and how this can play in the overall session of dealing with grief, suffering, and emotions. One of the focal points of apologetics is how to answer a person in defending the word

⁷⁰ Heschel, 619.

⁷¹ Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 44.

⁷² Adams, 161.

of God, which in some denominations of Christianity it is to defend the word of God in a humble and lovingly way, while others may be confrontational, and others may argue on what is the true nature of why a person may be behaving in the way that they are. In a world, where confrontation seems to be the norm in dealing with conflict or problems, the Christian is challenged to take the approach of defending scripture in a loving and humble way while not being afraid to speak the truth of scripture.

A Survey of the Old Testament by Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton states, that David is a prime example of a righteous man vindicated, including his conflict with Saul, in his conflict with Absalom, and on a national and eschatological scale in the development of the Davidic covenant.⁷³ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. In adding and proposing a new direction, the covenant shows God's commitment to those who have committed to God so the committed ones are covered by the covenants of God therefore the ones who have committed to God may have internal and external conflicts such as David did, or interpersonal conflicts, but God is always committed to preserving his kingdom and having them be a resident or member of his community.

Jesus & the Land by Charles R. Page II states, that the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, following the arrest of John the Baptist and his execution, his popularity had grown, and that people were looking for a charismatic leader, religious or civil, and John the Baptist and Jesus

⁷³ Andrew E. Hill, and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 348.

also must have inspired the people.⁷⁴ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the threat to human governmental authority is that the popularity of a person can attract followers and the larger the numbers the more of a threat that person may be to certain authorities in society. For example, popularity in modern time comes in different forms such as through social media, or how someone may provide an opinion through a network of people who may have similar interests. This social media popularity that can cause conflict did not necessarily exist during the time of Jesus. In the time of Christ, drawing many followers or people who believe in a message could be deemed as a threat to the government simply for having many followers or people attending someone giving a sermon such as Jesus Christ did. This type of conflict exists with modern ministry but ministry in today's time looks a little bit different from the ministry of Jesus or his early followers. Ministry is accepted more as a norm in the modern world to gather in large numbers. Gathering in large numbers in modern day usually is not problematic, provided that, people are not gathering in the ministry to rebel against the current laws of the land. Rebellion or adverse thoughts against the authority structure is what draws the attention of authorities and this is what drew the attention of the authority structure in ancient time to Jesus in that they felt he was leading a rebellion and was becoming powerful.

Good Morning, Holy Spirit by Benny Hinn states, that the Holy Spirit is one's great defender.⁷⁵ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been

⁷⁴ Charles R. Page, II, *Jesus & the Land* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 96-97.

⁷⁵ Benny Hinn, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 71.

made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that how does one deal with multiple perspectives in modern time. For example, a Christian apologist does not defend the word of God, it is through the strength that God has given through the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost that one is able to engage someone on an alternative perspective. God leads the believer to the true defense on the authority and truthfulness of God in the scripture.

True Discipleship by John M. Koessler states, that the Holy Spirit's ministry equips the church for service, and that he is the source of spiritual gifts and that there is a divide between different groups of Christians who believe all gifts are still functioning while others do not believe that all gifts are functioning in the current age.⁷⁶ This is referencing 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 that prophecy and tongues would cease when that which is perfect is come than that which is in part should be done away.⁷⁷ Also, Acts 2:43 serves as a reference point where many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.⁷⁸ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is how the church deals with multiple perspectives and conflict in the body of Christ on the spiritual gifts. For example, in the civilian world and military world there are many denominations, such as pastors and chaplains who prescribe to different functions of ministry on how the Christian body should operate. But while there may be many different denominations say in the military, these pastors

⁷⁶ John M. Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 66.

⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. This book outlines charity never fails, but whether there be prophecies they will fail, whether there are tongues they will cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away, for one knows in part and prophesies in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is done in part shall be done away.

⁷⁸ Acts 2:43. This book outlines that fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

and chaplains still must follow a military code. What these individuals are faced with is multiple perspectives and conflict or dilemmas that may present itself to them and figuring out how to navigate through the channels of command in service to God and country. This is just one example out of many that one can provide but this allows for the reader to imagine and have an illustration of one's own study on conflict and multiple perspectives in Christian ministry.

New Testament Survey by Walter M. Dunnnett explains, that there were periods in the first century when the church felt the pangs of suffering and hardship.⁷⁹ Dunnnett uses the books of James being a treatise on the faith that endures in the face of all obstacles, Hebrews is written to Jewish converts and reflecting on the serious conditions at the time, and 1 Peter also being concerned with this problem of suffering mentioning the word 17 times for the suffering of Christ and his people.⁸⁰ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the suffering which relates to the conflict that arises in those who choose to follow God is documented in scripture. Conflict that may come in various ways to the believer is a part of the suffering and hardship of the conflicting multiple perspectives in the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. So, the Christian when one delves into the scripture and allows God to speak to them is taught by God in the scripture that the world will provide multiple perspectives and it shows how the followers of God dealt with that conflict and the Bible shows that the body of Christ would be challenged but the covenant of God provides victory to those who keep the covenant in their hearts and minds.

⁷⁹ Walter M. Dunnnett, *New Testament Survey: Broadening Your Biblical Horizons* (Wheaton: Evangelical Training Association, 2003), 67.

⁸⁰ Dunnnett, 67.

Power in the Pulpit by Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix states, that biblical truth is best applied when the preacher of a sermon knows as much as possible about the contemporary man and how he lives life today, which will enable him to flow between the world of the Bible and the present time so that the listeners can receive the message.⁸¹ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that in delivering sermons, the preacher needs to show the congregation, the connection between the biblical tradition and present world and how the conflict shown in the Bible relates to the modern world. The Christian is charged with showing the people and how the God of the Bible has cared for them and why God should rule his or her life. This theology in having faith in God in the face of conflict builds on the faith of the Christian and why he or she should understand the many conflicting perspectives that exist in the world, but how the perspective to love God over all things should rule in the life of the Christian.

Pastoral Ministry in the Real World by Jim L. Wilson states, that one of the great genres of movies is that of the westerns, and in these movies the protagonist always wore the white hats and the antagonists always wore the black hats, and in conflict most people race to grab the white hat for themselves and quickly assign the black hat for the other side, which one may take sides.⁸² In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that different genres from film, television, music,

⁸¹ Jerry Vines, and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 182-183.

⁸² Jim L. Wilson, *Pastoral Ministry in the Real World: Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's People* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015), 117.

paint certain pictures that may or may not be true, and people tend to believe or take the approach that is presented to them through the arts or those who hold trusted positions in their life such as a close family member or friends or in another way of looking at it those one may work for and have confidence in to represent them. In the current world, people seem to rush to conclusions without definitive evidence. But, most times, people do not necessarily view themselves as the antagonists but more as the protagonist, the one who is in the right.

Doxology and Theology by Matt Boswell states, that the church believes theology is the occupation of pastors and professors, while also believing that the business of worship is the business of church musicians and songwriters, and because of this the churches are suffering because people do not understand that the greatest truths of the gospel have always been designed to cause the greatest praise.⁸³ Boswell argues, that theology is not just for the elite but for all the people of God and that one of the promises of the new covenant is that God has written the law upon the heart of the people, which is a reference to Hebrews 10:16.⁸⁴ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that with the incorporation of multiple perspectives the contemporary person is given ideals that multiple laws can rule one's life, while in truth the law of God is the only commandment and covenant that should exist in the hearts and minds of the people.

⁸³ Matt Boswell, *Doxology and Theology: How the Gospel Forms the Worship Leader* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013), 1.

⁸⁴ Boswell, 6.

Hebrews 10:16 states that the covenant of God, which is putting the laws in the hearts and into the minds and scripture is needed to help people understand what God expects of the world.⁸⁵

What Is Biblical Theology by James M. Hamilton, Jr. states, that the Bible is set in the world as one may know it, most of the story happens in the three bodies of land around the Mediterranean Sea, but the story covers the whole world, where God built the set or created the world, a place where he is known, served, worshipped, and present.⁸⁶ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the Bible shows God from the beginning to the end and outlines the grand story of God as creator and showing concern for his creation through the entire Bible. The conflict that is endured comes from believing and following alternative perspectives for the world. The believer is challenged by scripture to follow the law of God and this causes conflict for the person because to be accepted in the world one is told to accept what the world offers but the Bible says otherwise and that is to follow God and nothing else, which causes conflict for the Christian.

Leading in Prayer by Hughes O. Old states, that when thanking God for his mighty acts of creation and redemption that covenant theology is most clear, and from the standpoint of biblical theology of worship, where remembrance and thanksgiving are profound ideas.⁸⁷ Old

⁸⁵ Hebrews 10:16. This book outlines that Lord saying the covenant, that he will put his laws into their hearts, and in their minds, he will write them.

⁸⁶ James M. Hamilton, Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology: A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 27.

⁸⁷ Hughes O. Old, *Leading in Prayer: A Workbook of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1995), 236.

states, that the Eucharistic prayer with its hymnic recital of human history showing that God was in Christ affirms that one has a history with God and that the biblical understanding of thanksgiving in one's recognition of God.⁸⁸ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the remembrance and thanksgiving of the commandments and covenants of God allows for the believer to strengthen oneself in a fallen world of multiple perspectives and conflict, and to celebrate God the creator in the form in which one has been created to do. The Christian who worships and prays to God combats conflict that may come in different forms. When one's heart and mind venture away from God allows for evil to lie in wait to devour the person who has set aside the tools that gives them success in succeeding and not falling victim to conflict.

Plowing in Hope by David B. Hegeman argues, that while one should never lose sight of the antithesis, using 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, with Paul saying to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and viewing culture from a earth-transformational perspective in line with the principles of scripture will help the culture compromise with non-biblical values, and the unbelieving cultures one may encounter.⁸⁹ Hegeman argues, that the antithesis is the idea that there are two groups of people in the world, which includes two kingdoms, one under the lordship of God and the other under evil, put there by God himself, in which one must take sides and there is no neutrality.⁹⁰ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective

⁸⁸ Old, 237.

⁸⁹ David B. Hegeman, *Plowing in Hope: Toward A Biblical Theology of Culture* (Moscow: Canon Press, 1999), 20.

⁹⁰ Hegeman, 114.

that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that when multiple perspectives present itself, one set of people may view what they are doing as right or truth, while another set of people may view it as wrong or some way of falsity. One aspect of life is to ask who is leading one, is it the commands of the people in authority such as modern leadership or is one being led by the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. In the Christian community, there are multiple perspectives and different sets of belief and nobody views their side as the evil side. But what is commanding the person's life? Is it the ideals of what society places in law or is the commandments and covenants of the Bible? A person who professes and makes a claim to be a Christian must ask what reasoning is being used to make decisions in one's own life.

A Light to the Nations by Michael W. Goheen argues, that the redemption seen in the Exodus has been interpreted as an image of spiritual deliverance in the tradition of liberation theology in an image of political liberation, while on the other hand, the secular and dualistic view of the western culture makes it difficult for one to see the way the ancient peoples would have seen it.⁹¹ Goheen argues that the authority of the pharaoh was fundamentally a political matter, in which the people of Israel were under an idolatrous system, in which they could not serve and worship the Lord, and God brings his people from a redeemed community to a covenant community, where God defines his relationship with his people.⁹² In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in

⁹¹ Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic. 2011), 33.

⁹² Goheen, 33-35.

another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that when a group of people are in bondage the belief of the oppressor can become the belief of the oppressed and have the oppressed believe what the oppressor believes. In this case, laws may be made to hinder or force people to act in a specified way and when those laws challenge the Christian ethics of a person, how does that person respond? In the modern world, when laws are made, people lobby the government. Lobbying can go either way, to lobby for or against a law being made or the keeping of a law on the books. But the importance of lobbying in the discussion of the relationship of God to multiple perspectives is that God is the one influencing and not being influenced showing his supreme authority. God influences the behavior of his people by writing the commandments and covenants in their hearts and minds allowing for them to know how to love him in one's own life.

The Measure of a Healthy Church by Gene Getz argues, that one can predict a mixture of cultural and religious values can create unusual problems, such that the church may be a unified body of believers all in one in Christ, there are always conflict when people are mixed from different social and ethnic backgrounds, where people have different attitudes, values, and doctrines.⁹³ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the Christian who is challenged by multiple perspectives in the modern world needs to look pass the social and ethnic backgrounds of people, and the Christian must center in on the attitude, value, and doctrine of scripture and that of the teachings of Jesus Christ, who brought all people into subjection under the one true

⁹³ Gene Getz, *The Measure of a Healthy Church: How God Defines Greatness in a Church* (Chicago: Moody Press. 1995), 115.

God. This allows for the Christian to build a healthy love based on the commandments and covenants of God that brings people into the love of God shown in the Bible.

Created for Community by Stanley J. Grenz argues, that the way the biblical community of faith responded to the conflict of the gods offers a model of someone can declare faith in which many gods are increasingly pervading society, and the example of the biblical faith community provides an example that one cannot limit oneself to intellectual argumentation but on living out and embodying one's faith in life.⁹⁴ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that creation was created for God and community was created by God when he made Adam and took Eve from the rib of Adam. So, the community was created by God and therefore the world exists to bring community to each other as described by Christ to love one another, while ultimately grabbing a hold of the great commandment to love God first and foremost.

Preaching the New Testament by Ian Paul and David Wenham argues, that Jesus in Matthew is not a Jewish legalist, even when he refers to the least of the commandments, he is teaching the authority of God, he is bringing a new covenant, which is the fulfillment of the old.⁹⁵ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish

⁹⁴ Stanley J. Grenz, *Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 35.

⁹⁵ Ian Paul, and David Wenham, *Preaching in the New Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 77.

leadership was for Jesus to establish the kingdom of God in earth and to show the connection of the Old Testament commandments and covenants to the New Testament covenants being established on the hearts and in the minds of the people.

Managing Church Conflict by Hugh F. Halverstadt argues, that while Christian religiosity mostly operates to preserve the status quo, but Christian faithfulness operates to challenge and change the status quo, and this causes inner conflict, which causes emotional conflict between believers.⁹⁶ Halverstadt argues, that because church conflicts occur in voluntary situations, these structures entice and permit unaccountable uses of power, and through this individual members may pursue individual conscience or vision because there may not be an institutional channel or authorization that the church has to go through.⁹⁷ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that one is going to deal with conflict and multiple perspectives in the church. The church is accountable to the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture and the Christian needs to be resilient to laws that change or challenge the way the Bible outlines that one should live in the world.

Change Agent by Os Hillman argues, that there is a mountain of education and in order to reclaim this, that a spiritual renewal is needed among educators in the nation, and that the god of education today is knowledge that is not based on truth, and that the Old Testament describes a conflict between Greece, which represents knowledge-based systems, and Hebraic which is

⁹⁶ Hugh F. Halverstadt, *Managing Church Conflict* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 2.

⁹⁷ Halverstadt, 3.

based on obedience-based intimacy with God.⁹⁸ This is referencing Zechariah 9:13 referencing Judah and Greece.⁹⁹ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the authority of God in scripture is being highlighted in the Old Testament that connects to the New Testament that builds a solid foundation for the authority of God that crosses all cultures by this referencing. The Bible covers the geography of the world in its way of showing the authority of God through the world and the universe.

Seasons of a Leader's Life by Jeff Iorg argues, that personal apologetics is not about attacking the confused person because their thoughts are the result of false teachers or errant teaching and remembering this distinction will allow for a better conversation rather than a lecture.¹⁰⁰ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that this is the time where a person who may be struggling with an issue regarding faith, can experience a truth-telling experience and the apologist can incorporate the Bible into the discussion to bridge a gap that may be present in the person's understanding. This is important for the Christian to engage the world.

⁹⁸ Os Hillman, *Change Agent: Engaging Your Passion to be the One Who Makes a Difference* (Lake Mary: Charisma House, 2011), 186.

⁹⁹ Zechariah 9:13. This book outlines that Israel will be defended against enemies and that God will save his people that Judah has bent his bow, fitted the bow with Ephraim, and raised up the sons of Zion against the sons of Greece, and made them like the sword of a mighty man.

¹⁰⁰ Jeff Iorg, *Seasons of a Leader's Life: Learning, Leading, and Leaving Your Legacy* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013), 218.

Unapologetic Theology by William C. Placher argues, that apologetics traditionally is part of Christian theology and it is devoted to defending Christian faith to a non-Christian audience and that it can be an honorable enterprise; but it can be risky because someone can adopt the languages and assumptions of the audience so thoroughly that they no longer speak with a distinct Christian voice, and with this modern intellectual period, tradition and authority are not in the consideration.¹⁰¹ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the Bible to some is considered conservative or past tense compared to liberal thinking, which some consider present tense or modern day. The institutional environment requires a certain level of rational, reasoning, or logic that falls more on the line of scientific and requires certain methods of carrying out research in the learned society of the present day, while the Bible is not relied upon in the educational or sciences as a beginning point of universally acceptable standards. This includes the modern person not using the Bible as law, and some view the Bible as being a conflict to modern equality in the modern law. So, the authority of the Bible is not necessarily viewed as the authority because many people view it as not speaking the language of multiple perspectives thus modern law supports multiple perspectives because the current culture engages with and incorporates multiple intellectual systems that do not have the same perspective of the Bible.

How Does America Hear the Gospel by William A. Dyrness argues, that it is clear the culture cannot conceive the relation between the gospel and culture in any single way, and

¹⁰¹ William C. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 11.

assumes that in some sense Christ is in culture and that the call of God comes to people through their own experiences and history, but as soon as one accepts Christ one will feel some tension on following Christ or following cultural norms.¹⁰² In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that this provides a Christian the reality of different perspectives, and the opportunity to either be shaped by the culture of the Bible or by that of the culture in which one may live in. So, in the current culture, the beliefs of the Bible conflict with that of the western culture on how the gospel is followed in today's time.

Teaching the Bible in the Church by John M. Bracke and Karen B. Tye argues, that they largely agree with Dyrness, although he has a broader concern, and some of this concern that the conflict between the United States and the American gospel expresses cultural differences, which someone could be tempted to defend American culture against biblical cultures that someone may see as not only different but inferior and wrong.¹⁰³ The authors argue, that the church is dealing with cultural conflict, which focuses on intercultural education, that is developing an awareness of the cultural differences that people bring to the biblical texts and an appreciation and respect for those differences.¹⁰⁴ Bracke and Tye argue, that only by examining a text from a variety of perspectives is one likely to see the rich ways the Bible may address one.¹⁰⁵ In entering

¹⁰² William A. Dyrness, *How Does America Hear the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 24.

¹⁰³ John M. Bracke, and Karen B. Tye, *Teaching the Bible in the Church* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 92-93.

¹⁰⁴ Bracke, and Tye, 98.

¹⁰⁵ Bracke, and Tye, 135.

this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the confession of someone claiming to be a Christian is a challenge to the person on should one participate in what is considered a cultural norm, or should the person reject the ideas that conflict with what they confess to believe. For example, in university studies the blending of different perspectives is the model of the modern world so no matter who is in the class it most likely will be a different interpretation of scripture when more than one student is present in the course and there may even be different opinions between instructor and student on the meaning of a specific scripture or different opinions on the Bible. So, as one can see there are arguments for a variety of perspectives. One takes the stance that having various interpretations can cause a person claiming Christianity to lose sight of what being a Christian means when one integrates too many interpretations of scriptures and does not rely on what God speaks to them in the scripture. This can cause conflict between the culture of the Bible covenants and commandments, which are at the center of this thesis that focuses on multiple issues such as modern issues, for example, what is the definition or equivalent of equality for the modern day in comparison to biblical authority in today's world.

The Foundations of Spiritual Formation by Paul Pettit argues, that spiritual formation involves attention both to inside considered as heart work and outside considered mouth work, and the inner life encompasses various aspects including those of conscious, thoughts, self-talk, and conversations with God, desires, and aspirations.¹⁰⁶ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to

¹⁰⁶ Paul Pettit, *The Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2008), 126.

build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the conflict that may arise when differing opinions occur that challenge the life of the Christian includes the Christian being conflicted with the heart on matters of the mouth on what he or she may be hearing from different leaders and how this may be affecting what the Christian may believe. For example, a Christian may be faced with a work matter that may conflict with one's faith and thus requires the Christian to discern truth and issues of the heart. The challenge of getting to know God while at the same time struggling to know one's own self and dealing with how to stay grounded in the Bible while living in a world that many times uses everything but the Bible to make decisions can cause an emotional struggle and a spiritual conflict in the life of a Christian.

