Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Leadership Succession in the Missionary Baptist Church

A Thesis Project Submitted to

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Doctor of Ministry

By

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT
Roger Albert-Norwood Bush
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Leadership succession planning is often overlooked in many church organizations. Failure to create succession strategies causes organizations to face uncertain futures during leadership transitions. An absence of succession planning can repress an organization's financial growth, congregational morale, and spiritual growth, and in some cases, result in permanent dissolution. The purpose of this project is to examine the state of leadership succession planning within the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Church Association.

This thesis project employs surveys and comprehensive interviews of senior pastors of local churches within the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Church Association to explore succession planning and leadership transitions perspectives. Additionally, this project assesses the pervasiveness or absence of leadership succession planning within the Kenansville Missionary Baptist Association's member churches.

The desired outcome of this project will be the formulation of a biblical leadership succession guide, reinforced by exemplar literature and Bible Scriptures, to guide autonomous Baptist churches through planned leadership transitions. Additional churches may use this guide to fill leadership vacancies.

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Abbreviations

DMin	*Doctor of Ministry*
IRB	*Institutional Review Board*
PTMBC	*Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church*
MBC	*Missionary Baptist Church*
KEMBA	*Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association*
TABCFM	*The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*
CEO	*Chief Executive Officer*
USPS	*United States Postal Service*
Email	*Electronic Mail*
GBSCNC	*General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina*

Chapter 1

Introduction

In his book, *A Pastoral Succession Plan to Help Long-Term Pastors Prepare for Inevitable Ministry Transition*, Robert Wendell Strong states, "The passage of time makes changes in pastoral leadership inevitable."[1] This succinct, yet profound, statement should serve as a clarion call to the church to acknowledge the need for pastoral succession planning. Despite the call to awareness regarding succession planning, most pastors fail to plan for the unavoidable moment when they depart from their church. Churches that ignore succession planning are doomed to face a future of panic and fear-based reactionary responses to an inevitable, and often unexpected, loss of their pastor.[2] Frequently, the lack of planning and unpreparedness of churches during times of unexpected pastoral transitions result in the congregation "dying with the pastor," whether in a physical, spiritual, or metaphorical sense.[3]

Sadly, this is a common issue that plagues many organizations. Although the passionate, compelling work of church leaders may have been sufficient for sustaining the church in the past, churches expose themselves to decline and, in some instances, permanent closure if deeper attention is not given to the inevitable future transition of their pastor.[4] If churches want to secure the future of their leadership continuity and maintain and improve the health of the church, they must confront the issues of pastoral transition. Since the Baptist denomination does not contain a

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[1] Robert W. Strong, "A Pastoral Succession Plan to Help Long-Term Pastors Prepare for Inevitable Ministry Transition" (DMin diss., Biola University, 2013), 1.

[2] John Mattone, *Powerful Succession Planning* (New York: Amacom, 2013), 2.

[3] Sammie L. Logan, "Passing the Baton: A Biblical Framework for Pastoral Succession Planning in Congregational Churches" (DMin diss., Wesley Theological Seminary, 2015), 1.

[4] Thomas H. Adams, *The Nonprofit Leadership Transition and Development Guide: Proven Paths for Leaders and Organizations* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2010), 3.

ruling episcopal component that governs its churches, the autonomy of the individual Baptist churches empowers their members to make decisions related to replacing their pastor.[5] Reflective of "Congregationalism," the Baptist church adheres to a form of church polity that relies on the self-rule and sovereignty of every local church within the denomination.[6]

Considering this autonomy, it is imperative that churches with congregational forms of governance develop succession plans that galvanize the confidence to facilitate successful pastoral transitions when the time comes.[7] Too many congregations and committees are ill-equipped, uneducated, and inexperienced to facilitate pastoral transitions successfully.[8] Church search committees frequently adopt and execute inadequate secular transition models in the ministry context because they ignore and exclude biblical and spiritual requisites.[9] This thesis project highlights the need for a biblically based contemporary framework for pastoral succession within the Missionary Baptist Churches in Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association.

Ministry Context

This researcher is currently the senior pastor of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church (PTMBC). PTMBC is located in Wallace, North Carolina (Duplin County), and was founded in 1870. According to the demographic data,[10] as of the year 2020, the population of

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[5] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 2.

[6] Arthur L. Butler, "Church Planting in the Black Baptist Church" (PhD diss., University of Findlay, Findlay, 2020), 9. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

[7] Carolyn Weese, and J. Russell Crabtree, *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken about Pastoral Transit* (John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 7.

[8] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 10.