Ethics for Christian Ministry by Joe E. Trull and Robert Creech contends, that secularization outgrew the Christian monopoly of western civilization, and as new views challenged past traditions, a plurality or pluralism created many ideas and problems because it bred relativism, which contends that there is no one view of reality and all ideas are equal in value.¹⁰⁷ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the many ideas that exist in the American culture is the many cultures that have different opinions on the Bible within the American society who also may claim to be a Christian. There are many different perspectives that find its way into the church and this causes different outlooks on how people follow the Bible. American culture integrates multiple value systems into one, but the Christian is challenged to be

¹⁰⁷ Joe E. Trull, and Robert Creech, *Ethics for Christian Ministry: Moral Formation for Twenty-First Century Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 21.

committed to God's system, no matter who it may offend, one must take the stance that it is better to love God over all things.

Questions and Answers on Death and Dying by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross states, that through her experience, ninety-five percent of patients that they had studied were a little bit religious, but not genuine and authentic; and these people had an additional concern about life after death such as punishment, regrets, and guilt about what they deemed as missed opportunities, and it mentioned that many of people who had alternative beliefs to Christianity were more at peace than the Christian who had difficulties accepting death.¹⁰⁸ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is that the trials and tribulations of a modern-day Christian should be assured by the ministry of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the early Christians on the modern person not wanting to pass away but understanding that Christ was resurrected for living a perfect life. The pastor or leader is uniquely positioned to assure the Christian that if one has confessed Christ and asks him to be the Lord of his or her life and this person holds a true belief and faith that Jesus Christ is who he says he is and was resurrected, one should not be afraid of the outcome of death. The outcome of a true believer in God through his only begotten son Jesus Christ should be a life that follows a similar ending of the one who came to free one from sin, and the part of the Christian is living a worry-free life.

Every Name of God in the Bible by Lawrence O. Richards state, that biblical covenants are statements of God's purposes, which are expressed as promises, often associated with

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying: A Companion Volume to On Death and Dying* (New York: Ross Medical Associates/MacMillan, 1974), 162.

binding oaths, and the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenants see history's end for their fulfillment.¹⁰⁹ In entering this discussion and offering a new Christian perspective that continues the discussion but takes it in another direction and to build on this specific argument that has been made is to identify what is missing. The gap is to show that the covenants provide an eternal agreement and security to the ones who follow God to be free from conflict. For example, the new covenants provide assurance that through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, brings the conflict that exists in the world as one may see it to a pivotal reality that forms the believer into an eternal life living in the presence of God.

Old Testament Theology by Paul R. House argues, that one has the benefit of the perspective of Job 1-2 and that Job represents all the Old Testament figures who were caught in history between harsh reality and full revelation of God's ways and his first three friends have reached an impasse, with neither side able to change the other, while Elihu a fourth friend seeks to break the deadlock by explaining God's ways to the four debaters.¹¹⁰ What is missing is how to deal with conflict and in adding and proposing a new direction, the story of Job shows multiple perspectives and conflict through the interaction between Job and his friends. The friends of Job provided an alternative perspective on why calamity had come upon him. So, the Bible shows not just in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament how the followers of God will be faced with multiple perspectives and conflict that will sometimes challenge one's own Christian belief system. The Christian need to focus on what does scripture say regarding a

¹⁰⁹ Lawrence O. Richards, *Every Name of God in the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 231.

¹¹⁰ Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 435.

particular problem especially when faced with those who are in trusted positions of counsel such as a friend.

New Testament Theology by Leon Morris states, that each of the evangelists have their own perspective but one should not think of the theology of the individual writers as being all important in the gospels bearing their names but that each one is writing about Jesus.¹¹¹ This perspective from Morris focused on viewing theology from the legitimacy of the selection of material that the writer has made and to ask what the writer means. So, what is missing is how does one deal with the multiple perspectives, interpretations, and conflict of those living in today's time and how to apply those differences from what the writers of the Bible wrote and how to focus modern Christians on how to love God.

The Leadership Lessons of Jesus by Bob Briner and Ray Pritchard states, that the chief difference between management and leadership is the way those being managed are motivated.¹¹² Briner and Pritchard argue, that Jesus was both the greatest manager and the greatest leader of all time, and that both of his management and leadership skills should be emulated and prized. What is missing is that there are multiple perspectives and conflict on management and leadership styles, and these styles find themselves in ministry. So, the Christian leader is faced with how to manage and lead in ministry when others may have different interpretations of the Bible.

These textual references do not directly call out multiple perspectives or state the terminology of multiple perspectives or even index multiple perspectives or necessarily address

¹¹¹ Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 91-92.

¹¹² Bob Briner, and Ray Pritchard, *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 18-19.

the conflict of multiple perspectives in Christian ministry. This researcher can engage texts such as these to show that multiple perspectives and conflict is important although individual writers may not use the terminology of multiple perspectives and conflict regarding Christian ministry. The problem of multiple perspectives and conflict does exist in Christian ministry, and this researcher is breaking ground in addressing it in formulating theory and practice on multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry. There does not seem to have been research done that addresses the problem of multiple perspectives and conflict directly in ministry, and there does not seem to have been research beforehand to prove that multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry can be resolved by designing approaches for Christians to follow the commandments and covenants of God in addressing this type of conflict in ministry. This researcher is proving that there is a problem and there is a gap in the literature. Also, the scriptural references provided by this researcher show the Bible presenting the problem of multiple perspectives and conflict, and how that can impact the life of a follower of God.

Theological Foundations

Ministry could be considered one of the most important topics in relation to the ones who worship the Father and believe in the testimony of Jesus Christ. *One God Father Almighty* by John Behr mentions, that leaving aside for now the eschatological understanding of creation, the point is clear that the statement adopted by all creeds, “One God Father Almighty,” is precisely a theological statement: Father, is the name of God, and by virtue of God as the Father, through the Son, the Father is Almighty, having omnipotence, and this is not as a craftsman over inert matter, but one who works through reason and persuasion, bringing all things into rational and free

subjection to himself so that God is all in all.¹¹³ This includes truthfully loving the commandments and covenants of God and loving the authority of God found in the Bible. The challenge of multiple perspectives in ministry has been longstanding regarding opposing viewpoints on biblical canon in contemporary time within the Christian community and outside of the Christian community on the authority of God in scripture. The self-professing leader is charged and commanded in the Bible to carry the message of Jesus Christ as a witness to the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The church is challenged in the modern-day life on contemporary issues and the church faces multiple perspectives on biblical canon and the Christian faces many conflicts that threaten its belief system in the contemporary day. Multiple perspectives on biblical canon and Christian conflict do not only apply to the modern world. This also applied to those who lived in earlier times and ancient times who were charged with spreading a New Testament message connected to the Old Testament that started the early church. The Bible commands one to feed the flock of God that is among one taking the oversight thereof not by constraint or filthy lucre but of a ready mind.¹¹⁴ The Christian is challenged to be of a clear and pure mind to lead and build a healthier and stronger church. There was constant conflict during the life of Jesus Christ in his ministry in which Jesus Christ presented to an old community that had become used to operating one way when Jesus Christ came along and provided a New Testament built on Old Testament scripture. This led to a Christian community built by Jesus who was both Jewish as well as a preacher.

¹¹³ John Behr. "One God Father Almighty." *Modern Theology*, 34:3 (July 2018): 324.

¹¹⁴ 1 Peter 5:2. This book commands the leaders of the church to feed the flock that is among them and taking oversight not by constraint but willingly not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind.

Jesus Christ said to Peter, one of his disciples, that he would build the church upon this rock and that nothing would prevail against the church.¹¹⁵ Jesus Christ was telling of future events of his church and that his church would withstand the test of time and last to the end of time. This can be referred to as eschatology in theological terms. *Acts, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* by Darrell Bock mentions, in Acts 2 that Peter makes a connection to Jesus as the risen Messiah and explains that the spirit has been bestowed, having received from the Father, which reflects on Jesus highlighting the activity of the Father as the key to the activity of Jesus.¹¹⁶ Acts 2 shows the significance of the teaching and preaching of Jesus and him connecting himself to the Father and that of the Holy Spirit and the church.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, *The Acts of the Apostles* by Ben Witherington mentions, that Luke-Acts bear some strong resemblance to earlier Greek historiographic in method and form and the general arrangement includes some similarities to Hellenized Jewish historiography in content and general apologetics aims.¹¹⁸ To this date, the church continues to experience conflict but nothing has been able to prevail against the church and nothing has been able to make the church go away even through all of the persecution that Jesus Christ experienced and the persecution of his early followers and even to his present followers. The church still is relevant in the modern day. The church still exists today but the church is faced with multiple perspectives. *Matthew Henry's*

¹¹⁵ Matthew 16:18. This book explains how Jesus said unto Peter and upon this rock Jesus would build his church and that nothing would prevail against his church.

¹¹⁶ Darrell Bock, *Acts, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 57.

¹¹⁷ Acts 2. This book shows a sermon from Peter, the growing of the church, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of Jesus Christ connected to the Father.

¹¹⁸ Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 39.

Concise Commentary by Matthew Henry mentions, that the epistle was written when Paul was a prisoner at Rome and that the design of the epistle appears to be written to strengthen the Ephesians in the faith of Christ and to provide exalted views of the love of God and of the excellence and dignity of Christ, fortifying their minds on the cross.¹¹⁹

The theological part of this research will address multiple perspectives as it relates to the Christian in the world from a biblical approach, theological approach, apologetics approach, contextual approach, practical approach, and academic approach in building a Christian ethical system. The theological foundations are built off the trinitarian model. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* by Philip Towner mentions, that 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus have been known as the Pastoral Epistles (PE) from about the eighteenth century and as early as the second century they have been grouped together with the broader Pauline corpus and that these are the only Pauline letters addressed to individual coworkers rather than directly to churches.¹²⁰ On the other hand, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* by Gregory Beale and Donald Carson mention, in the remainder of 1 Timothy several texts employ Old Testament diction and concepts that became a part of the early church's lexicon.¹²¹ The theological foundations are built upon and written to honor, worship, and love the Father as the Bible tells one to do from the Old Testament to the New Testament including very specific statements by Jesus Christ commanding one to love God and the teachings and preaching about the Holy Spirit

¹¹⁹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (WORD Search, 2011), Introduction to Ephesians.

¹²⁰ Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 1.

¹²¹ Gregory Beale, and Donald Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 902.

and to build a Christian community that loves one another through following the commandments and covenants of God.

Mostly, every person involved in ministry is faced with challenges. Some experience conflict more than others. In ministry, learning and understanding what may be needed in dealing with and maintaining a Christian community devoted and committed to teaching and preaching biblical canon is important. There are three main themes that this thesis works on in a ministry context. These theological themes are (1) Christian, (2) Conflict, and (3) Multiple Perspectives. In the context of ministry, this is the course of ministry for one's own modern ministry on how the person in ministry takes on the challenges that may arise from one selecting to believe in the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. *Practical Missional Hospitality in a Suburban Church* by Kevin Stewart mentions, that missional hospitality cannot be confined to a church building or a home but must seek out in the solidarity of everyday life patterns.¹²² Jesus took a approach where he did not sit around and wait for people to come to him and explain their problems but Jesus took his ministry to the masses, the crowds, he went inside of homes, he ministered inside of the synagogue, he ministered outside, and Jesus had such a presence that there was not a barrier to his ministry. This is a ministry context that Jesus Christ followed, that needs to be adopted by the church which is the ministry context of Jesus Christ not allowing barriers and proclaiming the authority and truthfulness of God in biblical canon everywhere one may be. The importance of preaching and teaching according to the scriptures and believing that biblical canon is the inspiration of God and is directed for the Christian to love the Father as the writers of the Bible were inspired by God to lead other people to God. The importance of understanding how to teach, preach, and write, in relation to ministry and interacting and

¹²² Kevin Stewart, "Practicing Missional Hospitality in a Suburban Church," *Discernment: Theology and the Practice of Ministry*, vol. 3(2) (2017): 32.

engaging in an effective ministry context is for the person to understand the Bible as the authority of God and how these fit into their own lives as the disciples of Jesus Christ came to understand through the teaching, preaching, and revelation of Jesus Christ to them.

In a theological sense, the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture can relate to the order of the world. The natural order in philosophy deals with the moral sense in which the natural law derives its foundation on authority from what is considered natural laws. This set of authority can relate to having a set of standards that can be broken into parts, say for example, different religions, different philosophical points of view, different parts of the world, different denominations, to name some. *Mere Apologetics* by Avery C. Dulles states that C.S. Lewis believed it was possible to demonstrate God's existence, and that God's existence was vastly more likely than his non-existence.¹²³ Dulles argues that what C.S. Lewis meant by "mere Christianity" is that the common practices and doctrines that are enshrined in scripture and the early creeds of the church are the foundation for most churches. In addition, the Christian religion needs to rely on scripture and do not need to rely on multiple perspectives in different religions, philosophies, or different parts of the world for guidance. This is a way of defining for one's own people, say for example, the American people on what is deemed as moral and immoral behavior, which can relate to who or what is considered good and who or what is considered evil in society to understand that God sent his son to save the world. Ethics come in understanding the moral behavior of an individual, a group, or religious groups even those within their own society. In the current culture, the act of rejecting something that is alternative to someone else's belief is looked at as wrong but from the scripture one is challenged at different

¹²³ Avery C. Dulles, "Mere Apologetics," *A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, iss. 154 (2005): 15.

times to either select what is right or not. In biblical canon, going against set commandments and covenants from God leads to rejection from God by not conforming to the conditions of God as it relates to the scripture and in the outside world. In a way of looking at this, one could look at comparing these multiple perspectives and contrasting these multiple perspectives. This can also include creating new models to deal with conflict in ministry on how this contributes to ministry in the sense of theological foundations. Some may ask, what are the necessities of life? This question may create a reality for a person on what they really believe. Do they believe in all the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ taught and preached from the authority of the Father having authority over all things. How should the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian? In the church, how does the church influence the modern world on the fact that God himself existed from the beginning and has no end date.

In business terms, perpetuity goes to the form of annuities. Certain things that seem to never end or happen over long periods of time such as paying into 401 K or saving up for retirement or even after retirement making sure one has enough to pay bills or paying insurance premiums is the way of the modern world of relying on finances. If one wants to own a car or house, then one needs to work to maintain a certain way of living, and with this work a person plans for living a good life. In doing this, a person needs to consider taxes, which come in all forms of the world. This also includes a person considering other things that seem to have long payment periods so that someone can have the deemed necessities of life or a good life. Biblical law or divine law seeks the direct authority from God, the creator of all things. The multiple perspectives regarding scripture leads to multiple perspectives and conflict on what is law. Jesus Christ many times in scripture directs people to pray to receive guidance from God. On the other

hand, positive law directs people in other ways outside of praying. Positive law can be looked at as what is right and wrong from a government perspective of authority. Positive law looks at law from legal theories that have been set through case work and precedent law through jurisprudence. But as seen in law every case is different and every judge and jury follows their own set of rules and standards. This has been established by their own governing law such as different American states of government have different laws on the books for similar types of cases and depending on the civil law or criminal law a defendant may receive a different sentence. So, where this is leading is that even in one's own country, there may very well be a differing of opinions on what punishment fits the crime. This leads to a conflict of what constitutes and leads people to freedom and how one achieves the maximum state of happiness or the maximum state of punishment by legal standards. But for the law of God there are specific commandments and covenants that he gives for the world to follow and his law does not vary it stays the same no matter the territory, region, place, or system. Others may equate that the belief in God leads to ultimate happiness while others may view their state of happiness to economic matters.

There is a saying in the United States military forces, to never leave a fallen warrior behind. This saying and form of ethics and ethos for the U.S. military can be applied to an earlier biblical saying such as love one another or love your neighbor. The reason why the military saying can be applied to this biblical saying is that the saying takes the focus off self where the person needs to think about others in which he or she may be serving in the military side by side. The military ethics in this terminology is one of the basic pillars or foundations that makes up why no military comrade should leave their fallen soldier behind because it is important to be loyal to his or her service members. The theological foundations of the church as it relates to

multiple perspectives in Christianity is a call to those who have been captured in war or conflict and the countless people who have not lived through war or conflict because the church needs to be committed to serving Christ. The call to Christians shows the culture of telling people who are in the Christian faith who may be struggling with issues of the faith to love God with their whole existence and to influence someone's beliefs in the strength that God gives Christians in telling people about his truth. So, the countless people who are still out there when it is applied to a military conflict in the Christian faith is to reach out to those who may be poor, sick, or in prison, or lacking strength in life in some way as shown in the Bible or even outside the faith have the God given right to not be forgotten. The search for those imprisoned in life will never end as Jesus Christ in the Bible made strong statements about his life where he clearly proclaimed to be the Christ that has victory over his enemies. For example, in the Bible, Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1-2, he says in Luke 4:17-21, that he came to free people and he mentions the poor, the sick, and those who are captive in life.¹²⁴ Jesus Christ shows people of the conflict that exists in the world and proclaims the Father as the ultimate authority over all things who sent Jesus Christ his son forth to address the problems of the world. Jesus Christ also connected the Old Testament scriptures to his ministry that established Christianity. The statements from Jesus Christ made clear that he was sent from the Father and he came to free a world that had become imprisoned. Jesus Christ is leading a different kind of mission to bring people to a committed relationship to the Father. So, the church needs to make a commitment in creating a stronger and loving relationship with the Father which will provide spiritual nourishment to the Christian community

¹²⁴ Isaiah 61, Luke 4:17-21. These books show that the book of the prophet Esaias was delivered unto Jesus and he opened the book and found the place where it was written that the spirit of the Lord was upon him because God had anointed him to preach the gospel to the poor and had sent him to the heal the brokenhearted and to preach to the captives and recovering the sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and he closed the book and he gave it to the minister and sat down and all eyes that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

as unified but also to those in desperate need to join and connect to the Father. For the believer, seeking out God in theology is for the believer to take a journey of faith not just to provide for oneself a life with the Father but to present this same information to others to include all the creation of God the opportunity to build a loving and committed relationship with God the Father. The Father breathed into his human creation meaning that the breath of life that is in his creation originated from God.¹²⁵ This shows God as the central and most important part to the existence of the world and the formation of the human family leading even to the breath of life that exists within the world comes from God. *Theology and God* by Jean Richard mentions, that the classical formula to theology is faith seeking understanding or the understanding of the faith.¹²⁶ Richard explains in the theological interpretation that theology is not something engaged in for oneself alone but it is for the whole community of believers and theologians have a significant part in this from having a pastoral responsibility in which they work to provide answers to their own questions as well as the questions of the community.¹²⁷ The theologian not only should engage in this study for the community of believers but also for a call to the non-believers that God is reaching out to them to join his community of true love.

The Risen Jesus and Future Hope by Gary R. Habermas mentions that the resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that the teachings of Jesus were authoritative and truthful and mentions that the resurrection shows the stamp of approval from God on the message of Jesus.¹²⁸ This leads to

¹²⁵ Genesis 2. This book shows God formed man from the dust of the ground and he breathed into the nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul found in Genesis 2:7 and in Genesis 2:22 God took a rib from the man and made a woman and brought her unto the man.

¹²⁶ Jean Richard, "Theology and God," *Compass*, vol. 45(4) (Summer 2011): 3.

¹²⁷ Richard, 4.

¹²⁸ Gary R. Habermas, *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 218.

the discussion on the affirmation of the authority and truthfulness of scripture. Jesus was viewed as a lawbreaker by the authorities of his time leading the authorities of his time to crucify him. But Jesus Christ proclaimed a new type of life, that those who call upon the name of God and trust in God will be resurrected in the end. Scripture documents that Jesus Christ was ultimately resurrected by God. The Bible states that not a single bone was broken in the body of Jesus Christ as scripture states.¹²⁹ Although, Jesus Christ was crucified by the authorities of his time, God the authority of all authorities did not allow a single bone of Jesus Christ to be broken. Jesus Christ through his words was testifying through his teachings and he was preaching the importance of loving God the Father because every person's eternal happiness and eternal destination rests on one proclaiming and attaching themselves to the Father. Jesus Christ was willing himself into the life of the believer to believe that God can raise anyone out of any situation. John 12-17 shows Jesus saying that the hour has come that the son of man shall be glorified and assured them that unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will remain alone, but if it dies it produces much grain aligning with the biblical concept of God raising people out of different situations and helping Christians overcome and be victorious.¹³⁰ On the other hand, *Surprised by Hope* by Nicholas Wright argues, that the response for the believer must be that one believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as an event in history, and one has to believe that God has started the process of a new creation, and what may seem

¹²⁹ John 19:36. This book shows that a bone of Jesus Christ shall not be broken.

¹³⁰ John 12-17. These books show Jesus saying that the hour has come that the son of man shall be glorified and assured them that unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will remain alone, but if it dies it produces much grain aligning with the biblical concept of God raising people out of different situations and helping Christians overcome and be victorious.

impossible to a human is possible to God.¹³¹ The point is how should hope play out in the modern world. The gap is, how should the leader apply this to the modern world. This a gap that when multiple perspectives and conflict introduce themselves into the church mission, how should one convince others to love God with their existence. As shown in scripture, in times of conflict, a Christian can love God and hope for a good outcome and can trust that God knows the outcome and the Christian can trust that God has given those who trust in him that one has a future that one can hope for.¹³² Furthermore, *Hope for the Nations* by Tom Holland mentions, that the reference for hope is significant in Paul's letter to the Romans in Romans 5:1-5 and that hope is the fruit of the spirit and without the outworking of the word and the spirit, the early church in living out hope could not be experienced.¹³³ Romans 5:1-5 explains that one is connected to God through Jesus Christ.¹³⁴ The mission of the church is knitted together in the authority and truthfulness of the Bible that even through all the conflict that one may experience, God is thinking of one and he has made plans for those who follow him so that the ones that follow him can have eternal happiness. The perspective of the outworking of the spirit is a reference point to hope in the mission of the church. Wright also discusses this in the anticipation of God coming and filling the earth with his glory, transforming the old heavens and earth into the new, and the raising of his children from the dead to populate and rule over the redeemed

¹³¹ Nicholas Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), Chapter 13.

¹³² Jeremiah 29:11. This book shows that God knows the thoughts that he thinks of one, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give one an expected end.

¹³³ Tom Holland, *Hope for the Nations: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (London: Apiary, 2017), 374.

¹³⁴ Romans 5:1-2. This book shows one has been justified through faith, and that one has peace with God through Lord Jesus Christ, who one has gained access by faith into this grace in which one stands, and one boasts in the hope of the glory of God. But also glory in one's sufferings because one knows that the sufferings produces perseverance, character, hope, and the hope does not put one to shame, because the love of God has been poured out into one's hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to one.

world that God has made.¹³⁵ This contributes to the discussion that those who follow Jesus Christ will be resurrected because God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son. The purpose of the church is to work to get the message of Jesus Christ to the world and for the church to work as a team. This includes allowing the gifts of each individual member to grow and giving responsibilities that match the individual Christian so that they can flourish jointly with the team to accomplish the mission of Jesus Christ. The building is the place of worship, but the focus is always on the builder and that is God through Jesus Christ. *God's Actions* by Stephen Davis mentions in relation to God's actions that (1) God brings the world into existence, (2) God sustains the world or upholds the world into existence, (3) God acts through natural causes in the world, and (4) God acts miraculously or outside of natural causes in the world.¹³⁶ This outlines how without God sustaining life, creation would cease to exist.

Symbolism of Weakness by Jean-Pierre Fortin mentions, that there would be no need for faith if the definitive truth about God were knowable and explains that if the world was not lost, if the world was just hardwired to a spiritual global positioning system, that the world would not need to be saved, and that the person has to appreciate that they are lost and then they can understand that they can be found or saved which can start to make sense to the person.¹³⁷ The gap is, how should the church reach out to the lost with the love commandments of love God and love one another or love one's neighbor in the modern world. In the modern world, some people do not view themselves as lost. As shown in John 12:32 that Jesus Christ draws all people to

¹³⁵ Wright, Chapter 15.

¹³⁶ Stephen Davis, "God's Actions" in *In Defense of Miracles*, eds. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 165.

¹³⁷ Jean-Pierre Fortin, "Symbolism of Weakness: Jesus Christ for the Postmodern Age," *The Heythrop Journal*, vol. 58(1) (2017): 65.

him.¹³⁸ *Counsel from the Cross* by Elyse M. Fitzpatrick and Dennis E. Johnson mention, that the cross exposes both the counselors and the counselees utter helplessness and unworthiness.¹³⁹ This is a world of people who are experiencing all types of conflict and the importance of Christian counseling is integral in ministry to those people who are experiencing weakness. The cross is an example to show people how someone can persevere and succeed even through conflict such as with the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ experiencing turmoil and conflict in his life while continually practicing the commandments and covenants made by God and implementing them in his life. The point of Jesus Christ showing strength at a time while people were making every effort to bring public disdain to his public ministry, but the naysayers were unsuccessful because God intervened, and resurrected Jesus Christ and his kingdom has no end. The very nature of the scripture describes Jesus Christ in what appears to be what some would claim as a weak point in life, but the power of God intervenes and raised Jesus Christ out of the weakness that the authorities attempted to place on him and elevated him to authority over them. To love God can be counted as a strength that God will lead one to peace and not evil. The scripture lays the framework on how to prevail through conflict. *Redeeming Church Conflicts* by Tara K. Barthel and David B. Edling mention, that the model for redeeming church conflict is based on the account in Acts 15 involving Paul, Barnabas, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and the Judaizers where the core principles revealed were perspective, discernment, leadership, and biblical response.¹⁴⁰ The importance of ministry to interpret the scripture through asking God

¹³⁸ John 12:32. This book shows that when Jesus Christ draws all people unto him.

¹³⁹ Elyse M. Fitzpatrick, and Dennis E. Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009), 12.

¹⁴⁰ Tara K. Barthel, and David B. Edling, *Redeeming Church Conflicts: Turning Crisis into Compassion and Care* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 19.

to reveal the true nature of the scripture so that one can understand the scripture even when some may depart from certain parts of the scripture. There has been a history of disagreeing and formulating different perspectives on parts of the Bible. But the Christian needs to provide leadership through the guidance of the Father to bridge a divide.

The Attractional Church by Billy Hornsby mentions, that because of the ability for some churches to attract large numbers of people to places of worship, these types of churches have been defined as attractional and while a number of these churches are megachurches the real success can be measured by the number of souls that come to Christ and the impact the church has on the community.¹⁴¹ Hornsby in this statement ties the church to the community. Looking at this from another standpoint, the theological foundations need to be formulated on the first and great commandment to love God and taking this great commandment to the community to implement this commandment into the community. But the church also has additional imperatives in doing this by implementing the second commandment to love one's neighbor or love one another and teaching and preaching the great commandment to love God so that the world can understand the importance of Jesus Christ in the theology of the scripture. This includes providing a plan built on scripture in teaching and preaching to people on how to love God in the modern day. The church needs to be engaged in telling the modern culture about God. The approach is not to serve as judge and jury to a fallen world but to identify God as the sole owner of the universe to judge the world. This is important for the church to teach and preach including creating programs that affirm God as the ruler of the entire world and universe. The church cannot allow the outside world to dictate the narrative of scripture. When the church

¹⁴¹ Billy Hornsby, *The Attractional Church: Growth Through a Refreshing, Relational, and Relevant Church* (Nashville: FaithWords, 2011), 15-17.

communicates to a fallen world it must be done spiritually and strategically identifying the Father as the key to the universe and identifying Jesus Christ as the one who God sent to save the world. The church needs to clarify to the modern world what the sixty-six books in scripture are and how these books are essential to each person's life and how the scripture connects all cultures in the modern world. There are many different Christian groups who claim Christianity but who do not focus in on showing people the authority of God in the scripture in the modern world over all other laws. Since this paper is being written from an evangelical point, the focus is on the church and how the church preserves the love of scripture in the life of the everyday person. Although, some may challenge the scripture, it is the responsibility of the true church to defend the scripture in the way that Jesus Christ and his early followers defended the church even with the threat of persecution. Persecution is attached to Christianity and the Christian who engages in the public and professional world will likely be persecuted but this is a regular reaction from those who challenge scripture because scripture requires someone to live according to God instead of living by the mechanisms created by humans.

The theology of the scripture is connected to many aspects in the theological foundations. First, the theological foundations connect to the foundations of the seminary education program such as Liberty University School of Divinity in training and building strong leaders who use the word of God as the theological point of teaching and preaching. Second, the theological foundations connect to pastoral counseling which can connect to different aspects of counseling which can include a leader dealing with those who are sick and bereaved in the way that Jesus Christ dealt with them and their inner problems in life. Third, the theological foundations connect to Christian apologetics in how the leader understands and comprehends the issues of cultural apologetics. This is important to train leaders who have a passion and love for all people

and to work to understand problems internally in the church and externally from the church in surrounding communities that exist within a short proximity to the church. The church needs to be active and responsive to cultures around and sensitive enough to deal with issues affecting the surrounding communities. Fourth, the Christian apologist needs to understand the supreme importance of the miracles, resurrection, and ministry to provide a strong link to how loving God pays off for the person who relies on God and not on worldly matters. The direct link is that Jesus Christ connected God to all things and his healing of those that were sick and bereaved showed that those who love God will be resurrected just as he was after crucifixion. Fifth, the leader needs to be able to apply this to modern life. The leader must also apply this to love for one another or love one's own neighbor. Jesus Christ did not mean for the two commandments to be in conflict, these commandments are meant to work in connection with each other. Outside communities may pick and choose to exclude God from certain environments such as political, business, legal, and other environments but the church needs to include all scripture in the teachings and preaching of the Bible. In addition, the church needs to design church strategy around connecting both the great commandment and the second commandment to take the scripture locally, nationally, and worldwide.

Theoretical Foundations

There are multiple perspectives on the truth in love of biblical canon. What this researcher means when saying truth in love of biblical canon is referring to Ephesians 4:14-15 as mentioned in different sections of this paper.¹⁴² This scripture cites the importance of speaking

¹⁴² Ephesians 4:14-15. This book and verses are important to the scholarly discussion of multiple perspectives because it explains the importance of the body of Christ and that Christians should walk in unity. The scripture also mentions that the children should no longer be tossed to and from and carried about with every wind and doctrine by the cunningness and craftiness of deceitfulness and that by speaking in truth in love may grow up in all things who is the head, Christ.

truth in love and growing up in all things of Christ. No matter the alternative perspective, Jesus Christ in the Bible was firm in who he aligned with and that is the Father. This researcher must be careful to not align this statement with the heresy of modalism or the beliefs of the groups who claim to be Christian but who do not view Jesus in trinitarian terms, but they view Jesus as separate creation from God as one's own mentor in DMIN 840 at Liberty University taught during the writing of this thesis. Jesus aligned with God the Father because Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is a part of the Father therefore submitting to the Father. This also includes the Holy Spirit which completes the trinitarian model. The English word canon comes from the Greek word meaning rule or measuring stick. In modern society, truth is built on a concept of what can be proven, what can be seen, what can be observed in its natural environment, and what can be experimented on, to name some ways the modern world searches for truth. For example, as the teaching in DMIN 840 on this subject matter showed that the advent of postmodernism is based on what each person wants to believe. Postmodernism has its roots in pragmatic and relativism, and they will reject absolutes even if proven. The teachings on the biblical canon becomes more challenging in today's time with these types of challenges. The contemporary world views truth through multiple perspectives. The Bible is not used to settle problems outside of the church. This has also made its way into churches with the Bible not being used to settle problems. The Bible is not used to settle problems in the world, but Christians need to operate and live-in today's society, so this is important for the Christian to have a set of ethics that measures their behavior in modern society. In some Christian communities, the Bible is not looked upon as authoritative on every issue that it may deal with. This is a danger zone for the Christian. It could be looked at as the Christian playing with fire. The Bible should be the only rule of truth and put into practice, but many churches have abandoned parts of the Bible. Multiple perspectives have

led to different opinions on the authority of God in scripture. For example, someone may say that this is how the church should operate when the church has become political or involved in modern political systems. On the other hand, someone may question what Jesus Christ meant when he was explaining about how to feed his flock and lead his church in 1 Peter 5:1-2 as it relates to being involved in modern political systems.¹⁴³ The scripture is built upon doing things according to God and leading as examples of the flock. The Christian must love God and love one another without going against God and his commands. This allows the Christian to come back to God since many make claims that they hear from God. The only authority for the Christian is the Bible and not someone claiming some title, but they should be proclaiming the message of the Bible.

The theoretical foundation is understanding what Jesus Christ meant for his followers to do. For example, what did Jesus Christ mean when he said go and make disciples of all nations found in Matthew 28:16-20.¹⁴⁴ There are many different views on Christian discipleship and how discipleship should be conducted. How does one approach Jesus saying go and make disciples? *Disciple Making Is* by Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey mention, in given their understanding of the Great Commission, the question remains how does God expect his followers to implement it and they explain that the obvious answer is planting churches, which is a result of Christians

¹⁴³ 1 Peter 5:1-2. This chapter and verses shows how the elders are a witness to the sufferings of Jesus Christ and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed and the book explains for the elders to feed the flock that are among the elders taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

¹⁴⁴ Matthew 28:16-20. This chapter and verses explains that the eleven disciples went to Galilee where Jesus told them to go on a mountain and while some worshipped him others doubted Jesus saying that all authority has been given to him and then Jesus came to them and told them that all authority had been given to him and he told them to go and make disciples of nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything he commanded them to do and that he would be with his followers until the end of time.

pursuing the lost intentionally, preaching the gospel, baptizing believers, and training them to live for Jesus Christ, and then making more disciples.¹⁴⁵ For the Christian perspective, biblical canon shows that Jesus Christ said that he was the way, the life, and the truth, and that no man comes to the Father except through him found in John 14:6.¹⁴⁶ Jesus also used love in various parts of John 14, for example, Jesus mentions that he loves the Father and the Father gave him the commandments in John 14:31.¹⁴⁷ Love means to place nothing before God and loving him with the deepest affection. For example, say the person you love the most walks in the door, the person you have loved the most on earth, but even that person should not take your attention off worshipping and loving the Father. *The Gospel According to John* by Donald A. Carson mentions, both the verb ‘to love’ and the noun ‘love’ occur much more frequently in chapters 13-17, than anywhere else in the fourth gospel, which reflects that John devotes special attention to the relationship of love between the Father, the Son, and the disciples.¹⁴⁸ There is no other man no matter what his place in society who has been known to have aligned himself with the Father in that manner where he clearly and authoritatively says that nobody can get to the Father but by him. The events that surrounded the life of Jesus were extraordinary and the events that surrounded his life gives the world a sense of a higher authority whom Jesus identified as God the Father. So, there are many theories that relate to the Christian belief system that finds

¹⁴⁵ Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . . : How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013), 5.

¹⁴⁶ John 14:6. This book outlines Jesus Christ saying clearly that he is the way, the light, and the truth and that by no man comes to the Father but by him showing his authority was given to him by the Father.

¹⁴⁷ John 14. This book outlines Jesus Christ saying that if a man loves him, he will show that through keeping and following his commandments (John 14:21) and Jesus says he loves the Father and gives credit to the Father by saying that the Father gave Jesus the commandment (John 14:31).

¹⁴⁸ Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 204.

themselves in the operation of the church but how does the Christian address the core elements of what Jesus Christ meant in building his church and leading people to the Father? In the contemporary world, some of the most admired people are the people who are considered the authority in society or have the most influence in society. Those in ministry nowadays are usually not admired. In other words, people do not usually come to a church leader for the leader to tell them what truth is. This includes people having their own definition of what love is. Even when some people come to church or a church event, they still may not want to hear truth as it relates to the Bible, the authority of God, or how God intends for them to live. Some people attend church but the truth that they believe is not the same truth the Bible tells them, and they still define their own truth and own love through themselves and not the Bible. Christians who believe in multiple perspectives may cause them to question what truth is, what reality is, and what love is? This research is designed to search out and identify what people believe who claim to be Christian through a set of research questions that can guide the person in dealing with different perspectives. This investigates their belief system in the process. The small group theory is important because it is intentional research questions for the mission of God. It is important to this research because it allows for strong relationships to be developed and for the minister to better implement and engage people in the church to satisfy the call in their own lives and to include others in their call to search and find how their call relates to them calling themselves a Christian. This theory builds upon the approach to maintain key relationships to continue to grow the church in the way that God commands and requires one to do so. This theory is built on the model of the Great Commission which is a call to Christians, and this is a call for non-believers in discussing the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture because

loving God is a spiritual and essential part of creation. The nature of creation is to love God and all creation was created for this purpose.

The Holy Bible

In Christianity, a basic belief for the believer should be that the Bible is divinely inspired by the creator of the universe.¹⁴⁹ This serves as revelation and prophecy to those who believe in what has come and is to come. The Bible has what is sacred texts to some churches and to other churches who claim to be Christian consider certain parts to be sacred, but some also believe that not all the scripture is sacred. With these multiple perspectives, sometimes what comes in conflict with multiple perspectives is how some people may view the accuracy of the Bible in comparison with events in current life. For example, the Bible highlights the interaction between God and creation and how God intervenes in society in many situations when creation ventures away from the commandments and covenants set in action by God. In Christianity, multiple perspectives develop during times on conflict as to what parts of the Bible are authoritative and trustworthy and can be applied to one's life. The Bible influences society in many ways from Christian movies to non-movies. For example, the Ten Commandments with Charlton Heston directed, produced, and narrated by Cecil B. DeMille in 1956 to the Passion of Christ with Jim Caviezel directed and produced by Mel Gibson in 2004, and many other biblical movies that documented scripture. These would be considered Christian movies and if one looks at the world, rather some want to acknowledge this or not, the Bible has played a significant role in the formation of literature of all genres, entertainment, and the list can go on and on. Christians who study the Bible intensely can see when the Bible is quoted in artwork. There are many versions

¹⁴⁹ 2 Timothy 3:16. This scripture states, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. All scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

of Bibles and some have a preference. These can contribute to the multiple perspectives that arise in Christianity and leans to the understanding of how to jointly understand what and if any correlations exist between these different Christian belief systems. For example, is there something that most churches believe in or something that most churches do not believe in? The issue is to challenge these multiple perspectives and conflicts in the different churches and to discuss and make a joint effort on learning and understanding the different belief systems and delve into how to jointly come together on the first and great commandment to love God and to follow his commandments and covenants set forth in scripture. Luke 11:22 says a house divided will fall and this shows that the church needs to be united not divided.¹⁵⁰ This directs attention to any house that stands if the house is divided it leads to that house not having the ability to stand. The Father has laid the foundations of the earth and Jesus Christ has been appointed by God as the adhesive that leads the world to him and keeps the church together where nothing can separate or defeat the true purpose that God has set for those who are added to what God has built. So, this is a narrative to bring the Christian community to love God by not accepting and negotiating or brokering a deal with each other but to command as the Old Testament said and Jesus Christ said in the New Testament to love God with all one's heart, all one's soul, and all one's might. The theme is to love God as if your life depends on it.