[9] Victor M. Davis, "An Alternative Model for Pastoral Succession in the African American Baptist Church in Lieu of Congregational Voting" (PhD diss., United Theological Seminary, Dayton, 2006), 3-4. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Wallace is approximately 3,841. Wallace is the 179th largest city in North Carolina but declining at a yearly rate of −0.70 percent. The average median household income $37,777 per year.

The poverty rate is 13.40 percent. The town of Wallace's median age is 45.5. The median age for males is 42.7. The median age of females is 54.8. The racial composition of Wallace is 77 percent White, 20.19 percent Black or African American, and 1.27 percent identifying as "other." The most common employing industries are construction and extraction services (18.2 percent) and sales-related occupations (17.4 percent).[11]

In 1910, based on Matthew 16:17-18, the church was officially named Peter's Tabernacle. Since 1910, the church has thrived under godly leadership and membership in its southeastern North Carolina community named "Iron Mine." Since its inception, PTMBC has been a predominantly African American congregation. PTMBC currently maintains its longstanding membership, as a Missionary Baptist Church (MBC),[12] within the Baptist denomination.

The earliest existence of the Baptist denomination can be traced back to 1639.[13] Baptists believed that full immersion was the only valid form of baptism.[14] Additionally, Baptists

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[10] World Population Review, "Wallace, NC Population 2020," accessed May 21, 2020, https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/wallace-nc-population/.

[11] Data USA, "Wallace, NC," accessed May 21, 2020, https://datausa.io/profile/geo/wallace-nc/.

[12] Craig G. Atwood, Frank S. Mead, and Samuel S. Hill, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2005), 197. "The Missionary Baptist denomination throughout much of eastern North Carolina primarily consists of black Americans and is a constituent of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina placing the Missionary Baptists of eastern North Carolina in the General Baptist tradition with the 62 associations of the GBSC-NC functioning as presbyteries."

[13] Dudley Haynes, *The Baptist Denomination: Its History, Doctrines, and Ordinances: Its Polity, Persecutions, and Martyrs: Facts and Statistics of its Missionary Institutions, Schools of Learning, etc.: The Indebtedness of the World to Baptists, and their Duty to the World,* (Sheldon, Blakeman & Co, New York, 1857), 20.

[14] Ibid., 13.

believed that full-immersion baptism must also precede communion.[15] Baptists also subscribed to the principle that "the Bible is the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice" as the underlying basis of the Baptist faith.[16] The denomination has as its foundation an uncompromising recognition of the Bible as the only authority in all matters of faith.[17]

In addition to being a member of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (GBSCNC), PTMBC is also a member of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association (KEMBA). During an unofficial meeting in a small church approximately five years after the Negro emancipation, the Holy Spirit led a group of men to organize the Baptist churches in their rural southeastern North Carolina area. In 1907, nearly one hundred years later, the KEMBA was officially instated. The newly instated association of emancipated African-Americans added the word "Kenansville" in front of their Eastern Missionary Baptist Association title to differentiate it from its antithetical association of White Baptist churches that possessed a similar name: the Eastern Missionary Baptist Association. At its genesis, the KEMBA consisted of five churches, including the "First Colored Baptist Church" comprised of freed slaves.

The KEMBA continued to evolve by establishing the KEMBA Sunday School Convention. Recognizing that its emancipated Negro members were largely uneducated, KEMBA sought to remedy the problem by educating its Christians through Sunday school. KEMBA churches continued to partner by financially supporting an "Industrial Training School" that educated Negroes until the state of North Carolina permitted Negroes access to formal high

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Dudley Haynes, *The Baptist Denomination*, 13.

[17] Ibid., 14.

school and college education. The KEMBA's commitment to Christian education prospered its ministry initiatives by becoming the first MBC in North Carolina to send Reverend James O. Hayes, a Negro missionary, to Africa. In addition to being the first Negro North Carolinian missionary to serve in Africa, Reverend Hayes continued to advance the KEMBA's rich educational legacy by becoming one of the first graduates of the prestigious Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina.[18]

As a subsidiary of the GBSCNC, the KEMBA exists to develop a harmonious relationship between the twenty-five autonomous MBCs within its association, providing them with ministry personnel, services, and support when needed. KEMBA serves as the ordaining division for its member churches. Once ministers deliver their initial sermons, they are issued preaching licenses by the local church in which they are members. After receiving the preaching license, a minister is scheduled to be catechized by a KEMBA panel composed of pastors and deacons of various churches within the association. All KEMBA catechisms are administered during an annual conference held at the association headquarters in Warsaw, North Carolina.

Ministers that successfully meet all catechism requirements participate in an ordination ceremony on the same day. During the ceremony, ordination certificates containing the signatures of the KEMBA catechism panel are conferred upon the candidates. The KEMBA also submits a report of newly ordained ministers to the GBSCNC as a record of ordination into the Baptist denomination. Once ordained, a minister meets the minimum qualification to become a Baptist church senior pastor within the GBSCNC.

Originally tasked with providing Christian education to its member churches, the KEMBA notifies its member churches of pastoral vacancies within the association but provides

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[18] "History: Brief History of The Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association," KEMBA, accessed October 5, 2020, https://kembacenter.com/history/.

no further assistance in facilitating the transition process. Each church in the association, including PTMBC, uses its autonomy within the Baptist denomination to address its succession and transition needs. Like many of its fellow KEMBA member churches, PTMBC holds bi-weekly worship services. While some churches worship on second and fourth Sundays, PTMBC's worship services are held on the first and third Sundays. The original mission of the MBC is to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ through domestic and foreign missions.[19] Baptist history was founded upon missionary work. Ignited by the persecution of Christianity, the earliest Baptist missionary work can be traced back to 1732.[20]

The MBC officially formed "The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (TABCFM)" in the early eighteen-hundreds.[21] Soon after, remaining true to "The Great Commission,"[22] the MBC began its first fundraising campaigns to support the propagation of the gospel.[23] At an annual meeting in May of 1855, the TABCFM raised $144,907.58 to finance continued missionary work.[24] Throughout its existence, the MBC and its flourishing churches continued its rich heritage of foreign and domestic missionary work. In 2020, PTMBC's commitment to spreading the gospel through foreign and domestic missions was nonexistent.

PTMBC is no longer identified by its missionary-centric vision but instead is now characterized by a stale commitment to its antiquated traditional routine of worship. The

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[19] Francis Wayland, *Thoughts on the Missionary Organizations of the Baptist Denomination,* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co, 1859), 5.

[20] Ibid., 315.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV).

[23] Wayland, *Thoughts on the Missionary Organizations,* 316.

[24] Ibid., 317.

congregation comprises approximately forty-five members, 90 percent of whom are over the age of seventy. The church is described as a "family church." Several families, whose roots connect back to PTMBC's founding members and subsequent senior pastors and church officers, form the church's power structure, making the largest financial contributions, serving on the administrative board, and are most consistent in worship attendance. They are rigid in their commitment to Sunday school and the Lord's Supper. They greatly value the symbolic atonement, repentance, and redemption associated with the communion ordinance.

They value their traditional church building, whose edifice is composed of brick and stained-glass windows. The members view the building as a holy place where they go to commune with God. Their view of what a practicing member should represent is a great departure from the church's missionary Baptist roots. They believe a PTMBC member should attend church regularly and tithe consistently. There are no expectations for members to be developed for leadership, serve within the church, or participate in community outreach.

Historically, many senior pastors within the KEMBA association have served their churches until they retire, have health complications, or die unexpectedly. Presently, many senior pastors within the association have either reached retirement age or have served long past the age of retirement, with no succession plan to ensure leadership continuity. In addition to the absence of succession planning, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find young clergy members who are seminary educated, practically trained for ministry, or interested in assuming the senior pastor position. The Barna Group reports that twenty-three percent of U.S. pastors cite a lack of leadership training and development as a major concern in ministry. Additionally, research in

2017 revealed that sixty-nine percent of U.S. pastors agree that young mature pastors are in limited supply, with only fifteen percent of senior pastors being forty years of age or younger.[25]

In light of this reality, PTMBC does not have a succession plan to continue its leadership continuity upon the eventual departure of its senior pastor. The same may also be true for other MBC member churches within KEMBA. Churches void of succession plans must make it an immediate priority. A church can never plan too early for succession. Delaying the development of a succession plan may result in the decline and demise of the ministry.[26] PTMBC would benefit from a biblically based contemporary framework for pastoral succession in preparation for its senior pastor's eventual transition.

Problem Presented

The MBC, within the Baptist denomination, may lack contemporary, transitional policies for leadership succession. Many churches do not have a plan for the inevitable moment when their pastor leaves their church.[27] Smaller churches lack a consistent model for dealing with succession.[28] Without a pastoral succession plan in place, churches are compelled to navigate an uncertain future without guidance from a well-trained and equipped leader. Failed pastoral transitions are the cause of significant congregational suffering, loss of morale, and declining attendance.[29]

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[25] "What's on the Minds of America's Pastors," Barna Group, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.barna.com/research/whats_on_mind_americas_pastors/.

[26] Warren Bird, and William Vanderbloemen, *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 19.