The plan of divide and conquer is a plan used in war or conflict such as military including how to design military strategy. This plan of divide and conquer is not only used in the military it is also used in other environments. Many military strategists use this perspective of divide and conquer. Divide and conquer is an old method shown in the Bible that is used in many modern

¹⁵⁰ Luke 11:22. This verse shows that Jesus knowing their thoughts said to them that every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and that a house divided against itself will fall.

environments. The modern-day church can view the divide and conquer strategy as anything that attempt on changing one's own perspective to what the Bible says about a current-day issue. This can challenge Christians in multiple ways and can try to influence the person to change his ways rather though persuasion or though threat, or some other form. The point is that the Bible was written and given to the world for a reason to provide a spiritual and personal guide to how to act in one's own life especially when dealing with multiple perspectives and conflict in one's own life. This is one of the reasons why the Bible was written. For example, in the story of Adam and Eve, they were placed outside of the garden of Eden for their disobedience to God. God told Adam and Eve what he needed for them to do so that they could live a happy and death-free life. The serpent had his perspective and that was to disobey God. The disobedience of Adam and Eve were an act of disobedience against what God had told them not to do and that was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Exodus and Deuteronomy, with the Ten Commandments, God clearly gives commandments and covenants for his people to follow. The Bible clearly takes the initiative to explain to the creation to act in a specified way. Some may debate this or disagree with this statement and this is where multiple perspectives come into the reasoning. Even in this research, the DMIN 840 mentor disagreed with this statement on the purpose of the Bible and why it was written. The DMIN 840 mentor in his comment said creation was made to glorify God. One does not disagree that creation was made for God. But the regular person needs to understand the connection between how people should act in life which connects to if they are glorifying God in their life. This can come in multiple ways such as dividing ministerial leadership against one another so that they cannot work together or dividing members against members so that they are not united in the church, and division can come in other forms. The same as what the serpent did to divide and conquer Adam and Eve and get them

to disobey God is the same reasoning why God needed for the world to understand how to act and get back to loving him. The Bible is provided to bring guidance to the believer. The believer cannot be divided on issues but needs to unite on the truth in the scripture. This includes to show love and togetherness to God and with each other using the Bible as a guide to provide to the believer a set of beliefs that has been revealed in scripture. So, the church needs to remember that Jesus Christ said to love God as the first and great commandment and act upon this in their whole existence. There are multiple perspectives and theories regarding the church and in Christianity on how and what to believe as it relates to the Bible. Some people view and calculate scripture through theory rather than practical application and these multiple belief systems find themselves in multiple constructs and applications on how to conduct Christian ministry.

Christian Theology

It is believed that there is an Almighty Creator of the universe, and from the words of Jesus Christ, three are significant in the role of the Christian faith, which includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.¹⁵¹ It is believed, that the authority of God the Father precedes any authority, and the existence of God the Father precedes any existence. Christian theology is broken into multiple perspectives and practices. Some focus on the Old Testament and some focus on the New Testament, while some focus on rationality or providing a rational argument. There are many different subjects that are addressed in Christian theology. For example, some of these are the authority and truthfulness of the Bible, the inspiration of the Bible, to name some.

¹⁵¹ Matthew 28:18-20. This passage shows Jesus declaring that all power is given unto him from the Father and he tells the disciples to go and teach, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever that he commanded them and that he is always here even unto the end of the world.

In this thesis, the specific context of the Father is that he is the creator to all. This sense of God is not described in the light of creator of some, God is described in the light of creating all and having authority over all even to the ones who deny his authority. The Old Testament describes God very strongly in the actions of God and how he responds in the world. The New Testament builds on the Old Testament bringing an open discussion to Jesus Christ who is clearly identified as the Son of God. This conversation brings into the open discussion a family of God that shows a family context not only in a physical but in that of a spiritual connection to God. The Bible shows Jesus Christ as the ‘word’ in the scriptures.¹⁵² Most anybody could understand that the word is revealed in speaking things into existence and that every living creature needs in some form or fashion to exist in the world. Jesus Christ is described as a biological family member of God. Jesus Christ says that he will pray and that the Father will send the Holy Spirit to comfort and that he will teach all things, and bring all things to remembrance identifying another family member of God, which is the Holy Spirit.¹⁵³ In the teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ, the authority of the Father is the one who attaches to all things as he is the one sending and giving any type of role or authority as Jesus Christ says.

Christian Apologetics

Apologetics will be defined for this thesis paper as defending the faith that one believes in through reasoned arguments that may consist of preaching, teaching, writing, and other forms of communication. This includes the critical defense of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christian apologetics has taken many forms over the centuries. Christian apologetics and

¹⁵² John 1:1. This verse shows that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

¹⁵³ John 14:15-31. This passage shows Jesus giving credit to the Father and identifying each role that a member of the family of God has.

a Christian apologist defend Christianity against objections that can include different aspects of the church. There are many perspectives on Christian apologetics that has many elements. Some of the varieties of Christian apologetics includes a defense of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ, biblical apologetics, moral apologetics, philosophical apologetics, and prophetic apologetics, to name some forms of apologetics. In Christian apologetics, there is a discussion on how to defend the Christian faith. One of the study points is that of 1 Peter 3:15 on the point of defending the Christian faith.¹⁵⁴ The scripture provides to answer a person who may be questioning one's faith but in doing so, do so from the sanctification of one's own heart in loving God. It is easy for some to become angry when another perspective comes from someone else, but the Christian is challenged not by the other person but by scripture to love God in doing so. The challenge focuses on the heart of the person which is strongly connected to love when people show the heart in drawings and artwork. People see this when giving someone they love a gift, many times the heart is the drawing or artwork or picture that shows someone that the other person loves them. The heart is the part of someone at least for the current age that brings in the thought and perspective of love. So, in all actions, the scripture speaks to the heart of the person including in this current world to sanctify the Lord God in one's own heart and for the Christian to have a good conversation for Christ.

Love God

The importance of understanding how the church should apply to love God in the current age holds a significant place in the Ten Commandments and the first and second commandment

¹⁵⁴ 1 Peter 3:15-16. This passage shows the Christian to sanctify the Lord God in one's own heart and should always be ready to give an answer or defense to every person that asks for a reason of the hope that is in one and that having a good conscience as they may speak evil of one and they may be ashamed that falsely accuse the good conversation in Christ.

explained by Jesus Christ. How should the church implement loving God in the current context? In starting to define how to love God is to obey his commandments and covenants. Some look at the first and great commandment by Jesus Christ as more theoretical when speaking of to love God. The theoretical question mark that is attached to love God focuses in on God as the root of all love and how the church should implement that love in the current context. This means that God is love and that love always will connect to God. This conversation of love God first and foremost is a theoretical question to some more than a practical question. But for the purpose of this thesis project, love God will be applied as a mixed methods approach including applying this scripture from a theological, theoretical, and practical application to love God. *Love Your God with All Your Mind* by James P. Moreland mentions that the impact of belief on behavior is a function of three belief traits, which are its content, strength, and centrality.¹⁵⁵ In addressing the content portion, how does the church convince the world that loving God should be the first aspect of the life of a Christian? How does someone provide a minimal argument to love God in showing the strength to this commandment in the modern world when the human structure of the world is to include multiple belief systems? For example, when someone adheres to only one belief system such as the Christian faith this can be viewed as exclusive to other people who do not follow Christianity. But although the Christian faith excludes certain behaviors, scripture identifies the second commandment to love one's neighbor or love one another, which is a way of reaching out to people to bring them into the love of God. The centrality of the issue of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry is how does the church provide to people in all nations the message to love God from a Christian perspective. The Christian is commanded to

¹⁵⁵ James P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997), 73.

love one's neighbor or love one another even when the neighbor may not agree with the commandments of the Christian faith. While the non-Christian may present himself or herself as an adversary to the Christian faith, the Christian is commanded to love one's neighbor or love one another. This is a reference to a Christian worldview that may conflict with an alternative worldview. For example, when someone explains to love one's neighbor or love one another, how should someone carry the message of Jesus Christ to the world while at the same time not compromising the Christian belief system. 2 Corinthians 4:10 mentions for the believer to bear the message of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁶ Jesus Christ numbered these commandments in the order of importance, first to love God, and second to love one's neighbor or love one another because he was telling of the future challenges that the Christian may be faced with.

In Christianity, God is placed at the center of the heart of the Christian. When the Christian is challenged with parts of life that go against the natural and spiritual order of the commandments, the Christian is commanded to love God, which means for the Christian to follow the commandments of God. This means that God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit.¹⁵⁷ This connection to God in the scripture shows that there is nothing in this entire world that should take the place of God. Jesus Christ clearly shows that God is number one in the world. So, the focal point is how should the church show love for God. Some church environments may design local church programs and take a reactive approach that incorporate the issues of the local church while another local church may take a proactive approach responding to what the church sees as the most important issues at the time. *Missional*

¹⁵⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:10. This book shows the Christian to always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in the body of the Christian.

¹⁵⁷ John 4:24. This verse shows that God is a spirit and they that worship God must worship him in spirit.

Church by Jeppe B. Nikolajsen mentions, that mission is regarded as the essential nature and calling of the church, and in this missional ecclesiology guards itself against a disassociation of mission from the church (the modern mission movement) in contrast to a disassociation of the church from mission (the world centered approach of *missio Dei*).¹⁵⁸ The mission of the church is important to center in on understanding the truth that comes with preaching and teaching the scripture. *Why Truth Matters Most* by Douglas Groothuis explains, that truth is something that a person may know or fail to know but truth is not something that a person should manipulate according to desires, fears, whims, or hatred.¹⁵⁹ *How (Not) to be Secular* by James Smith mentions, that the secular age is the product of new and creative solutions, which is an entire reconfiguration of meaning.¹⁶⁰ *The Knowledge of Good and Evil* by Herold S. Stern mentions, good and evil and the meaning behind the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden story is one of the most difficult and intriguing things to figure out or problems from the Bible and the argument from this standpoint is of a philological and a philosophic, and this means that this term belongs in a universe of discourse and one's fundamental search is for meaning.¹⁶¹ The philological is the historical development of the garden of Eden story and how this applies to the current context of people loving God and obeying his commandments and covenants. The philosophic deals with the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence of the garden of Eden story and how this applies in the current age to love God. For example, Adam and Eve

¹⁵⁸ Jeppe B. Nikolajsen, "Missional Church: A Historical and Theological Analysis of an Ecclesiological Tradition," *International Review of Mission*, vol. 102(2) (2013): 61.

¹⁵⁹ Douglas Groothuis, "Why Truth Matters Most: An Apologetic for Truth-Seeking in Postmodern Times," *Journal of Evangelical Times*, vol. 47(3) (2004): 442.

¹⁶⁰ James Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 47.

¹⁶¹ Herold S. Stern, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 8 (1958): 405.

chose to disobey God and listen to an alternative perspective presented by the serpent and this led to a life of conflict in the life of Adam and Eve that even passed down to their children such as the division of Cain and Abel in the Bible.

Chapter 3

Methodology

There are multiple perspectives and conflict in Christianity and these multiple Christian perspectives at times may cause conflict and create multiple perspectives of scripture. The church is formed by the will and decree of Jesus Christ. So, the foundation of Christianity is based around the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ based his life on the foundation of God. Since Jesus is the Son of God, and is submissive to the will of the Father, the life of Jesus is one with the Father. However, there are many self-proclaimed Christians who do not follow or believe in the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture, but they still claim to be Christians. So, this causes a problem with those who are claiming to have a belief in God and a connection to Jesus Christ. The methodology and approach need to be concise on how one presents the information to the participants including how one asks the questions will determine how the questions are answered by the participant. This methodology investigates the theoretical and theological underpinnings to understand which Christian methods can be applied to this specific issue of multiple perspectives in Christianity. If a Christian does not follow the commandments or covenants set forth in the Bible, then what is his measuring stick for calling himself a Christian. For centuries, the Bible has been the measuring stick for how the Christian would live in the world, and without the Bible how would a Christian measure his actions. This methodology will look through the Bible and apply literature in the formulation and implementation of an ethical model that the self-proclaimed Christian can use to address these types of issues and measure their actions, including this methodology to implement this model

for the Christian. On the part of this DMIN thesis, trust, integrity, and a sense of openness will be the means for this DMIN research, to provide a setting that allows participants to not be in fear of the process and to encourage them to tell the truth as it relates to their own belief systems and to provide a disclosure to the participants through informed consent. These set of practices include receiving informed consent will allow all that are involved in this DMIN thesis project to understand the parameters of the study and the information that anyone needs to make an educated and informed decision on if they want to participate in the project or not. These practices such as giving people the information needed to make an informed decision will provide a study on understanding on how to love God while also looking at the second commandment to love one another or one's own neighbor in the current context. This research study will not deviate from what the scripture says for the person to act and live out their life in love of God. This methodology will work to teach the participants a way to express their true love for God.

Survey and Questionnaire

The survey instrument will consist of the researcher creating an item list and providing Christians and non-Christians a list of survey and research questions. This will relate to multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. The survey will focus on the local Christian in a Christian environment. The Likert survey will be used in employing questionnaires and longitudinal study in reviewing and observing these responses through the participant responses. This will include open-ended questions format and closed-ended questions format about the influence of multiple perspectives and conflict in his own Christian belief system. This will be presented in the form of research and test research questions to formulate an understanding of the belief systems of individuals and how these beliefs influence their current lives. The narrative responses will be

analyzed by the researcher. For example, a guided question could allow participants to get more in depth on why they believe the way they do such as asking, ‘Can you describe in more detail why scripture is authoritative or is not authoritative.’ There can also be an example question such as, ‘If you use the Bible in your life, can you give an example of how you use the Bible in making decisions in your life.’

Revisiting the Unpardonable Sin by Duane A. Litfin in addressing unbelief and apodictic proof states, that one cannot survey the full biblical record on this point but can survey the abundant testimony of the gospels is sufficient to demonstrate the range of human responses to the apodictic evidence that God provides.¹⁶² Regarding one’s own study, the multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry, one is surveying the biblical record on the authority and truth of the commandments and covenants in the Bible and how this testimony is sufficient to explain the range of human responses to the ancient history and thus modern history that God is the authority of the world and the universe.

¹⁶² Duane A. Litfin, "Revisiting the Unpardonable Sin: Insight from an Unexpected Source," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 60(4) (December 2017): 720.

Research Questions

January 2021

Institutional Review Board



Troy Stewart Research Questions for Christian Ministry Study

The following research questions were initially designed in the context of pre-test and post-test research questions. But after communications with the Institutional Review Board, the two questionnaires have been condensed into one questionnaire.

Test Research Questions

Biblical canon is a set of texts and may be viewed as authoritative scripture or a set of rules or way of measuring the behavior of one's neighbor or one another. Biblical canon is what you may know as the Holy Bible.

Primary Research Question: If one's own Christian community believes Biblical canon is authoritative, then why does the Christian community believe the Bible is authoritative?

Using Acts 11:25-26 in the New Testament as a reference point, Christian is a broad term that identifies someone who assembles themselves with the church and teaches many people in the name of Jesus Christ. This scripture shows the disciples assembling themselves the whole year with the church and teaching many people just as Jesus Christ did. According to scripture, the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. There are many who claim to be believers

and identify as a Christian in the modern era. This provides multiple perspectives on the concept of who can be a Christian. This, in some cases, leads to conflict on what a Christian should believe. There are many denominations that have contradictory beliefs but claim to be Christians. For the purposes of this study, a Christian is defined as someone who lives in love, repentance, faith, and obedience to the Father in the name of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ. This includes a Christian adhering to all the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture and enacting and supporting the laws of God found in the Bible.

RQ 2: Are you a Christian?

Yes No

RQ 3: Do you believe that all of scripture is authoritative?

Yes No

RQ 4: Do you view the Bible as outdated?

Yes No

RQ 5: Do you believe that some people, whether inside the church or not part of the church, view the Bible as outdated?

Yes No

RQ 6: Do you view the Bible as non-inclusive towards some people/people groups?

Yes No

RQ 7: Do you believe that some people, whether inside the church or not part of the church, view the Bible as non-inclusive towards some people/people groups?

Yes

No

Using Exodus 20, Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, and Luke 18:18-30 as your reference point, 'leave all behind' regarding this question means to give anything or all things away for God through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gave people the option to follow him. Some followed him and some decided not to follow him. The command to 'leave all behind' means to give everything away for God and to follow Jesus Christ. This can cause conflict in one's life and there are multiple perspectives on how one should follow Jesus Christ. This reference on the commandments and how one may obtain eternal life not only relates to physical riches, but also to anything that can pull someone away from God, such as idolatry, coveting, money, fame, status, power, influence, or worshipping anything that take one's love away from God.

RQ 8: Would a professing Christian be able to leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

RQ 9: Should a professing Christian leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

RQ 10: What does it look like to leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ in the life of a modern-day believer?

RQ 11: Please describe in more detail why scripture is authoritative or is not authoritative based on your perspective?

RQ 12: Do you use the Bible to make decisions in your life?

Yes

No

RQ 13: Please provide an example of how you use the Bible to make decisions in your life?

RQ 14: Using Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 6:5 in the Old Testament and using Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27, John 13:34, and John 14:1 in the New Testament as your reference point, describe some ways that your church operates based on the commandments set forth in scripture (i.e. The Ten Commandments, The Great Commandment to ‘Love God’ and the Second Commandment to ‘Love one’s neighbor or love one another,’ seek first the kingdom of God, and the Great Commission mentioned by Jesus Christ)?

RQ 15: Using Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, and Luke 10:27 as your reference point, what does a Christian do when modern ideals conflict with the Great Commandment to ‘Love God’ mentioned by Jesus Christ?

RQ 16: How should one deal with conflict in local Christian ministry?

RQ 17: How should one carry out the mission of the local Christian church when faced with multiple perspectives on scripture?

RQ 18: How should a Christian leader prepare his Christian community for interaction within the church and interaction with those outside the church?

The authority of the universe in this research means to use the Bible as the measuring stick of how one lives life. There are many man-made laws that challenge what the Bible says.

Use the authority of the universe in the context of a Christian using the Bible as the authority that is used to measure how one lives in life. Reflect on how a Christian should use the laws of human government when it conflicts with what the Bible says.

RQ 19: How should a Christian apply the Bible as the authority that is used to direct how one lives life (i.e. Reflect on how a Christian should follow the authority of the Bible and apply the laws of human government when they conflict with what the Bible says)?

RQ 20: Define truth, love, and freedom?

RQ 21: Where does one draw the line on how to live out a Christ-like life in a contemporary world of multiple perspectives when one encounters outside perspectives that conflict with one's own belief regarding the authority of God in scripture?

RQ 22: How does a Christian operate in a world of multiple perspectives even within one's own Christian community?

RQ 23: What are the necessities of life?

RQ 24: Do you believe in all the teaching of Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

RQ 25: How should the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian?

RQ 26: How should the teachings of the Bible play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian?

Participants

The intervention model will be built on a small group model to encourage open responses that were initially designed as pre-test and post-test questions but after communications with the IRB, the two questionnaires have been condensed into one questionnaire. The survey that one plans to use is a Likert survey, where a Christian will say if they strongly agree or strongly disagree that all of scripture is authoritative. But this will not be the only result because open-ended questions will also be provided to them so that they can further explain their own perspective on the matter. Also, the longitudinal survey where one will ask questions from Point A to Point B on how someone views scripture at Point A (initially designed as the pre-test questions) then one will intervene at Point B a later time and re-survey (initially designed as the post-test questions) to see how their perceptions may have changed. But with the combination of the pre-test questions and post-test questions, how one views the scripture will be combined with how one sees the scriptures.

Procedure

The first item will be to receive informed consent from any participant who plans to participate in the study. The participants will complete the study voluntarily. The participants will be given at least a week to complete their responses.

Measures

This study will measure three main variables: (1) Christian, (2) Conflict, (3) Multiple Perspectives and measure how these relate to ministry. In measuring Christian, a list of questions will be asked to receive a response from the participants on how they view Christianity and if they identify as a Christian such as 'Are you a Christian.' This data will be included with the

study in the format on how they concluded that they are Christian or not in the form of open-ended questions.

Intervention Design

There will be five teachings, preaching, and an ethical framework built on the foundation and the subject of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. This will include the design of to love God in creating a foundation within the heart of a Christian to build disciples for Jesus Christ in the local context and in some cases the global environment or wherever one is. The intervention design will be built around the first and great commandment to love God for the Christian as the Bible commands for someone to do and this will focus on the lives of all people building their lives on loving the Father. Loving God as the most important of all in the life of the Christian and in the world as the scripture including the Old Testament and New Testament makes a case for God as the centerpiece of the love and heart of the world. This will be the intervention design of the thesis to be creative and innovative in building a world that gives God all the credit in the existence and authority of the world.

A Defense

The five teachings will be: (1) A defense of love God as the first and great commandment; (2) A defense of love one another or one's neighbor without compromising one's own Christian belief system; (3) A defense for finding God through Jesus Christ in Christianity over multiple perspectives in ministry; (4) A defense for how to deal with conflict in Christian ministry over outside perspectives; (5) A defense for the authority of God found in the Bible. This intervention has been designed to address the problem of multiple perspectives in a local Christian community and the conflict that can arise from having multiple perspectives of biblical

canon. The current study will focus on the Christian belief systems of participants and how that compares with biblical canon.

The goals will be: (1) To influence the Christian to love God; (2) To develop a conversation on why God is the most important in the world and in a Christians life because God is most important of all because he is creator of the world and the world needs to love God, (3) To train self-proclaimed Christians on how to love God and to train non self-proclaimed Christians on the importance of God, (4) To challenge the self-proclaimed Christian to operate in the spirit of God, (5) The intervention design will focus on the spiritual formation of the Christian, (6) To present a Christian defense to believers and non-believers. The Christian is faced with social pressures to think and act a certain way in the modern world and sometimes that is out of fear, doubt, or conflict that may occur when someone believes in the authority of God. This includes seeing the current world promoting ideals opposite of what the Bible says, so in this study, participants will be encouraged to leave their fears behind and understand the power and authority of God as discussed in biblical canon. This gives the participants a way to investigate their true self and find out what they believe and for the researcher to understand the participants multiple perspectives as they may be and to apply that to a local modern ministry to maintain a Christian community that reaches out to all people. The means of differentiating self-proclaimed Christians is those who attempt to operate by the will of God such as going to church, or tithing, or assembling with others to proclaim the name of God. Non-self-proclaimed Christians is the opposite of self-proclaimed Christians such as those who say they are Christians but do not necessarily attempt to live a life for God.

This research design is to provide a platform to those who believe in the authority of God in the Bible and the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture and to reflect on the

narrative of the Bible and to reach out to those in need. The research participants may or may not be struggling within themselves to adhere to the message of Jesus Christ and this research is to address this issue as it relates to the Christian in contemporary times. The implementation for this design is to work towards a greater and higher purpose where people define their own lives in tune with the authority of God and think and act in a manner that includes God in their own decision making. This DMIN thesis is designed around a local setting focusing in on local ministry to minister to believers and non-believers in the context of reflective questions and inquiry for a deeper understanding of the call of the person from God and for the person to adhere, listen, and discern, that call through all the multiple perspectives that may be around them. The intervention design is to present research related questions to Christians and even to those who may not claim to be Christian and ask Likert-style questions and some open-ended response questions. The number of participants will be given the survey and asked to answer the survey. The use of convenience sample has been traditionally considered weakened since it is a non-probability sampling method where the sample is given to a group easy to meet with or get into contact with. This research study is set and designed to engage people in a local ministry setting. On the other hand, this same form of convenience sampling will be strengthened by contacting people who have experience in the general area in which they will be questioned and have exposure to the populations that are in formulation of questions in the survey and that they may have been in close contact with these believers and non-believers as they engage or engaged in ministry in which they can give honest and truthful responses. Another strength is directed to those who have exposure to the questionnaire and survey to expand in the questionnaire and survey. Also, more strengths can include a high-return rate which can provide multiple participants and reflections on the research questions, and the fact that the experience will

provide multiple perspectives on ministry, with people having full-time experience in ministry, part-time experience in ministry, regular attendance in church or ministry or Christian related organizations, or involvement in local or national programs performing Christian related activities. This distribution will provide strength as it will provide a critical reflection technique to ministry that is modeling Christian behavior in a modern-day world, which is a focus of the research. For example, *Active Learning Techniques in the Christian Education Classroom and in Ministry Contexts* by Kenneth S. Coley asked Likert-style questions and open-ended response questions to students in a Doctor of Education program and asked them to return it by email attachment within a week and while this research was weakened using convenience sample, it was strengthened by involving students that had similar experiences and the strengths included a high-return rate, full-time ministry, and some level of experience employing the teaching techniques.¹⁶³

The design strategy is to build a Christian partnership that works to bring people to love God. This will promote intervention by leaders to teach and preach from what the scripture says that will influence the lives of Christians from a local perspective throughout multiple communities and address the challenges that multiple perspectives present to the Christian community and to promote love God. The program will be initiated locally to encourage togetherness in an effort for people to focus on creating Christian communities that build the love of God in the world of committing and establishing a true loving relationship with the Father. The effort will work to include public and private partnerships in a strong effort to

¹⁶³ Kenneth S. Coley, "Active Learning Techniques in the Christian Education Classroom and in Ministry Contexts," *Christian Education Journal*, vol. 9(2) (Fall 2012): 365.

initiate and illustrate the importance of the Christian in society and how the Christian can influence instead of having others influence them with outside perspectives.

This intervention design will be used to establish, support, enhance, and influence the Christian by incorporating the Bible into his own life and provide a form of welcome, hospitality, and formation for the Christian adult population including the children population. The design will be directed to guiding the target population on a course of life to determine and develop appropriate Christian responses to conflict that involves the church. This will be coordinated through test research questions in making plans and solutions including speaking, teaching, preaching, and writing on multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. Collaboration is also important in creating ways to communicate the powerful message of the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. This will include sharing new ideas and programs such as a lecture series, teaching series, and preaching the strong message of scripture for the modern world to hear and understand in a time of multiple perspectives and conflict that involves the church.

The intervention plan will be in a small group of local Christians. There is no way to one hundred percent know how many people may respond to a survey or questionnaire, but an inquiry can help to identify people who may have a further interest in one's own research study. One is looking at a small group of Christians and the expected numbers in this thesis are small around ten or more and if this number of ten is not possible the study may have less participants in comparison to the many people who claim in the world to be a Christian.

The Meanings of the Book of Job by Michael V. Fox argues, in addressing the author of the book of Job mentions, that the first teaching from God to Job is to have faith and to trust in

his goodness even when knowledge fails, and goodness does not seem visible.¹⁶⁴ The defense of this research relies on the Christian in the modern world having faith in God and trusting in God although it may seem that evil mechanisms are the authority but for the Christian to realize that the goodness of God still has the authority over the entire world and universe.

Christian Ministry

The local ministry will take part in a study that will examine the perceptions of the belief in God and the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture through the multiple perspectives of local people on biblical canon. All participants will have some understanding of what it means to be a Christian and how that relates to them in the contemporary world. The challenges will be for them to identify what they think about Christianity and how this may fit in with the current world of multiple perspectives. The model will be built on how the Christian think and act in Christianity in their own lives does such as do they adhere to all the scripture, or do they adhere to some of the scripture, and why do they identify as a Christian or not. The challenge is to have them challenge themselves to identify what makes them who they are and why they are the way they are. Jesus Christ made powerful and strong claims and he challenged his followers in research and inquiry with questions as ‘who do you say I am.’¹⁶⁵ These questions by Jesus Christ shows him giving to those who were in his specific group the freedom of belief in him. Jesus Christ provided to those who were a part of the crowds and were around him an opportunity to engage with him on his identity. Identity regarding this text means is Jesus the son of God. In this manner, Jesus Christ posed inquiry questions to those directly in his grouping and he posed

¹⁶⁴ Michael V. Fox, "The Meanings of the Book of Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 137(1) (Spring 2018): 17.

¹⁶⁵ Luke 9:18-20. This book outlines Jesus posing a question to his followers asking the people who do the crowds say that I am and some said John the Baptist and some said Elijah and some said one of the prophets who has risen again and then Jesus says but who do you say I am and Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God.’

these questions outside of his grouping and it shows the struggle with belief systems and how belief system can be a challenge in the present world. Grouping means a set of people acting together with a common interest or purpose such as the disciples. This is how it looks in modern times with the research methodology of active research and inquiry. The questioning from Jesus to the crowd created multiple perspectives. In current time, these questions can be posed to a small group of local Christians where they are given the option to select openly what they feel is the correct response for them in the present world and to reflect on their belief system. These participants can engage in critical reflection openly and honestly on why they have taken the stance that they have in their own belief system. So, what these people or crowds spoke from their own mouths was their own believed truth on who Jesus was and is. This is the thesis research on including others in this research for truth in asking related questions to present day people who are challenged with multiple perspectives such as who they say Jesus was and is and how do they believe that plays a part in their own normal day life and if they feel they are required to follow the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture. The plan is to receive truthful responses and to provide a way to reflect for the participants to do this through answering these research questions. The methodology for the ministry will focus on the small group theory, allowing people to have the ability to be heard through their reflection. Sometimes, in a large environment, certain people do not have the ability to speak in a congregation. For example, in mega-churches, there are many people and sometimes the pastor or pastoral leadership may not have an opportunity to meet every member of the congregation. On the other hand, in a small church, sometimes with a small group gathering people may meet with the pastor or pastoral leadership. So, this methodology is to blend different factors of the mega-church, large ministry environment with a small-church, small group theory approach. This

allows for the church to continue to invite people to the local church while also providing an environment where every member feels important in the ministry. Important means that God created mankind in his image. Anyone that is created in the creator's image should feel valued. One of the questions that one may ponder is creation here to feel important? This is determined on how one looks at one's importance. Does one value importance on superficial things such as appearance? Or does one value importance on being included in the true mission of the church, which is to love God in all things.

If a church congregation does not believe biblical canon is authoritative, then why do they not believe in scripture as authoritative. If one ministry believes in the authority of scripture that challenges others within the same group of Christians that do not believe in all scripture as authoritative then what is each sides reasoning for believing the way that they do. What is the determining factor that makes someone believe scripture is authoritative or not? What is the determining factor for someone to pick and choose what scripture that they believe is authoritative in their lives or what they deem as not authoritative? Can these dilemmas be the case of multiple perspectives and different communities and cultures not wanting to offend each other even at the cost of diluting their own Christian faith in the process? Scripture says that Jesus Christ proclaimed that the first and great commandment is to 'Love God' and the second commandment is to 'Love one's neighbor or one another.' For example, Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27; John 13:34 highlight Jesus proclaiming love.¹⁶⁶ Love is the key word to the first and great commandment and love is the key word to the second commandment in the Christian religion per Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Jesus Christ in the New

¹⁶⁶ Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27, John 13:34. These books in the New Testament show Jesus Christ proclaiming 'love' as a key to the first and great commandment and second commandment. This has become a centerpiece to the Christian faith on how to operate within the world.

Testament was affirming what was in the Old Testament found in Deuteronomy 6:5 to ‘Love the Lord God with all one’s heart, all one’s soul, and with all one’s might.’¹⁶⁷ In light of the fact that Jesus Christ proclaims that nothing comes before God, when a Christian is challenged in anything, the Christian or anybody is commanded and challenged by Jesus Christ in the New Testament to first love God and second to love one’s neighbor or one another as Jesus places the commandments in order of importance. How does a Christian know what to do when these two commandments are challenged in their own lives? By addressing multiple perspectives, and bridging a gap, this thesis will serve to constructively and through methodology build a Christian ethical perspective on why biblical canon is authoritative.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The teachings, preaching, and a Christian ethical framework plan will be implemented in this researcher’s local ministry context to cover the importance of the authority of God in scripture. The teachings, preaching, and ethical framework will be preached, taught, and written down for those to read and learn from focusing on the physical and spiritual, implemented and directed at four main groups: (1) Youth Ministry; (2) Young Adult Ministry; (3) Adult Ministry; and (4) Senior Ministry. All four main groups will be taught indefinitely for the duration of this researcher’s ministry but for this thesis it should take five weeks in every available environment in a ministerial, preaching, teaching, counseling, and a Christian writing effort to teach and preach to people about the authority of God through scripture. This specific implementation of the intervention design should only take five weeks once started, focusing on each teaching, and

¹⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 6:5. This book shows the Old Testament saying love God with all of one’s heart, one’s soul, and one’s might which was later quoted by Jesus Christ in the New Testament where he proclaims ‘love God’ as a key to the first and great commandment and he proclaims to love one’s neighbor or one other as the second commandment. This has become a centerpiece to the Christian faith on how to operate within the world.

preaching each week. This will be done through a teaching and preaching series to reach out to people locally and in all cultures. The implementation of the intervention design will focus on theology, apologetics, and leadership guiding people to God through Jesus Christ with biblical training and scripture as the foundation to measure the actions of the Christian. This is a critical aspect of spiritual formation for those who call themselves Christians in a world that has multiple perspectives. The Christian ethical model will include the engagement of believing communities and non-believing communities in a directed effort to provide management and implement Christian ethics in relation to Christian discipleship in a way to influence the Christian on the authority and truthfulness of God in all the scripture. The implementation of this intervention design will focus on how and why someone believes what they believe. This will work to engage people and to maintain a Bible based ministry that regards the Bible as the inspired word of God.

The aim for this DMIN thesis is not to solely disseminate information but to provide and plant in the hearts of believers in Christianity with multiple perspectives and non-believers a ministerial research reflection. This includes how to maintain a church congregation of Christian faith in God through a discourse of multiple perspectives and conflict that may occur around someone in the overall planning and implementing of a Christian message built on biblical canon. Christians live in a world where they are given the opportunity to blend into society, but conflicts may occur when they are faced with making a livelihood or staying true to the Christian belief system. This is only one dilemma that most Christians may face when operating in the world and this is to approach the intervention design from that of a pastor, Christian writer, teacher, preacher, counselor, and other related Christian positions who understand the challenges and engages the Christian in an intellectual way but also from a practical way. The data will include the numbers and the count such as the participants and their individual and collective

responses in the study in implementing an intervention design. The design will organize the research study including researching precise and concrete answers and to investigate how they came to their belief system while leaving open for them to go in any direction for why they believe the way they do. The participant will be encouraged to be open and truthful as to provide integrity to the study and this study was initially designed to provide pre-test and post-test research questions but has been condensed into one questionnaire after discussions with the IRB. Are there any major events that led the participant to believe the way that they do? This is one of the ways that the implementation of the intervention design is planned, which is to direct the participant to provide honest and truthful responses during the duration of the research study. The intervention is planned to serve as a pilot study or piloting the questions by asking two to three people who take the scale and questionnaire to provide thoughtful feedback or one can ask an independent expert to assess the questionnaire to see if improvements need to be made such as eliminating some research questions as a way to assess the strength of the instrument by using thoughtful and intentional construction and implementation of the intervention design from pre-test to post-test questions that were integrated into one questionnaire. Multiple perspectives have become the norm of the church congregation. Formulating and implementing solutions can build a Christian ethical framework and design a picture in the contemporary world. The pre-test and post-test questionnaire was initially designed in the DMIN 820 and DMIN 830 courses, and the researcher continued building the questions in DMIN 840 and the researcher designed the questions initially as pre-test and post-test questions, but when going through formal review with the IRB, it was condensed into one questionnaire as the IRB did not see where intervention would take place in the research study.

There were ten to twenty standard research questions included by the researcher in the initial research study created in the DMIN 820 and DMIN 830 research courses. The number of questions were adjusted during the thesis research course DMIN 840 study to a total of twenty-six questions and submitted to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board, but this is what was expected in the initial stages of planning for the pre-test and post-test research questions that they may be adjusted later. Leaders will be asked to participate as volunteers to allow people to make the choice to participate. This provides the participant the freedom of participation. This will allow the participant the opportunity to understand the volunteer model to promote reflection from the participant in open ended questions and closed-ended questions. Flexibility will be given to the participants, for example, in responses to questions and surveys, so that they are able to interpret and give honest and truthful responses.

There is a term in business that is referred to micromanagement. In a way, this terminology is viewed in a negative view. Micromanagement is a style of management where a manager closely observes an employee, controls the environment, and where the manager makes sure that the employees are performing to a satisfactory level. Depending on the organization, some organizations take more of an aggressive approach while others take more of a non-aggressive approach. Micromanagement deals with a freedom issue and most people view it as negative because they feel that they are giving away their freedom or they feel someone is always watching over them. On the other hand, the approach this thesis research will take is to allow the participant to feel as they can express their own thoughts freely in their own words that best fits them as a person. The research management styles that this intervention is planned to take is to provide an action research approach and providing creativity and innovation in the model of focusing on the concept of to love God as the first and great commandment in the

present world. For example, in visionary, the researcher plans to communicate a strong purpose and direction that the research is planned to take while allowing the participants to be free to explain their perspectives on the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. What is meant by visionary in the previous sentence is that in the last days God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh and sons and daughters shall prophesy, and the young men shall see visions, and the old men shall dream dreams.¹⁶⁸ From the transformational perspective, one will take the approach of innovation and breaking ground through the research. This will be to promote the growth of the Christian to love God in new and innovative ways that promotes the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. Participants will be led to give their true emotions and their beliefs and to show why they may feel the way that they do as it relates to Christianity. The implementation of the intervention design is to start and continue a truthful and loving conversation with Christians and non-believers to build a team of ministers locally and globally over the long term. This includes building upon a local church congregation that builds the ministry around the concept of to love God in one's life and throughout one's life. This is built to organize thinking and spiritual focus on the concept of to love God and love your neighbor. The first and great commandment to love God and the second commandment to love one another or one's neighbor can be done in love and the commandments and covenants of God cannot be deviated from while combining the first and second commandment. This thesis is implemented to reinforce in having people commit to the Father. A practicing Christian should strive to live out the message of scripture in a world that has a message of multiple perspectives that can sometimes separate or pull people away

¹⁶⁸ Isaiah 44:3, Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17. This book shows in the last days that God will pour out his spirit upon all the flesh and the offspring, descendants, sons and daughters shall prophesy, and the young men shall see visions, and the old men shall dream dreams. This shows what will be happening in the last days on God given direction on how his people should be operating in the world.

from following the scripture. Though delivering strong research this will take strong communication and skills and for one to show the participants that one has a heart for God which leads to having a heart to deliver a message of to love God and bring this to the people. This has a goal to see the Christian and non-believer grow in holiness and to offer for them to have a growing love for God as Jesus Christ commanded one to do. This includes supporting all the Bible and living a life for God in the Christian faith and embracing a role to tell others about the beautiful message of the scripture. This leads to loving God and spending an eternity in love with the Father. This thesis is a call to all to love the Father with all of one's heart, soul, and might, as the Bible says.

In explaining the book of Daniel in the Bible, the Life Changing Series in *A Life-Changing Encounter with God's Word from the Book of Daniel* states, that the central theme of the book is to show the sovereignty of God over history and empires, setting up and removing kings as he pleases, and this theme is that the affairs of men are subject to the decrees of God.¹⁶⁹ The questions that the book addresses are how can followers maintain their loyalty to God while living in cultures that are hostile to biblical religion, what does the future hold, and how will history end?¹⁷⁰ The explanation is that the visions of Daniel in the Old Testament scriptures have a strong likeness to Revelation in the New Testament. These books have universal implications that span to the ultimate conflict between good and evil where God in the book of Daniel provides visions to Daniel of the ability of God to overcome any adversary. This also connects to Revelation in the New Testament showing God being able to defeat any adversary. Jesus in the New Testament reaffirms this where he proclaims that God is the one that is good. The book of

¹⁶⁹ NavPress/Tyndale House Publishers, *A Life-Changing Encounter with God's Word from the Book of Daniel* (Colorado Springs: NavPress/Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), 12.

¹⁷⁰ NavPress/Tyndale House Publishers, 13.

Revelation shows a conflict between good and evil, and that God is ultimately victorious over all his enemies guiding the reader to a main theme that there is nothing in the world or even the universe that is stronger than the Lord. It designs a theme that God is supreme over all things.