[27] Ibid., 20.

[28] Ibid., 21.

[29] Andrew C. Flowers, "Leading through Succession: Why Pastoral Leadership Is the Key to a Healthy Transition" (DMin diss., Western Seminary, Portland, 2015), 12-14.

Purpose Statement

If there are no contemporary transitional policies in place, then the purpose is to raise awareness of the need for a succession plan for transitioning pastors within the denomination. Approaches to leadership succession and transition vary among churches and denominations.[30] Although God does not provide a biblical, detailed succession strategy, He does provide biblical examples of working through successive generations.[31] This project guides the church in selecting and implementing the succession strategy that is most appropriate for them.[32]

Basic Assumptions

Leadership succession is vital to the continued existence of the Church. Although research literature provides much valuable insight regarding the importance and benefits of succession planning, local churches still lag in adopting and implementing such strategies. This researcher is committed to analyzing the literature, exploring the current state of succession planning in the MBC, communicating the importance of succession planning, and providing guidance toward developing and implementing a succession strategy. This project seeks to gather information through qualitative and quantitative research and analysis. To accomplish this, the researcher makes certain assumptions regarding the conditions under which this study occurs.[33]

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[30] Anthony B. Robinson, and Robert W. Wall, and Walter Brueggemann. *Called to Lead: Paul's Letters to Timothy for a New Day* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), ebook, 167.

[31] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 25.

[32] Some pastors identify, select, and groom their own successors. In some churches, pastors are excluded from the succession process. In other churches and denominations, a more contemporary approach is used; an already trained and equipped interim serves between one and two years before a permanent successor is elected (Ibid., 167).

[33] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 19.

The researcher assumes that the member churches within KEMBA will permit a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) researcher to explore the private or confidential areas of their ministries. The second assumption is that senior pastors will agree to be interviewed by the researcher. The third assumption is that the senior pastor or church does not have a written succession plan. The fourth assumption is that the church does not know what succession planning is or its importance to the ministry. The fifth assumption is that the ministry does not have a leadership pipeline of potential candidates.

The sixth assumption is that the ministry does not have a written leadership development plan. The seventh assumption is that many of the senior pastors within the KEMBA are approaching, are currently, or have surpassed the retirement age of sixty-five. The eighth assumption is that the pastor and church board are willing to make the necessary investments to develop a succession plan. The discussion of succession planning may remind senior pastors of their mortality.[34] Therefore, this researcher assumes that senior pastors are willing to face the thoughts of an eventual decline of their once heroic stature as they pass the baton and embark upon a journey toward a role of less significance.

Definitions

In connection to the basic assumptions, to fully comprehend the problem, purpose, thesis, and conclusion, the following definitions will promote lucidity to the research.

- *Apprentice*: "Apprentices are people who learn from doing, and that is precisely what the apprenticeship model provides: practice, feedback, corrections, and more practice."[35]

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[34] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 6.

[35] Ram Charan, *Leaders at all Levels: Deepening Your Talent Pool to Solve the Succession Crisis* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 2.

- *Autonomous Baptist church*: "There is no ruling Episcopal body that governs a Baptist church. Churches with a congregational form of government place pastoral selection solely in the hands of the people."[36]

- *Congregational government*: "A form of church government in which the local church is autonomous and at which the major decisions affecting the church are made by members (committee)."[37]

- *Emergency succession planning*: "Planning to facilitate rapid transfers of duties and authorities to designated individuals in the event that the current executive or other key leader is unable to function."[38]

- *Leadership succession pipeline*: "The talent pool from which the CEO comes."[39]

- *Pastoral succession*: "The natural leadership transition of one who serves in the pastoral office, to the pastor who immediately follows."[40]

- *Predecessor*: "Refers to the retiring or exiting pastor of a congregation."[41]

- *Succession planning*: "A defined program that an organization systemizes to ensure leadership continuity for all key positions by developing activities that will build personnel talent from within."[42]

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[36] Davis, "Alternative Model," 2.

[37] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 2.

[38] Adams, *Nonprofit Leadership*, 174.

[39] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 3.

[40] Davis, "Alternative Model," 1.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Rebecca Luhn Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning: Building Leadership from Within* (Menlo Park: Crisp Publications, 1996), 4.