Remote Teaching and Preaching

There are many terms for remote learning such as distance education, distance learning, online learning, virtual learning, and other related terminology and this has become another way of learning in the current context. The present world has worked on providing learning opportunities to communities that do not have access to the traditional learning methods. Time restrictions and distance or someone not having the ability to be in more than one place at one time such as work, home, and online education, which makes it difficult to be in one place at the same time. For example, as this relates to the present-day, the pastor can use new ways to bring biblical canon to their own church congregation or in times of conflict where what the world refers to as acts of God may happen that restrict movement of the pastor. In times of conflict, the pastor needs to continue to think and act and implement in new ways to show the importance of God. Implement in new ways is to continue to be innovative through different means, which includes but is not limited to technological means. For example, church use to be conducted only in person, but through the years, services have been done through different ways to reach larger audiences. This includes the implementation of Christian teaching, pastoring, education, and training carried out in new ways. This relates to Christianity in that the pastor and the participant may be separated but the pastor and researcher can still work to bring the good news to all where the traditional church may not be in regular attendance, and therefore they cannot meet in a traditional setting such as a church. This does not mean that the pastor stops making a biblical effort to deliver the message of God, this means that the pastor needs to seek God out in how to

deliver the message of God through scripture in all types of environments. In the current day, information can be transmitted through technological means such as email, audio, video, internet, online website formats, conferences including phone conferences, discussion boards, and various means to perform research and deliver the message of God in an unconventional way when conventional in person ways are restricted. Remote teaching and preaching can be done synchronously and asynchronously. This research study is preparing for the unexpected. For example, in times of conflict sometimes people stay at home and do not necessarily want to leave their homes as often due to uncertain circumstances and unpredictable times and this requires new methods of training the present-day Christian and reaching out to the world to continue to bring the message of the Bible including the Old Testament and New Testament to the contemporary person. The Christian including the pastor needs to be creative and innovative especially in conflict or stressful times.

The intervention will address the problem because it will look at the factors on how people view the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture and how the scripture applies to their own lives. For example, this will look at the question, how does a Christian know what to do when the first and second commandments shown in the Bible and commanded by Jesus Christ are challenged in the life of a Christian? The intervention is to study why do some people in the church congregation view scripture as authoritative while others do not. When dealing with multiple perspectives, getting a consensus amongst participants may be difficult but through the responses, this will allow the researcher to understand the similarities and differences on why some people in Christianity believe the way they do regarding scripture. There is no universally agreed upon method for practicing ministry rather that it is in a church including as a pastor, a chaplain, or some other related Christian field. There are multiple ways in ministry that a person

may carry out the duties of the ministry and many people have their own belief systems. There are multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry and this methodology works to continually create and innovate a ministry system that implements the commandments and covenants into the present world.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter outlines the results gleaned from the data as it relates to this research study of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. This results section will be written innovatively and will be a creative drawing of not only the facts and data, but this will engage the reader and invite them to learn from and understand the reasoning for conducting this research study. This study will illustrate and draw out the plan and solutions that have resulted from the implementation of the project. For example, reading the entire Bible may lead to successful results. Not reading the Bible could lead to someone claiming to be a Christian but not fully understanding the commandments and covenants given by God. There is legal terminology in the legal world that states the ignorance of the law excuses no one from the liability of the law. This is a legal understanding of justice in the modern world meaning that just because someone may not know the law fully does not excuse them from following the law or escaping the law merely because they are not aware of the full content and context of the law. This could relate to justice or just law which depicts what is fair in the modern world, what is acceptable, having an evenhanded justice system, and fair and impartial treatment or judgment, to name some aspects of providing justice in modern law. This type of system works to piece together a system which is viewed as impartial and justice for the plaintiff and defendant. It can also relate to what is ethical, what is moral, what is lawful, and what is considered right or wrong in society. The understanding for this is that people who break the law would be able to come forward and say that they did not know what they were doing was against the law. In doing this, everybody is given the right to a competent attorney that should know the law and should be able to provide

adequate representation for a person who is accused of breaking the law. This structure leads to a set of results, which includes a set of consequences, actions, effects, or outcomes relating to the issue or problem. The results will describe one's own observations on how the participants view the Bible in the modern world through their own responses.

Successful Outcomes

A successful outcome would be for Christians to think and act spiritually about the Bible and scripture as a measuring stick for what they do in their lives. Another successful outcome would be for a Christian to ethically evaluate themselves and value scripture. This includes the self-proclaimed Christian challenging themselves to think and act in a manner appropriate according to what God gives the world to follow and to implement this in their own lives. God shows in the Bible that he is the authority over all. This includes the modern-day Christian incorporating the commandments and covenants in biblical canon in their own lives as God has placed an authority structure in society for all to follow. A successful outcome is for one to view the Bible as a way of understanding what God requires for the world to do and for one to view the scripture as a measuring stick to not only influence their own life but the life of others instead of contemporary culture influencing the actions of a self-proclaimed Christian.

Yield of the Intervention Plan

Spiritual formation is a way of forming someone rather for ministry or can also be applied to someone's life outside of the church or ministry. One's own approach reflects and journals on a way a person may journey through their own lives in the process and practices of a person's religious, spiritual, personal, and professional life. The modern approach is to be open to multiple perspectives and while that may get someone from Point A to Point B in modern life how does that ultimately work out in someone's spiritual, religious, and eternal life. So, the old

and new approach is built upon the teachings in the Bible as the single perspective to love God and that gets a Christian from Point A to Point B as Jesus Christ used Old Testament scripture to build a bridge to a New Testament leading to Christianity. This thesis and one's own writing and research are to work to influence the modern Christian to thinking and acting the way of loving God which ultimately leads to loving one another or one's neighbor but also emphasizing for the self-proclaimed Christian to not forget about the commandments and covenants from God and if they do not know the commandments and covenants of God for them to start to learn and understand how God requires them to live. This visits the Great Commission where Jesus Christ tells the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything he commanded them to do and that he would be with his followers until the end of time.¹⁷¹

This is for the Christian to understand that God comes first no matter what even when the first and great commandment and second commandment are conflicting and challenging the Christian which may happen at different times in life. The approach is built on the biblical canon as seen that those in the Bible challenged people to think out of the box. The world can box someone into thinking and acting in the way of the world, but the Bible challenges the world to think and act according to how God requires them to think and act because a person's everlasting life depends on it. For example, Jesus Christ challenged people by saying that those who want to

¹⁷¹ Matthew 28:16-20. This book explains that the eleven disciples went to Galilee where Jesus told them to go on a mountain and while some worshipped him others doubted Jesus saying that all authority has been given to him and then Jesus came to them and told them that all authority had been given to him and he told them to go and make disciples of nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything he commanded them to do and that he would be with his followers until the end of time. This is one of the scriptures linked to the results to teach people of all nations which can relate to multiple perspectives in bringing them into the commandments and covenants mentioned in the Bible.

save their life will lose it and whoever loses their life will find it.¹⁷² This could be looked at from a practical viewpoint, where there are people who will threaten someone physically or mock someone for their love of God and in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, another way of looking at this scripture is that someone may have to walk away from their old approach, for example, on how they viewed scripture where they may not have viewed scripture as authoritative, and they may have to find a new life in believing in the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. This is what this thesis presents to the modern world to accept and love God in all that one does.

This thesis will be approached from an action research approach that includes theological and theoretical foundations and reflects on ministry in a modern practical context. There are multiple perspectives and conflict in Christianity and at times this can take a broad stance from different Christian denominations having multiple perspectives on scripture. The church is formed through the thinking and actions and testimony of Jesus Christ. So, the foundation of Christianity is based around the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ based his life on the foundation of God. However, there are many self-proclaimed Christians who do not follow or believe in the authority of God in scripture and in society, but they still claim to be Christian. So, this causes a problem with those who are claiming to have a belief in God and a connection to Jesus Christ. The results link to the methodology and approach, which needs to be concise on how one presents the information to the participants including how one asks the questions will determine how the questions are answered by the participant. This is important to address how the old approach will connect to the new approach and providing this link is to look at how the Old Testament connects to the New Testament in the Bible. The researcher expects to

¹⁷² Matthew 10:39, Matthew 16:25, Luke 9:24. These books outline Jesus challenging people to follow him and telling people that it will not be easy to follow him but those who lose their lives will find it.

include illustrations that may include graphs, charts, and tables as they relate to the research design in this research study. This is integral in describing multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry and incorporating the narrative of the Bible into the yield of the intervention plan.

Safeguarding Measures

Trust, integrity, ethics, and a sense of openness will be the way for this DMIN research, to provide a setting that allows participants to work towards a full understanding of life as one knows it and not be in fear of seeking out God in the process. This research will encourage the participants to tell the truth as it relates to their own belief systems and to provide a disclosure to the participants through informed consent. These factors such as trust, academic integrity, and academic openness are extremely important for the researcher in conducting any type of ministry project. This research will not be a legal interrogation. The research will be related to a course where someone reflects on their life in various aspects of the course as it relates to the subject matter. Since the researcher is approaching this with a critical and ethical approach, this researcher will get informed consent. These set of practices including receiving informed consent will allow all that are involved in one's own DMIN thesis project to understand the parameters of the study and the information that the research has been well thought out and to show anyone who plans on participating that this research is honest and seeks to work to build healthier Christian communities that support God and each other through togetherness. This research will be approached from an academic and action research approach incorporating educated responses and informed decision on if they want to participate in the project or not. Every participant will have the choice to participate during the duration of the research project or not, and at no time will a participant ever feel that they are required or forced to participate in this study and can

drop out at any time if they so choose. This will be considered a free-exercise clause in the research study.

The thesis project is gearing toward a theoretical, analytical, and conceptual questions, related to current biblical and theological issues that have a direct and indirect relationship to a current ministry need such as addressing multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. The number of human subjects is not expected to be many once it is known how many will participate and this research may take more of an academic, theoretical mixed with theological due to the nature of the ministry project. There will be no harm on any participant as this will be purely intellectual thinking and purely academic thinking and purely ministry thinking as this relates to multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry and no negative consequences can be attached to any participant due to the design of the thesis project.

The researcher at times may have an interest in a more analytical or conceptual questions that relates to a current issue such as biblical, historical, or theological, that may have a more indirect relationship to a current ministry need and the thesis approach would be more theoretical and may not usually involve the use of human subjects and may involve a small group of local Christians. This research study has been designed to have an action research approach while also addressing factors that can fit into a purely academic research category. Since there will be no risk to any participant and one's own safeguarding methods have been prepared, this research study may fall under the following exemption category:

These exemptions identified by the IRB in thesis research projects such as exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which this identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b): (2) 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: (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside

the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; and this research study may fall under these exemptions.

This exemption may apply to one's own current research application and if any forthcoming changes were to happen then that would have to be reported to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board. This research is planned to proceed in the context of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry from an academic research and action research approach.

Expected

In the process of designing this research it was expected that this research would be put through a rigorous analysis and assessment at different stages. This expectation was to ensure that this research is a groundbreaking study to build a strong design and to implement this research into the Christian community. This researcher has done everything possible to avoid any poor design or faulty implementation and has gone through certification with the IRB. For example, this researcher has gone through social and behavioral research course training with the collaborative institutional training initiative program. This is compliance training for research and ethics.

Project Information

This was a project that was developed from one's own ministry practice in relating this to the DMIN in Theology and Apologetics program at the Liberty University School of Divinity. The design of the DMIN program from DMIN 810 Foundations for Doctor of Ministry, THEO 810 Theology of the Gospel, APOL 810 Cultural Apologetics, DMIN 820 Research and Thesis Development, DMIN 830 Thesis Project Proposal Development, DMIN 840 Thesis Project Writing Stage 1, DMIN 885 Thesis Project Writing Stage 2 has prepared one for the completion

of DMIN 890 Thesis Defense. The previous positive DMIN performance from this researcher set in place positive future performance in this program. Through this LUSOD DMIN coursework, this researcher was able to identify a gap in the literature through reading the Christian materials extensively. This reading of the literature is supported in the scripture and the researcher found a gap. Although, the Christian literature did not directly address the ministry topic that this researcher is focused on, this review of the literature has proved that there is a gap in the literature since there is no consideration on how to approach the commandments and covenants as they relate to multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry. This highlights that this is a ground-breaking research study. This included this researcher formulating research questions to address the topic at hand. Through one's own research, this researcher started to find a gap in the literature. This gap in the literature was revealed by God the Father. In return, this researcher started to focus in on the gap in the Christian ministry literature.

The type of project that the researcher sought approval for was research that was to be undertaken in which a faculty member, staff member, or student collects information on living humans as part of a planned, designed activity with the intent of contributing relevant information to a body of knowledge within a discipline. The project was proposed for doctoral research. This research signifies the importance of the authority of God in scripture through the array of multiple perspectives and conflict that may arise in ministry. The research team did not include any non-affiliated, non-Liberty University co-investigators. All co-investigators involved in this study is affiliated with Liberty University at the time of the commencement of this project just as the primary investigator has been affiliated with Liberty University through one's own DMIN in Theology and Apologetics. One's own affiliations with Liberty University School of

Divinity was a theme of the project information as the researcher received doctoral training from LUSOD.

There was no conflict of interests. The researcher does not hold a position of influence or academic or professional authority over the participants and this researcher did not influence this research study in any way. For example, the researcher was not the participants supervisor, pastor, therapist, teacher, principal, district administrator, or school administrator, ranking member, or have any form of leadership role to any participant. The participant is free to think in the way that they want with no concern or threat of retaliation from the researcher, or any investigator involved in this research study.

There was no financial conflict of interest. For example, no person provided money or any support to this research and no person has directed a specific result to come from the research. This research was pure in its design and pure in its intent to understand this theme brought forth in Christian ministry to break ground and identify solutions. No money whatsoever was transferred or given to the researcher to bias this research study in any way. The researcher nor does any family member of the researcher receive any income or other payments, own investments in, or have a relationship with any non-profit organization that could benefit from this research or in other words, no organization is paying the researcher to reach any results that supports their own ideology. This research study is built on the volunteer model to have people participate at their own free will. For example, when a person decides to volunteer for an organization, they should have every right to discontinue participation, and this research study is that type of research, where every thought recorded is that of an individual and no persuasion has taken place for a person in how they should feel about an issue. Just as this researcher has no conflict of interest, any participant should clearly not have a conflict of interest and no selection

is made on how a person is believed to feel about an issue although they may identify as a Christian. This is a pure research project with the intent to implement in ministry a design for Christians to understand the authority of God in scripture in consideration to the multiple perspectives that exist in the modern world and the conflict that it may create. This is a research result of free-thinking individuals amongst the intellectual design to reach as many people as possible at its conclusion. The project was not funded at the commencing of the project and ending its conclusion has no funding.

The study dates for the project were expected from the start date of January 18, 2021 to an end date of May 14, 2021. The project during the IRB process had planned to use a single Liberty University department or group, which would had been the Liberty University School of Divinity. To use a single Liberty University department or group, one had to submit proof of permission from the department chair, coach, or dean to use Liberty University personnel from a single department and one sought proof of permission from the required Liberty University administration, but it was decided by the administration that survey participants should be redirected. This researcher agreed and did not see any issue with redirecting the survey participants once a decision was made about redirecting the survey participants, so this change was implemented upon the decision by LUSOD. Through this researcher seeking Liberty University School of Divinity approval, this research was analyzed thoroughly to implement a strong design. Once the change was implemented, one did not plan to use Liberty University students, staff, and/or faculty as participants and one focused in on the ministry design being implemented inside and outside of churches. This is important to direct this research study to multiple environments within the Christian environment that may provide a design to implement a betterment to the churches locally, nationwide, and worldwide.

Participant Information

There is a participant criterion put into the design of this research study. The participants in one's own study must be eighteen years of age or older and a Christian ministry leader, congregant or involved, or participating in some form of ministry. This includes a Christian, and either a ministry leader, church member, or church ministry member. During the initial IRB stages of defining the participant information, the participants were going to be video lecturers/presenters who taught the researcher through one's own doctoral program, but this was changed.

The participant population was not planned to be divided into different groups or different procedures. The researcher did not plan to survey any participants that were related to the researcher for the Liberty University thesis project. But the researcher may survey participants in one's own church that may be related to the researcher in the future as they would fit into the participant criterion. The characteristics that would make an individual ineligible to be in one's own study or one's own exclusion criteria would be if a participant is not eighteen years of age or older and if they are not involved in Christian ministry. To understand the Christian population, one plans to focus in on those who identify as a Christian. This is important to identify those specific populations to find out any differences that may exist in individual beliefs. For example, one Christian church may have their beliefs set but some individuals in the church may believe differently on issues pertaining to the authority of the scripture in different environments. This must be addressed to start to understand why some believe the way that they do that contributes to the results. The participant can be a Christian ministry leader, congregant or involved in some form of ministry. In order, to participate, the participant must be eighteen years of age or older, and the gender will be male and female for this study and these participants

will be a small group of Christians. If someone under eighteen years of age chooses to participate, additional measures would have to be taken such as approval from their consenting parent guardian. Taking part in this study is voluntary. So, the expected type of participants would be adult participants. The rationale for selecting this selected group is because the Christian ministry leader, congregant, or those involved, or those participating in some form of ministry usually fit within these categorical groups.

Recruitment

The researcher will contact the potential participants to recruit them for one's own study through email or phone. But the researcher may have a convenient sample in person at Christian communities and if the opportunity arises the researcher may have to make first contact with the participant in person. If a participant chooses that paper-format or decides to have the survey administered in person or over the phone, the researcher may provide a paper copy to the participant and have it returned at a future date in rare cases. The researcher may also ask the participant to put their responses in any format and return to the researcher at a set date. In addition, one may use a recruitment email if one has access to a Christian ministry leader email. For example, if a church has a church website or if one has access to a congregant email or phone number, one may email or call. This may be used to ask the potential participant if they are available to take a Christian ministry survey. A recruitment email is planned to be used and one week later a follow-up email if a potential participant has implied or shown interest in participating in the survey. The location and timing of the recruitment is planned to be mostly done through email. But in some rare cases, other alternative measures of administering the test research questions may be considered so that a population of people who may not have regular

access to a computer so that this population can give their perspective of ministry in modern time.

Consent

The project does not involve deception. For example, deception may include but is not limited to the following cases, for example, withholding the true and full purpose of the study, withholding information about the experimental and control groups, using audio, and video recording, or photographing participants without their knowledge, or in other words not revealing everything to the participant where the participant may feel deceived if this information is not disclosed at the beginning of the research study.

The project does contain anonymous data collection. The research project does involve a participant population where signing forms is not the norm. A signed consent form would be the only record linking the participant to the research in this research study. A breach of confidentiality would constitute the principal risk to participants and while this would be unlikely, this would be the primary risk for this research study. The research poses no more than minimal risk to participants, which means there is no more risk than everyday activities that a person may participate in. So, the participant can expect not to have any more risk that they have in their regular daily occupation. The research does not include any activities that would require signed consent in a non-research context. There are not any study-related activities that would normally require signed consent. The subjects or legally authorized representatives are not members of a distinct cultural group or community in which signing the forms is not the norm. The participants will receive a written statement and written information about the research. This information statement and information sheet will contain all the information and elements of an informed consent but without the signature lines on the consent form.

The study does not require parental or guardian consent. For example, if any of the participants are under eighteen years of age, parental or guardian consent most likely may be required as seen in school environments. In kindergarten to twelfth grade school environments, it is normal for a student to have to present a consent form so that the child can participate in activities or even go on field trips. This also includes that the study does not require child assent. For example, assent is required unless the child is not capable of assenting due to age, psychological state, sedation, or the research holds out the prospect of a direct benefit that is only available within the context of the research. Children under the age of thirteen should receive a separate child assent form written at their grade level that they can read or that can be read to them. Children between the ages of thirteen and seventeen can provide assent on the parental consent form. This was done in one's own research in the early stages of research to have on hand in case a participant fits into this category, but this is not the target population of the research study. The consent form for adult participation will be attached to the recruitment email and emailed to participants verbally by phone or email.

Survey and Questionnaire Procedures

The procedure will be an email questionnaire. The research questions should take approximately ten thousand and eighty minutes to complete and will be conducted through email. Ten thousand and eighty minutes is equal to one hundred and sixty-eight hours. One hundred and sixty-eight hours divided into twenty-four hours is equal to seven, which means a participant can take seven days to complete the questionnaire from the date and time the questionnaire is sent to the email address of the participant. The participant will be given a week to complete their responses and email them back to the researcher. The email questionnaire will be sent to potential participants. The survey will be conducted through email. The project will

not involve any participant compensation. Compensation is not a part of this research study. The participants are given the volunteer option and under no circumstances will the participant believe that compensation or an incentive is a part of their participation.

Data Security

The questionnaire will be anonymous. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. The physical copies will be stored in a locked file cabinet and only the researcher will have access to the data. The data will not be destroyed after three years. The data will be retained for a minimum of three years after the research study has been completed. The data will be analyzed by searching for common themes from the participants. The researcher will look for trends and themes in the research. Data may be used for publication and future presentations. The project will not involve the use of archival data or secondary data. Archival data is data that exist already, or information previously collected, for example, in a past study or evaluation, for a purpose other than the proposed research. This can include student grades, administrative procedures, and patient medical records. Secondary data is data that was previously collected by someone other than the primary investigator for the purpose of research. This can include a census, or records collected by an organization, or in other words, a researcher choosing to utilize survey data that was collected as part of an earlier study or originally done by another researcher. This can also include collecting documents from participants or an organization, government data such as meeting minutes, policies, syllabi, and other related materials. Confidentiality is to keep something in secrecy. This can show that the researcher can identify participants and link them to their data, but the participant will not reveal participant identities to anyone outside of the study, keeping the data private. No aspect of the study is considered confidential. Anonymity means that although the researcher knows whom one will invite to

participate in the research study, once the data is collected, the researcher cannot link individuals to their personal data, and the identity of the person is unknown. This means that no personally identifying information can be collected in an anonymous study. Aspects of the study will be considered anonymous. There will be processes to ensure that the data collected is anonymous. The questionnaire will be to not collect any identifiable information. As soon as the researcher receives the responses back in an email, the researcher will print the responses, delete the email, place the responses in a shuffle pile, and shuffle the responses. This is the only way the researcher can maintain anonymity.

Risks and Benefits

The only potential risk is a breach of confidentiality if the data is lost or stolen. There will be no alternative treatments that might be advantageous to the participants to be made available in the research study. This project is not considered greater than minimal risk.

There will be no direct benefits to the participants. Benefits to society include creating and developing new strategies for the benefit of the church and community that one lives in. The issue is to challenge the multiple perspectives and conflict in different Christian faiths and to discuss and make a joint effort on learning and understanding the different belief systems. This will include to delve into how to jointly come together on the first and great commandment to love God and to follow the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture.

One is evaluating the risk-benefit ratio. The study is worth doing, even with the identification of these risks. For example, the Christian ministry environment is a ministry context, which may create a sense of multiple perspectives in multiple environments and contexts including in academia, but it is worth the reflection and it is worth searching for biblical solutions.

Common Themes

A theme is considered the central subject within a writing. This is viewed by some as the narrative that explains the concept of the writing and what the reader may perceive the writer is explaining. Themes can be understood as implying rather than stating explicitly, that this is what the author meant without knowing directly what the author may have meant while writing the subject matter. A theme can search for or inquire on common perceptions that may fit into one's own current cultural context. This may address different fields such as social issues or behavioral issues among other fields. One example of the Bible and the theme that could be gleaned from the scripture is that how does one deal with multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry as experienced in early Christianity and current Christians. This theme deals with how a person can live a life for God, while at the same time existing in a world where if one follows and believes in multiple perspectives this is considered the ideal life for modern ideology, but biblical canon commands one to live a life for God as described in the Bible or scripture.

Christianity is one of the largest religions in the world. But there are many local churches that practice and believe differently from the teachings of the authority of God in the Bible and these churches believe differently from each other. The Christian belief system is built around the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ. In some local churches, the belief system may center around the concept of love God, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, while others may center their belief on the birth and life of Jesus before he started his ministry. Christianity began with a small number of people. These humble beginnings were based on the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ that have grown into a worldwide religion. This practice of having a local church is still prevalent today. Although, some churches are larger than others and are considered mega-churches with thousands of members while some churches may not even have ten members but

are still joining together in fellowship in the central belief of the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ.

The Christian belief system is built on the theme that there is only one creator and that God the creator created the heavens and the earth. In this belief system comes the belief in the trinitarian doctrine which believes that there is one God but there are three persons which co-exist with each other, which are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. One of the central themes in the Christian faith is the crucifixion of and the subsequent resurrection of Jesus Christ that proves to the world that God sent his son to deliver the world from sin. This crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ is believed by Christians as the way that God the Father forgives them for their sins in the world.

Jesus commands as the first and great commandment for one to love God with all one's existence, which puts a commandment on any of his followers to practice love for God. Jesus commands as the second commandment that one love one's neighbor, which puts a commandment on any of his followers to practice love for one another. These commandments as commanded by Jesus Christ is viewed through multiple perspectives inside and outside of the church.

Approaches	Advantages
Assesses and provides analysis on current trends	Gives and provides a Christian ministry analysis
Considers what counters conflict in Christian ministry	Understands multiple perspectives which addresses expectations and the impact of Christian ministry in the modern world
Looks at Christian ministry from research that includes open-ended and closed-ended questions	Presents information from a descriptive analysis by applying quantitative numerical such as anonymous participant responses in the data in the form of qualitative explanations
Tracks common themes in Christian ministry from participants	Enables the participant and those who later read the ground-breaking research study over time to develop a more robust, accurate, and clear understanding of the commandments and covenants in applying to policies and actions in Christian ministry
Researches the commandments and covenants on how Christian leadership can apply them qualitatively and quantitatively	Research analysis and understanding on whether leaders and participants in Christian ministry are interested in moving in the right direction in line with the commandments and covenants in the Bible in implementing and sustaining what the Bible teaches

God the Father	Jesus the Son of God	The Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit
The creator of the heavens and the earth	The only begotten Son of God the Father	The one who Jesus the Son of God refers to as the comforter
The one who designed and implemented the commandments and covenants in the word and in the world	The one sent by God the Father so that anyone who believes would receive everlasting life in his presence	The one who Jesus said God the Father would send in his name to bring all things to remembrance

Key Attributes
Identifying the commandments and covenants
Providing an original and novel study
Groundbreaking on the general relevance in a Christian community of multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry
To provide research questions that are precise and gives the participant the ability to engage in deep inquiry of Christian ministry
Design a research investigation that investigates the very nature of the commandments and covenants
Discover a research gap and present knowledge in a useful and educated way
Make use of ministry to influence Christians to live by the commandments and covenants in the Bible and command the modern church to align one's church with biblical canon

Christian Ministry

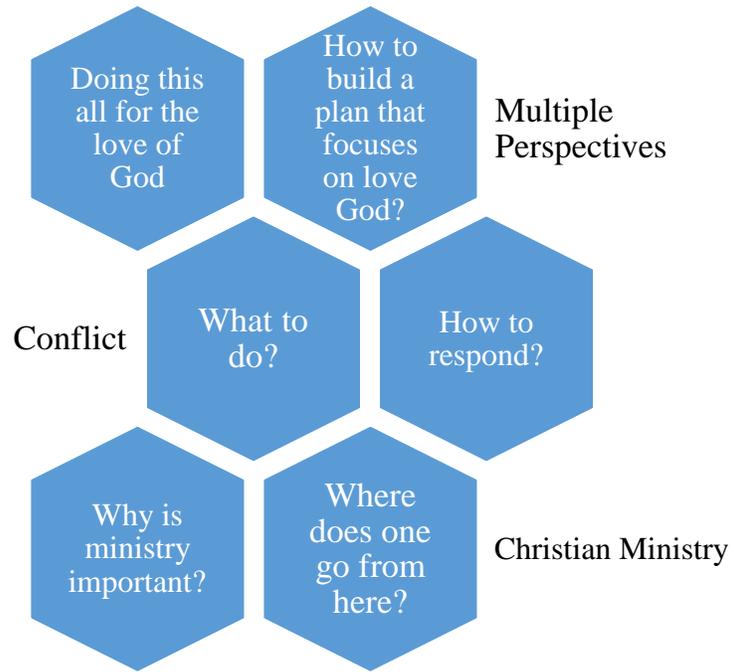
Commandments

Covenants

Love God

Love your neighbor

Love one another



Love Scripture

- Implementing biblical canon inside and outside of the church

Applying Scripture

- Incorporating the Bible into everyday life activities

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This conclusion will compare the research for the thesis project proposal with the results of the implemented research project. It is here that the researcher will work to explain to the reader the relevance and efficacy of the study, and will work towards asking the questions, ‘so what’ and what does one do with this information now?’ This will include asking, how do the results compare with similar situations, how might the research be replicated in a similar situation, and what questions need additional investigation? The findings described in this research may validate the conclusion that reading the Bible in its entirety and understanding the commandments and covenants identified in the Bible may lead to important lines of research on why biblical canon is the measuring stick for the modern-day Christian. This is how a Christian should measure themselves in identifying and operating in the Christian faith using the Bible as the measuring stick and no other outside doctrine should be considered a revelation of the authority of God in scripture.

The modern-day Christian in this research study may tend to incorporate outside perspectives into their own belief system and this is where discipline in the Christian faith and understanding the commandments and covenants of God provide direction. This will present to the self-proclaimed Christian to maintain their commitment to the Father taught in the Bible and revealed by God in scripture. Others may still believe that incorporating multiple perspectives is the way that they should exist outside of the church. The Christian will face challenges at different times in life. The intensity level may be different depending on the issue that presents themselves to the Christian rather internally or externally of the church, in personal or

professional environments, but this research study works to provide the Christian with going to the teachings and preaching in the Bible when faced with conflict and stressful circumstances. This includes seeking God first in all things, and by frequent practice of prayer in which Jesus did during conflict, and a strong commitment and life to remaining a practicing Christian through the duration of one's own life. Incorporating all these factors may create a more committed Christian who incorporates all the Bible into their life, but it does not mean that they will not face conflict in their own life. The data may indicate a connection between Christian, multiple perspectives, and conflict, rather than a causality. The conclusions may or may not reflect the entire Christian population, there may be slight or major differences in the belief of someone, but the conclusion will be to present the authority and truthfulness of God in scripture. For example, *Christian Educators' Use of Prayer to Cope with Stress* by Robin LaBarbera and June Hetzel mention, that in a sample, 64% of the ministry of teaching were convinced that the ministry of teaching was their calling, and the researchers question whether prayer frequency was associated with job satisfaction given the stress experienced and majority of the participants that planned on staying in ministry for their full-time careers.¹⁷³

Current Trends

A trend is considered as a way that a topic or subject matter may be developing or changing. There are many types of trends. For example, in the stock markets, data patterns are observed to forecast how something is rising and falling. This can be viewed as the bull and bear markets, bull for rising and bear for falling. In relating this to the Christian market, this may be looking at how a Christian product is rising or falling in sales. There are fashion trends, where

¹⁷³ Robin LaBarbera, and June Hetzel, "Christian Educators' Use of Prayer to Cope with Stress," *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 55(4) (2016): 1445.

certain types of fashions may be considered the best to wear at different times of the season. In relating this to a Christian market, this may be looking at how a Christian brand may fit into one's own lifestyle. There are Christian trends to observe the Christian market. These are some trends but there are many current trends in the world.

For this thesis, trend is how does the behavior of Christians match with the Bible in short time periods and over the life of a Christian. Do some people who claim to be a Christian follow the Bible sometimes, most of the time, or all the time? One of the trends in modern day for Christianity is how to love God in a world of multiple perspectives. In the modern time, loving God may challenge a Christian with loving one another. Some struggle how to love God and love one another at the same time. For example, equality is an issue that contrast with Christianity and challenges the Christian in the form of love God and love one's neighbor or one another. For some, biblical equality does not equal with modern equality. This is perceived in modern day as conservative versus liberal. This is along the lines of how scripture narrates modern life or how the Bible fits with some in society who may also claim to be a Christian. So, new trends are being engaged in the modern world that leaders in society are implementing. But as seen through history, human laws come and go, these laws change, are modified, revised, amended, and some of these laws last a short time, while others last a long time. So, the Christian leader is challenged to understand these new trends, and work to minister to people on the value of scripture in a culture that is trending towards more of a contemporary approach that wants to mark off and change the biblical approach. This contemporary approach takes more of a non-biblical approach, but this thesis takes a biblical approach. Trends are leaning more towards contemporary scientific approaches and modern trends are not leaning towards a biblical approach. But a Christian need to ask themselves, what is equality? For the Christian, equality is

what the Bible defines and not what the world defines it as. At points in life, a Christian may be tempted to believe the beliefs of the world. But for the Christian, one needs to be led by the spirit to believe the facts of the authority of God in scripture, and the truth as it is narrated in the Bible.

Present and Future

The Father is committed to the Christian and Jesus Christ his son draws inspiration from the mission to save the world in preparation for those who follow him to live in the kingdom of God. The Christian needs to pursue this vision through a strategic spiritual process that commands the Christian through the scripture and enables one to navigate through multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. The Christian must work to understand the Bible. The Christian apologist needs to be able to clearly explain why the Bible is important to them as one's own faith and as a whole body of faith. This includes the Christian incorporating the belief system of the Bible into everything that they do, for example, including one's Christian values and ethics into their own occupation.

The Christian needs to be committed to the Father and his son draws inspiration from the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Christian is to educate the world toward loving God with all one's existence and love one's neighbor or one another without one conflicting with what the Bible says. So, what the Christian must do with this information in the Bible is to not be ashamed of the biblical canon in a world that incorporates multiple perspectives, and when the Christian relies on scripture this may lead to conflict. The spiritual intellect of the Christian needs to be in tune with one's service to God by one leading and explaining to people the reconciliation and all people being made whole by what the Father did for one by sending his son Jesus Christ. The Christian leader is a teaching person that focuses on delivering the work of Jesus Christ through instruction, preaching, writing, and lovingly leading people to love God.

Survey Research Methods by Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. states that in having focus groups that the general protocol is to discuss the perceptions of people, experiences, and feelings in relation to what is being measured in the survey and for the researcher to attempt to find the single question or set of questions needed to create measures of the variables on the list.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Fowler mentions that when survey results are reported, it is an obligation to report the information needed in assessing the quality of the data and to replicate the results.¹⁷⁵ This research followed general protocol and standard procedures. For one, this researcher created the research questions and had more than one person review the questions. Through this process, this researcher was able to have more than one perspective identified in the research, these perspectives were shown through multiple people in their lived experiences, and this was shown through the research in providing information on the structure and formatting of the questions. In this research process, one will be able to carry this research further from the present to the future in conducting, researching, and constructing Christian ministry. This in return looks at the early Christians and how they viewed Christianity in its early beginnings in connecting to how a modern Christian views Christianity in its present state and how this may impact and relate to future ministry.

Since all people who claim to be Christians do not have the same perspective and have multiple perspectives of the Bible and this belief is based on the same God the Father, his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost, so what does the body of Christ do now? Why have all Christians not been able to believe the same on Christianity? The challenge to those in the church and not in the church is based on the multiple perspectives that Christians have regarding the Bible and what the church should believe and how the church should be operating

¹⁷⁴ Floyd J. Fowler, *Survey Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2002), 107.

¹⁷⁵ Fowler, 157-158.

in the modern world. Why are Christians not able to come to the same conclusion as the person in the same church as them? Why do Christians have multiple perspectives from the church that may be in the same locality as them and may even be the same denomination as them but have different viewpoints? Multiple perspectives can be viewed in multiple forms. For example, one perspective can be that of an unbeliever who may be in the church and may be in a position of authority inside the church or outside the church. These unbelievers may come with multiple perspectives and the unbelief may be seen through their own lived experiences. On the other hand, some unbelievers may stay far away from anything they see as resembling church and may explain their disbelief to people.

Another perspective is of a person who may make the claim that they are a Christian, but they live a life in contrast to that of the Bible. This person who claims to be a Christian may be in the church and may be in a position of authority inside the church or outside the church. These persons who claim to be Christians may come from any denomination or they may be non-denominational and how to be a Christian may be seen through their own lived experiences. The Bible shows that some of the followers of Jesus experienced disbelief during the ministry of Christ. The challenge of multiple perspectives is that each person has their understanding of the Bible and why they may view their side as the correct side. As in any conflict, each side has one's own reasoning for why they think that they may be right. The point is that wrong perspectives of the Bible can lead someone on the wrong path and Christian leaders should take full responsibility to equip the church that they lead in presenting biblical information as Jesus Christ did, which is speaking the truth and love. This includes living a life that follows the model of how the Bible describes how one should live. The Bible is what the Christian should read to understand the commandments and covenants with God when challenged with multiple

perspectives. This is where a Christian should train oneself on how to see when someone is using the scripture for their own methods which can result in error of a person claiming to be a Christian. The history of a church is another way that can lead a Christian to multiple perspectives. The Bible may say to believe a certain way, but some churches may believe the way the history of their own church or current leadership is directing them to believe. Believing any other way from what the Bible commands one to live is placing one's current modern tradition over that of the authoritative tradition of the Bible. The Bible is the decisive factor in the life of a Christian.

The Christian must make a strong statement for love that reaches out to all cultures. The commandment of love God is highlighted in the Bible. The church needs to show the love that is described in the Bible and this love must be implemented in the church and in the community. This includes being innovative and creating plans that align with the Bible. The church has been built on to love God, which includes love one's neighbor or love one another, and staying on track by addressing the need for the world to bring any conflict that one may have to God. The church cannot be limited to saying what it may think that the modern world wants to hear, but the church needs to be committed to speaking the truth in love, and this truth in love can be found in the biblical canon.

The church has the first commandment given by Jesus Christ to love God and the second commandment to love one's neighbor or love one another. These commandments must show the world the importance of the commandments and covenants. This means speaking the truth in love to provide an opportunity to every person to love God so that one can live eternally in the kingdom of God with his eternal love. This needs to be incorporated into the life of the person so that one can understand the commandments and covenants set forth in the Bible. The Christian

needs to show how important to love God is and the church must make the Bible available for all people by being a loving steward for God in delivering the commandments and covenants set forth in the Bible.

Participant Responses

One of the keys to building the research questions and having participants answer the questions is building a response to the call of ministry. The importance of asking the questions is for the participants to build a vocabulary on biblical canon and the set of texts that can be viewed as scripture that is authoritative. This sets a lifestyle for the modern Christian to understand the commandments and covenants of the Bible such as love God and love one's neighbor or love one another. The Holy Bible is a book that provides the Christian a way of life in a world of multiple perspectives and how to deal with the conflict that comes from different opinions.

Primary Research Question: If one's own Christian community believes Biblical canon is authoritative, then why does the Christian community believe the Bible is authoritative?

This primary research open-ended question shows the heart and mind of the Christian to see if the Bible is authoritative to the Christian community. This engages those to see if those who are in the community are living according to how God the Father explains for the community to live. This is asking the Christian are they being driven by the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost and although there may be multiple perspectives, the community needs to be committed to God and Jesus Christ.

Using Acts 11:25-26 in the New Testament as a reference point, Christian is a broad term that identifies someone who assembles themselves with the church and teaches many people in the name of Jesus Christ. This scripture shows the disciples assembling themselves the whole year with the church and teaching many people just as Jesus Christ did. According to scripture,

the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. There are many who claim to be believers and identify as a Christian in the modern era. This provides multiple perspectives on the concept of who can be a Christian. This, in some cases, leads to conflict on what a Christian should believe. There are many denominations that have contradictory beliefs but claim to be Christians. For the purposes of this study, a Christian is defined as someone who lives in love, repentance, faith, and obedience to the Father in the name of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ. This includes a Christian adhering to all the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture and enacting and supporting the laws of God found in the Bible.

RQ 2: Are you a Christian?

Yes No

This RQ2 question shows the participant identifying or not as a Christian. It is a research question that has shown that the participants associate oneself with Christianity. In this closed-ended question the participant is given the option to identify as a Christian or not.

RQ 3: Do you believe that all of scripture is authoritative?

Yes No

This RQ3 closed-ended question builds off the primary research question to ask the participant if one believes that all of scripture is authoritative. This is a question where multiple perspectives come into play where some may believe that parts of the Bible are authoritative, and some may believe that all of scripture is authoritative. In this closed-ended question the participant is given the option to answer if one believes scripture to be authoritative or not.

RQ 4: Do you view the Bible as outdated?