- *Successor*: "Refers to the incoming or 'new' pastor of the congregation."[43]

- *Talent management and development*: "This term frames succession planning as a human resource process. In this process, top leaders in an organization assess its key leadership needs, current capacity, and 'bench strength' (potential leaders ready to move up)."[44]

Limitations

Due to circumstances surrounding this study that are unexpected or uncontrolled, this project may encounter limitations that impact or constrain conclusions.[45] One limitation that may arise is intimidation or perceived encroachment upon the territory of the senior pastor being interviewed. As pastors are interviewed by this researcher, a fellow contemporary in their association (KEMBA), the interviewee may perceive that the researcher is secretly vying for their position. Therefore, the interviewee may not be completely forthcoming during the interview. This fear may also inspire another limitation: potential interviewees may refuse to participate in the study because they feel inferior in knowledge regarding succession planning.

If interviewees perceive to be greatly uninformed regarding pastoral succession, they may feel intellectually inferior to the researcher. A lack of theological education may also cause insecurities within the interviewee when they realize that a DMin student is interviewing them. Interviewees might refuse to participate in the study because they have intentionally ignored succession planning to ensure their long-term job security. Additionally, if the board members of the interviewee's church discover the concepts of succession planning, they may initiate the process of replacing their current pastor against his will. The autonomy of congregationally

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[43] Davis, "Alternative Model," 3.

[44] Adams, *Nonprofit Leadership*, 175.

[45] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 20.

governed Baptist churches, along with their authority to vote pastors out of office,[46] may cause great fear and dissuade interviewee participation in the study.

Another potential limitation of the study may be that churches have pulpits that are currently vacant. In this case, board members may be too preoccupied with their search for a new pastor and will not prioritize participation in the study. The stress and urgency of finding a new pastor may cause them to perceive this study as unimportant. Conversely, if a board member does agree to be interviewed, they may lack appropriate knowledge regarding the spiritual needs of their church, the pastoral search process, or the appropriate level of spiritual maturity and practical preparedness of their next potential leader. Therefore, if willing to participate in the study, their limited knowledge may greatly limit the study.

An additional limitation of this study may be the declining health of senior pastors within the association of churches. There may be senior pastors who are hospitalized or bedridden due to illness. They may not currently have the ability to execute their ministry responsibilities but still occupy the executive position. They may someday recover from illness and return to their regular duties as the senior pastor, but guest preachers facilitate weekly worship services in their absence. The absence of the senior pastor without the appointment of a consistent interim replacement may limit the scope of the study.

A final limitation of this study may be the current restrictions of church operations and worship services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[47] Due to the restrictions, churches may be operating on a modified schedule or not operating at all. Modified office hours of the senior

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[46] Davis, "Alternative Model," 2.

[47] "Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith," Center for Disease Control and Prevention. accessed May 24, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html.

pastor or church administration may make it difficult to contact and interview leaders for this study successfully.

Delimitations

Due to the implausibility of exploring every aspect of this project's concepts, delimitations will be used to reduce the breadth of this project.[48] While the research literature indicates that pastoral succession is lacking in most churches, the scope of this study will be narrowed to the southeastern North Carolina MBC within the KEMBA. Narrowing the scope of the study to the KEMBA MBCs will engender a customized comprehension of the stated problem. Clarity and comprehension of the stated problem will arouse a more efficient solution.

This study will extend interviews to senior pastors only. Since the researcher is a senior pastor of a church (PTMBC) within the KEMBA, senior pastors of KEMBA member churches may be more willing to participate in the interview process. Being the appointed undershepherd of the church, the senior pastor should possess intimate knowledge regarding succession planning and leadership needs of the ministry. According to the research literature, if no succession plan has been created, the senior pastor is the most capable of determining the organization's succession needs.

Finally, the interview questions and data will only pertain to pastoral succession planning and leadership pipeline development. If there is no succession plan in place, the researcher will seek to investigate why. If a succession plan exists, the researcher will investigate the training and development models within the plan.

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[48] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 20.

Thesis Statement

Succession planning is one of the church's most significant contributions to its longevity. If a suggested contemporary succession plan is created within the MBC, then the MBC's autonomous churches will have access to a guide that will help senior pastors and pastoral search committees identify potential successors, develop and equip them with the required skill set of an executive leader, and select a successor to assume the senior leadership position during times of transition. Churches that create succession plans and successfully implement them will ensure leadership continuity and continuing organizational success during and after transition. Churches void of succession plans face uncertain futures, including a decline in attendance, loss of morale, and potential dissolution or permanent closure.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

Chapter Two consists of a literature review, theological foundation, and theoretical foundation. The literature review expands on, guides, and supports the thesis regarding succession planning within the MBC. Chapter Two also consists of a theological foundation that explicates the divine supervision of succession planning within the universal and local church. In addition to the literature review and theological foundation, Chapter Two includes a theoretical foundation that introduces a theory that supports the rationale for this study, problem and purpose statements.