Yes

No

This RQ4 closed-ended question builds on a perspective that the participant may view the Bible as outdated and where the participant believes the Bible does not apply to modern day life. Or in some cases it was the other way around where the participant did not view the Bible as outdated and where someone believes the Bible does apply to modern day life. This is a challenge to how a Bible driven person may believe that scripture is not outdated and still applies to modern day issues while some believe that new perspectives are the way of life.

RQ 5: Do you believe that some people, whether inside the church or not part of the church, view the Bible as outdated?

Yes

No

This RQ5 closed-ended question attempted to be more specific with identifying groups of people some inside the church and some not part of the church, in asking the participant how they view the world in how others may view the world in the discussion of if the Bible is considered outdated.

RQ 6: Do you view the Bible as non-inclusive towards some people/people groups?

Yes

No

This RQ6 closed-ended question works on the participant understanding of non-inclusiveness and how this may be considered in the view of someone and how the Bible describes some people/people groups.

RQ 7: Do you believe that some people, whether inside the church or not part of the church, view the Bible as non-inclusive towards some people/people groups?

Yes

No

This RQ7 closed-ended question works on the participant understanding of non-inclusiveness in an attempt to be more specific with identifying groups of people some inside the church and some not part of the church, in how they view the world through someone else's view in how someone outside of themselves may view non-inclusive.

Using Exodus 20, Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, and Luke 18:18-30 as your reference point, 'leave all behind' regarding this question means to give anything or all things away for God through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gave people the option to follow him. Some followed him and some decided not to follow him. The command to 'leave all behind' means to give everything away for God and to follow Jesus Christ. This can cause conflict in one's life and there are multiple perspectives on how one should follow Jesus Christ. This reference on the commandments and how one may obtain eternal life not only relates to physical riches, but also to anything that can pull someone away from God, such as idolatry, coveting, money, fame, status, power, influence, or worshipping anything that take one's love away from God.

RQ 8: Would a professing Christian be able to leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

This RQ8 closed-ended question looks at how the participant views leave all behind. Would is a past of will and looks at the beliefs and senses of a person in expressing the conditions of one's life in indication of if someone would be able to leave all behind in this modern world. Some view would in the terms of material and property and belongings of that sort while other participants view would in the terms of the non-importance of these materialistic things and that leaving all behind is a synonym as shut all things in one's life for God.

RQ 9: Should a professing Christian leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

This RQ9 closed-ended question looks at how the participant views leave all behind. Should is used in this context to indicate if someone has an obligation or a requirement especially when one's life conflict with the ministry of Jesus Christ. Some view should in the terms of is it important to drop all things for Jesus Christ.

RQ 10: What does it look like to leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ in the life of a modern-day believer?

This RQ10 open-ended question asks the participant to look at the appearance of leaving all behind. Some participants perceive leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ in the modern world as not engaging in sinful behavior while others believe that this consists of engaging in activities that promote the existence of Jesus Christ in the life of the believer.

RQ 11: Please describe in more detail why scripture is authoritative or is not authoritative based on your perspective?

This RQ11 open-ended question asks the participant to describe why scripture is authoritative or is not authoritative and engages the participant on scripture to provide their own views on scripture. Details of scripture being authoritative in some cases is following the commandments and covenants has working one in one with each other. This includes that the commandments exist with each other instead being separated from each other.

RQ 12: Do you use the Bible to make decisions in your life?

Yes

No

This RQ12 closed-ended question asks the participant how one makes decisions in their own life. This can be applied to the individual life of a person and how useful the Bible is for the participant in making their everyday decisions. In the world, people do not walk around with the Bible unless one is in church, one may see multiple Bibles in use by congregants but in walking around in everyday activities the majority of people do not carry the Bible and in many cases, the participants are given alternative books to refer to when making decisions in life including in balancing their work life and personal life.

RQ 13: Please provide an example of how you use the Bible to make decisions in your life?

This RQ13 open-ended question works to build a learning structure of the participant in providing examples of how one may use the Bible to make decisions. This is engaging the participant to be inclusive of using the Bible in making decisions in one's life. The Bible can be used to love God meaning when the participant is faced with an alternative perspective to that of the Bible the participant used a scripture in the Bible that they felt related to what the participant was experiencing and worked through the problem by applying that specific scripture to their own problem.

RQ 14: Using Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 6:5 in the Old Testament and using Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27, John 13:34, and John 14:1 in the New Testament as your reference point, describe some ways that your church operates based on the commandments set forth in scripture (i.e. The Ten Commandments, The Great Commandment to 'Love God' and the Second Commandment to 'Love one's neighbor or love one another,' seek first the kingdom of God, and the Great Commission mentioned by Jesus Christ)?

This RQ14 open-ended question uses scripture to emphasize the commandments being used in the church and engages a ministry to think and act on the importance of scripture in the church and how to interact with people in the church with the commandments. Each participant has one's own version of how these commandments is applied in the church. But the consideration of these commandments must be incorporated in the church through the revelation as seen in the Bible.

RQ 15: Using Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, and Luke 10:27 as your reference point, what does a Christian do when modern ideals conflict with the Great Commandment to 'Love God' mentioned by Jesus Christ?

This RQ15 open-ended question opens a discussion on the conflicting ideals of modern day with the Great Commandment of 'Love God' mentioned by Jesus Christ. In the modern world, God is not the focal point but the Father should be the focal point so there is conflict. This searches for an answer to an age-old problem. The participant has been trained to think the way of modern thinkers and this leads the participant to act in a manner that is consistent with what new ideals explain. The participant who has modern ideals in some cases do not match with the Great Commandment, but some participants meet 'Love God' with doing what God says as seen in scripture.

RQ 16: How should one deal with conflict in local Christian ministry?

This RQ16 open-ended question centers in on conflict in local Christian ministry in which many congregations do not focus in on how to deal with conflict. Some participants view dealing with conflict as agree to disagree with each other and others view it as compromise,

while others view it as following the commandments and covenants of God regardless of the outcome of the conflict between the two disputing parties.

RQ 17: How should one carry out the mission of the local Christian church when faced with multiple perspectives on scripture?

This RQ17 open-ended question centers on how one can carry out the mission of the local church when faced with multiple perspectives on scripture. As seen in modern day, the local Christian church is faced with multiple perspectives and some have different responses or no response and this engages the participant to see what one's response to conflict is. Carrying out the mission of the local church when faced with multiple perspectives is a concerted effort because even some within one's own ministry are against and some resist what scripture says, but the one who is carrying out the mission must be resilient against the multiple perspectives. This allows the Christian to withstand difficult conditions that present itself during the time of conflict. Instead of one being defeated the one carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ is resilient to conflict because the participant in ministry stands firm on the commandments and covenants as outlined in the Bible.

RQ 18: How should a Christian leader prepare his Christian community for interaction within the church and interaction with those outside the church?

This RQ18 open-ended question provides a discussion on the Christian leader and how the leader prepares the community of Jesus Christ for interaction with the church and interaction with those outside the church. Any practicing church must start preparing a Christian response to one's own local community that fits with the Bible. The participant in ministry must prepare interaction with others through love for God and by this receive revelation from Jesus Christ and

operate with the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit with anything that one does inside of the church and outside of the church.

The authority of the universe in this research means to use the Bible as the measuring stick of how one lives life. There are many man-made laws that challenge what the Bible says. Use the authority of the universe in the context of a Christian using the Bible as the authority that is used to measure how one lives in life. Reflect on how a Christian should use the laws of human government when it conflicts with what the Bible says.

RQ 19: How should a Christian apply the Bible as the authority that is used to direct how one lives life (i.e. Reflect on how a Christian should follow the authority of the Bible and apply the laws of human government when they conflict with what the Bible says)?

This RQ19 open-ended question allows the participant to search one's own reflection of a Christian on conflicting goals of what the Bible mentions and what outside doctrine mentions that may come in different forms such as human laws. Some ministries simply conform to the laws of human government while others may form a sense of resilience that is based on following the Bible. This engages a Christian on the authority issue.

RQ 20: Define truth, love, and freedom?

This RQ20 open-ended question sees how the participant views truth, love, and freedom. As one may see, these three words finds itself in a conflict of philosophy, theology, theory, and practice of ministry. This is a focus of multiple perspectives on how multiple communities view truth, love, and freedom differently.

RQ 21: Where does one draw the line on how to live out a Christ-like life in a contemporary world of multiple perspectives when one encounters outside perspectives that conflict with one's own belief regarding the authority of God in scripture?

This RQ21 question draws a line of Jesus Christ in comparison to the contemporary world, which at times can be completely different in a world of multiple perspectives. In the modern world, it is only a matter of time of when one will encounter outside perspectives to what one believes but it is how one uses that encounter to provide understanding to one's own belief system in applying the truth, freedom, and love of the authority of God in scripture.

RQ 22: How does a Christian operate in a world of multiple perspectives even within one's own Christian community?

This RQ22 open-ended question provides an operation manual of how one operates or protects themselves from the multiple perspectives that exist. One can only lead when they start to build a handbook to how one should handle the multiple perspectives that one will encounter in the world.

RQ 23: What are the necessities of life?

This RQ23 open-ended question asks the participant to identify what is important to them in life. Necessities are different depending on the person one may ask, and some things are a requirement in life to some people and are essential and a prerequisite to life. This engages the participant on what that is for that specific person.

RQ 24: Do you believe in all the teaching of Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

This RQ24 closed-ended question asks the participant does one believe in all the teaching of Jesus Christ. This allows the participant to either answer yes or no and to take everything that one has learned from Jesus Christ and to answer if one believes in all of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

RQ 25: How should the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian?

This RQ25 open-ended question asks the participant to explain how the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ should play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian. With multiple perspectives in Christianity, there are different opinions on the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ and how his ministry is relevant in modern day.

RQ 26: How should the teachings of the Bible play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian?

This RQ26 open-ended question asks the participant to explain how the teachings of the Bible should play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian. The Bible for the Christian should be the law that one follows but in the modern-day there are multiple laws, and some choose to follow some biblical laws while following some modern laws that the Bible conflicts with. So, the teaching of the Bible is used in comparison to that of modern-day and how the Bible plays out in the heart of the modern-day Christian.

Outcome

The outcome of the research is related to the thesis statement. The importance of making one whole is a focal point of Christian ministry. The Bible explains that God loves the world. God sent Jesus to make the world whole through Christ. What is the aim or plan of the Christian

leader? This leads one to search to make clear what one intends to do in ministry and how that aligns with the mission of Jesus Christ. The research questions data is important to this research because it allows for the researcher to receive understanding from multiple participants on multiple perspectives and conflict in ministry. This allows for the researcher to continually apply a solution to the research problem.

The next steps that must be taken is for the researcher to release the thesis so that Christians can understand the importance of love God by following the commandments and covenants set forth in the Bible. The first thing one must focus on is to show this thesis to bring attention to the problem so that Christian leaders can start to develop a plan that co-exists with what is set forth in the biblical canon. Although, there are multiple perspectives in Christian ministry, the Christian cannot deviate from the plan of God. Developing ministry should never be about one developing a plan by themselves but through the guidance from the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost.

The strength of this research is the concept of love God. This strength of love God links to all other strengths because there is no way the Christian can go wrong by loving God with one loving and following the commandments and covenants in the Bible. Another strength of this research is love one's neighbor or love one another which connects to love God and following the commandments and covenants of the Bible.

To be hospitable is to provide love. What one means with this statement is that the Bible describes the Christian to be on loving terms with others as the Bible explains that one should love their enemies. This does not mean that one believes in what others believe in especially when outside perspectives do not align with the scripture. The form of Christian love is connected to hospitality, which is making those inside and outside of the church feel welcome in

the house of love. For example, Jesus says in his Father's house there are many mansions and that he goes to prepare a place for his followers.¹⁷⁶ One of the strong points of love is for one to be hospitable to others and Jesus shows that God loves those who follow him, and that he has built many mansions for the one that follows him. The ultimate sacrifice of his only begotten son and his preparation for the homecoming of his followers.

The design for a united church is to love God and this prescription is set in motion in the Bible for all people to follow. This allows one to master the Bible by committing to a life of love for God and love for one's neighbor or love for another. This is the prescription for the Christian instructing one to ultimate love that authorizes the believer to put forward a treatment that will bring them through the multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry inside and outside of the church. The Christian must walk in the way of the Lord, which includes listening to the Lord.

The commandments and covenants are a part of the preparation that the Christian must take for oneself to inherit the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is clear that a place is prepared for the followers of God and he provides the Great Commandment that everybody in those mansions will be required to follow to live forever which is to love God and love those who are included in the residence of God.

The importance of redirecting one's goals and focusing in on what is important in Christian ministry is why multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry was the selected and chosen topic for this researcher. This is a requirement to address these differing opinions in the process of ministry so that Christian leaders can redirect one's ministry to the

¹⁷⁶ John 14:2. This book outlines Jesus saying in his Father's house are many mansions and if it were not so that he would have told one and that he goes to prepare a place for one.

Great Commandment to love God with all one's entire existence and to not allow any outside perspective to change their course of life, but to follow the commandments and covenants of God in pursuance of being one with the Father.

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Appendix A

January 2021

Institutional Review Board



Troy Stewart Screening Questions for Christian Ministry Study

Screening Questions

Are you 18 years of age or older? Yes or No

Are you a Christian? Yes or No

Are you either a ministry leader, church member, or church ministry member? Yes or No

Reverend Troy Stewart
Principal Student Investigator

Appendix B

Recruitment Email Letter

January 2021

Dear Christian Ministry Participant:

I am conducting research to better understand multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry as a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University. The purpose of the study is to address common multiple perspectives facing the Christian community and how to constructively maintain a Christian community that views the Biblical canon as authoritative. This email is being sent to you inviting you to participate in the study. The deadline for participation is February 2021.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and Christian. Participants must also be either a ministry leader, church member, or church ministry member. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire by email. It should take approximately 180 minutes to complete and 7 days to complete the questionnaire from the date and time the questionnaire is sent to your email address. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be required.

To participate, please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research, but you do not need to sign and return it.

Sincerely,

Reverend Troy Stewart
Principal Student Investigator

Appendix C

Recruitment Email Letter Follow Up

January 2021

Dear Christian Ministry Participant:

I am conducting research to better understand multiple perspectives and conflict in Christian ministry as a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University. The purpose of the study is to address common multiple perspectives facing the Christian community and how to constructively maintain a Christian community that views the Biblical canon as authoritative. I am calling to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and Christian. Participants must also be a ministry leader, church member, or church ministry member. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire by email. It should take approximately 180 minutes to complete it and you will be given 7 days to complete the questionnaire from the date and time the questionnaire is sent to your email address. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be required.

To participate, please verify you meet the eligibility criteria above or email me at [REDACTED]. A consent document will be emailed to you if you are eligible. The consent document contains additional information about my research, but you do not need to sign and return it.

Sincerely,

Reverend Troy Stewart
Principal Student Investigator

Appendix D

Consent

Title of the Project: Christian Ministry

Principal Investigator: Reverend Troy Stewart, Doctor of Ministry Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order, to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and a Christian ministry leader, congregant or participating in some form of ministry. This includes a Christian, and either a ministry leader, church member, or church ministry member. Taking part in this research study 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 address common multiple perspectives facing the Christian community and how to constructively maintain a Christian community that views the Biblical canon as authoritative. Biblical tradition is important for my own community. This study will be applied to local Christian ministry in addressing a problem in the theology and apologetics discipline within the Christian church from a Christian perspective.

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. Complete a questionnaire by email. This should take approximately 180 minutes to complete and will be conducted through email. 7 days to complete the questionnaire from the date and time the questionnaire is sent to your email address. The participant will be given a week to complete their responses and email them back to the researcher.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive compensation from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include creating and developing new strategies for the benefit of the church and community.

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. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. As soon as the researcher receives the responses back in an email, the researcher will print the responses, delete the email, place the responses in a shuffle pile, and shuffle the responses. This is the only way the researcher can remain anonymity.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked cabinet. The data may be used in future presentations.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please stop completing the questionnaire and do not return it to the researcher. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Reverend Troy Stewart. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Reverend Troy Stewart at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Terry Faulkenbury, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED].

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

Appendix E

Research Questions

January 2021

Institutional Review Board



Troy Stewart Research Questions for Christian Ministry Study

The following research questions were initially designed in the context of pre-test and post-test research questions. But after communications with the Institutional Review Board, the two questionnaires have been condensed into one questionnaire.

Test Research Questions

Biblical canon is a set of texts and may be viewed as authoritative scripture or a set of rules or way of measuring the behavior of one's neighbor or one another. Biblical canon is what you may know as the Holy Bible.

Primary Research Question: If one's own Christian community believes Biblical canon is authoritative, then why does the Christian community believe the Bible is authoritative?

Using Acts 11:25-26 in the New Testament as a reference point, Christian is a broad term that identifies someone who assembles themselves with the church and teaches many people in the name of Jesus Christ. This scripture shows the disciples assembling themselves the whole year with the church and teaching many people just as Jesus Christ did. According to scripture, the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. There are many who claim to be believers and identify as a Christian in the modern era. This provides multiple perspectives on the concept of who can be a Christian. This, in some cases, leads to conflict on what a Christian should believe. There are many denominations that have contradictory beliefs but claim to be Christians. For the purposes of this study, a Christian is defined as someone who lives in love, repentance, faith, and obedience to the Father in the name of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ. This includes a Christian adhering to all the commandments and covenants set forth in scripture and enacting and supporting the laws of God found in the Bible.

RQ 2: Are you a Christian?

Yes No

RQ 3: Do you believe that all of scripture is authoritative?

Yes No

RQ 4: Do you view the Bible as outdated?

Yes No

RQ 5: Do you believe that some people, whether inside the church or not part of the church, view the Bible as outdated?

RQ 10: What does it look like to leave all behind to follow Jesus Christ in the life of a modern-day believer?

RQ 11: Please describe in more detail why scripture is authoritative or is not authoritative based on your perspective?

RQ 12: Do you use the Bible to make decisions in your life?

Yes No

RQ 13: Please provide an example of how you use the Bible to make decisions in your life?

RQ 14: Using Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 6:5 in the Old Testament and using Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27, John 13:34, and John 14:1 in the New Testament as your

reference point, describe some ways that your church operates based on the commandments set forth in scripture (i.e. The Ten Commandments, The Great Commandment to ‘Love God’ and the Second Commandment to ‘Love one’s neighbor or love one another,’ seek first the kingdom of God, and the Great Commission mentioned by Jesus Christ)?

RQ 15: Using Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, and Luke 10:27 as your reference point, what does a Christian do when modern ideals conflict with the Great Commandment to ‘Love God’ mentioned by Jesus Christ?

RQ 16: How should one deal with conflict in local Christian ministry?

RQ 17: How should one carry out the mission of the local Christian church when faced with multiple perspectives on scripture?

RQ 18: How should a Christian leader prepare his Christian community for interaction within the church and interaction with those outside the church?

The authority of the universe in this research means to use the Bible as the measuring stick of how one lives life. There are many man-made laws that challenge what the Bible says. Use the authority of the universe in the context of a Christian using the Bible as the authority that is used to measure how one lives in life. Reflect on how a Christian should use the laws of human government when it conflicts with what the Bible says.

RQ 19: How should a Christian apply the Bible as the authority that is used to direct how one lives life (i.e. Reflect on how a Christian should follow the authority of the Bible and apply the laws of human government when they conflict with what the Bible says)?

RQ 20: Define truth, love, and freedom?

RQ 21: Where does one draw the line on how to live out a Christ-like life in a contemporary world of multiple perspectives when one encounters outside perspectives that conflict with one's own belief regarding the authority of God in scripture?

RQ 22: How does a Christian operate in a world of multiple perspectives even within one's own Christian community?

RQ 23: What are the necessities of life?

RQ 24: Do you believe in all the teaching of Jesus Christ?

Yes

No

RQ 25: How should the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian?

RQ 26: How should the teachings of the Bible play out in the heart of the modern-day Christian?

May 7, 2021

Troy Stewart
Terry Faulkenbury

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-172 Christian Ministry

Dear Troy Stewart, Terry Faulkenbury:

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.(i). 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).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) 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 document(s) 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 [REDACTED].

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office