Literature Review

Succession Planning

According to Thomas H. Adams, the one thing that remains constant and will always endure, sometimes at a rapid pace, is change. The author also highlights that organizations overlook the inevitability of change by neglecting to plan for the exit of executive and key leaders.[49] When discussing the inevitability of change within an organization, the church is not exempt. According to Victor M. Davis, churches will be confronted with a similar task of navigating the process of leadership transitions, which congregations are rarely prepared to address.[50] Weese and Crabtree also recognized the need for today's church to abandon old paradigms regarding leadership transitions and adopt a new paradigm of succession planning.[51]

The lethargic approach to pastoral succession has caused a significant problem for the

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[49] Adams, *Nonprofit Leadership*, 172.

[50] Davis, "Alternative Model," 1.

[51] Hans Christopher Googer, "Senior Pastor Succession in Multisite Churches: A Mixed Methods Study" (Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 75. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

local church. Andrew C. Flowers describes the significant problem as "a source of suffering for churches and pastors" due to failed pastoral transitions.[52] Therefore, a consensus among Flowers, Davis, Strong, and Johnson, Sr. expresses an urgent need for pastoral succession planning in response to aging, retiring, resigning, and terminated church leaders who have succumbed to the inevitability of time and change. When it comes to defining pastoral succession planning, authors Davis, and Vanderbloemen, and Bird agree that pastoral succession planning ensures leadership continuity that focuses on the transfer of authority from a predecessor to a successor.[53] Although the authors agree on the importance of pastoral succession planning in the church, there is limited research available for religious organizations, specifically succession plans for church pastors and executive leaders.[54]

Therefore, secular leadership succession must be researched to extract principles that, if and when appropriate, can be applied to the church. Secular leadership succession planning is defined by Adams as "the planning and actions that ensure there is effective leadership over multiple transitions in an organization."[55] Although Adams' definition of secular succession planning aligns with Davis' and Vanderbloemen's and Bird's definition of pastoral succession planning, it appears to be insufficient compared to the definition provided by other scholars.

Flowers and Charan take succession planning a step further by venturing beyond present leadership continuity to include considerations for future transitions, emphasizing the need for a

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[52] Flowers, "Leading through Succession."

[53] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 10.

[54] Prentis V. Johnson, Sr., "Exploring Leadership Succession Planning for Pentecostal Church Pastors and Leaders: A Generic Qualitative Inquiry Study" (PhD Diss., Capella University, Minneapolis, 2017), 50. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

[55] Adams, *Nonprofit Leadership*, 20.

"leadership pipeline."[56] The authors believe that organizations should not be reactionary in response to an emergency or planned leadership transition. Instead, a church's leadership and congregation should identify and select a predetermined pool of potential successors to choose from should the need for transition materialize. Simply selecting a successor from a pipeline of candidates and installing them into the executive position is insufficient. Berke and Adams write that leadership management and development must be a core component of succession planning. The authors write that succession planning should include a proactive approach to training, managing, developing, and mentoring potential pipeline candidates.[57] All potential successors should have the opportunity to acquire and enhance their leadership skillset so that they are properly equipped to lead upon selection for a transition.

The authors support the identification, development, and management of top talent as a strategy to meet organizational leadership needs. Wolfe writes that every company possesses employees with exceptional talent and should find a way to identify them.[58] Succession planning offers a method for doing so. The potential for organizational success during and after a transition is increased when the succession plan and leadership pipeline address recruitment, selection, development, retention, and transition. Therefore, organizations should view the need for succession planning as paramount.

Berke further highlights the necessity of succession planning by highlighting the ongoing challenge of attrition among executive leadership and its negative impact on organizational

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[56] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 27; Ram Charan, Stephen J. Drotter, and James L. Noel, *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 167.

[57] David Berke, and Center for Creative Leadership, *Succession Planning and Management: A Guide to Organizational Systems and Practices* (Greensboro: Center for Creative Leadership, 2005), 2; Adams, *Nonprofit Leadership, 175.*

[58] Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning*, 8.

performance.[59] Turnover among chief executive officers (CEOs) increased by 170 percent between 1995 and 2003. The author explains that turnover at the CEO level often has negative impacts on organizations. Since there is a close correlation between the senior pastor of a church and a chief executive officer,[60] the same is also true for churches. Although the senior pastor is not the CEO of a congregationally-led church, senior leader attrition may negatively impact a church. In a religious context, Logan echoes findings of Berke's secular context regarding executive turnover.

Logan reports that the average tenure for a senior pastor is eight years.[61] With the average career of a senior pastor lasting eighteen years, many pastors, on average, will transition to a new pastorate two to three times. Therefore, the inevitability of time and change, coupled with the inevitability of executive retirements and transitions, makes succession planning in religious and secular institutions the most vital asset in achieving and maintaining endurance and high performance during transition. Because of this conclusion, Hehman and Hummel and Kochis and Saporito and Winum agree that establishing a succession plan that identifies a potential successor is a critical issue determining a company's success.[62] Although literature emphasizes the necessity of leadership succession planning, many organizations continue to operate without creating a strategic plan for leadership continuity.

Flowers, Strong, and Logan agree that organizations that fail to plan for leadership succession experience a decline in organizational success. The authors establish that a void in

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[59] Berke, *Succession Planning and Management,* vii.

[60] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 5.

[61] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 13.

[62] Eric Hehman, Jay W. Hummel, and Tim Kochis, *Success and Succession: Unlocking Value, Power, and Potential in the Professional Services and Advisory Space* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2015), 43; Thomas J Saporito, and Paul Winum, *Inside CEO Succession: The Essential Guide to Leadership Transition* (Wiley, 2012), 5.

leadership is created during transitions due to the absence of a succession plan. According to

Logan, without a plan for future leadership succession, churches experience an amalgam of

negative consequences they could have otherwise avoided.[63] Those negative consequences

include membership decline, ministerial disenchantment, tension among congregational

members, and in some cases, ministry dissolution. According to a survey performed by

Workscape in 2006, thirty-two percent of firms possessed strategic succession plans that

identified future leaders in the organization.

Although the sizes of the firms yielded varied responses, sixty percent reported that they

did not possess any such plan. Firms with less than twenty-five full-time employees represented

only 17.6 percent of firms with succession plans. Firms that employed more than 250 employees

represented 87.5 percent of organizations with an established leadership succession plan.[64] The

survey reveals that larger organizations have a greater propensity to develop a strategic plan for

leadership succession. However, the same propensity toward succession planning is lacking in

the local church.

According to Russell Crabtree, although succession planning is the most urgent matter

facing the megachurch, few large churches are committed to succession planning.[65] According to

renowned management expert Peter Drucker, the most absent component in the church is

succession planning.[66] If succession planning increases the probability of successful leadership

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[63] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 57.

[64] William J. Rothwell, *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from within* (New York: Amacom, 2010), 28.

[65] Davis, "Alternative Model," 20.

[66] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 12.

transitions,[67] and leadership development and training are at the core of successful succession transition,[68] but the African American Baptist church is void of such plans,[69] then the author of this thesis perceives this to be a gap that exists within the African American church. As a solution to that gap, the MBC, within the African American Baptist denomination, may benefit from contemporary, transitional policies for leadership succession.

Although much of the literature emphasizes the importance and implementation of leadership succession plans, researchers have not always viewed succession planning favorably. Earlier research studies performed in the 1960s rejected the idea. In his 1960 research study, Grusky found succession planning a troublesome event that hindered organizational performance.[70] Many factors hinder transitions. Charan writes that many organizations are inconsistent in their approach to and development and execution of succession planning.[71]

The author reports that when organizations practice succession planning, it is often hindered by limited understanding, a partial effort given toward what is viewed as mundane tasks, and a bureaucratic process that makes execution of the plan problematic. Googer and Logan agree that a lack of cooperation from the outgoing predecessor creates a hindrance to transition.[72] Another hindrance to transition is the inability of organizations to design succession plans that keep pace with the changing landscape of business, which proves to be detrimental to

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[67] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," abstract.

[68] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 3.

[69] Davis, "Alternative Model," 1.

[70] Johnson, "Exploring Leadership Succession Planning," 23.

[71] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 11.

[72] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 4-5; Logan, "Passing the Baton," 9.

leadership continuity.[73]

Davis reports that a major hindrance to succession is the autonomy of churches within the Baptist denomination. He believes the autonomy of MBC, which authorizes the selection and appointment of senior pastors through congregational vote facilitated by a pastoral search committee, further complicates the process of transition.[74] However, the congregational form of government throughout the history of the MBC supports the idea that leadership succession facilitated by pastoral search committees can be an effective succession strategy when planned and executed properly.

The Roles of the Executive and Search Committee

According to Strong, an inexperienced search committee can prolong the selection of the next leader for a year or more.[75] As a church struggles to find an appropriate replacement, too much time is wasted, finances dwindle, and the ministry loses momentum and morale.[76] Although this supports Grusky's negative view of succession planning, most researchers support the need for it but are divided concerning the role of a search committee during the transition process. Davis and Saporito and Winum cite that the abrupt departure of executives due to death, employment termination, or unexpected resignation, creates a need for a governing board to assume and maintain administrative operations during a leadership crisis.[77] Conversely, the literature reveals conflicting views regarding the perceived roles of the executive and the search committee when there is no leadership crisis during a planned succession.

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[73] Saporito, and Winum, *Inside CEO Succession*, 8.

[74] Davis, "Alternative Model," 2.

[75] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 10.

[76] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," iv.

[77] Davis, "Alternative Model," 2; Saporito and Winum, *Inside CEO Succession*, 24.

According to Berke, frequent CEO turnovers provide boards with a unique opportunity to reassess company needs and build a search committee based on those needs.[78] Hiscox supports Berke's view of search committees, citing the board's administrative role during the pastoral search process. When the senior pastor position is vacant, the committee schedules preaching opportunities, interviews, and verification of credentials and background.[79] Although Saporito and Winum discuss the need for a board or search committee, they also reveal that many boards do not fully embrace their role in the executive succession process.[80] Although boards do not take full responsibility for succession planning, Flowers writes that they are often too committed to traditional methods of leading the transition and refuse to relinquish authority to the transitioning pastor to lead the succession process.[81]

Therefore, the author cites that a changing world requires that the church adapts to new times. Although search committees have traditionally led succession, there is compelling evidence that the senior pastors should lead the transition. Flowers argues that facilitating a healthy transition is the pastor's job.[82] According to Johnson, in the 1990s, researchers found that executive involvement in developing a succession plan was vital to the success of the transition, which supports Flowers' position.[83] Unfortunately, many pastors reject the responsibility of leading the succession plan, opting to retire or abandon the position, leaving the responsibility of

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[78] Berke, *Succession Planning and Management*, 4.

[79] Davis, "Alternative Model," 2; Saporito and Winum, *Inside CEO Succession*, 17.

[80] Saporito and Winum, *Inside CEO Succession*, 25.

[81] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 20.

[82] Ibid., 17.

[83] Johnson, "Exploring Leadership Succession Planning," 38.

transition to an unprepared search committee.[84]

However, there is an alternative view among researchers regarding the roles of the executive and the search committee during leadership transitions. Strong's perspective suggests that pastoral succession takes place by pastoral appointment, pastoral or governing board recommendation, or search committee process.[85] Strong, Charan, Davis, and Googer concur that the most successful transitions involve a collaboration between the executive and board members.[86] Strong contends that transitions are more successful when the CEO and board work together on the succession plan, the CEO passing the leadership baton according to the timeframes and conditions specified in the plan.[87] Collaboration between the executive and the board improves chances of a successful transition but alone does not solve the succession problem.

Internal versus External Successors

The researcher of this thesis has identified two issues that plague the succession process. The first issue relates to the selection of the successor. The second issue relates to the leadership development of potential successors. When searching for a potential successor, the executive and board must determine whether they will seek an internal or external candidate. When making that decision, Wolfe declares that companies are at liberty to choose their next leader based on what is most beneficial for the company. The author writes that the best succession planning should include an option for seeking and hiring external candidates.[88]

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[84] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 23.

[85] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," Abstract.

[86] Charan and Drotter and Noel, *Leadership Pipeline, 166;* Davis, "Alternative Model," 8; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 69.

[87] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 162.

Strong also supports the consideration of external candidates based on unique circumstances and conditions within an organization.[89] Charan and Googer support Strong's research that there are times when external candidates are the better choice for organizations that desire to make internal changes.[90] Opposing views among researchers reveal that companies that hire successors internally experience more successful transitions.[91] Berke and Strong agree that internal candidates are more successful because of company tenure, understanding of company culture, and various nuances determining organizational success or failure.[92] Conversely, there are negative aspects of hiring externally.

Charan found that external hiring is disruptive to organizational operation.[93] Disruption occurs when external successors struggle to learn business and administrative operations or when they have difficulty assimilating to the company's existing culture. Johnson also addresses disruptions created by external hires.[94] The author reveals that learning intricate organizational networks and systems can take an external successor between six months to two years.

These disruptions support Grusky's frustrations with succession planning.[95] The disruptions also give credence to the author's argument that internal succession is less disruptive to organizational operations.[96] When compared to internal successors, Saporito and Winum cite

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[88] Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning*, 116.

[89] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 32.

[90] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 9; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 69.

[91] Berke, *Succession Planning and Management*, 6.

[92] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 85.

[93] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 9.

[94] Johnson, "Exploring Leadership Succession Planning," 37.

[95] Ibid., 23.

that the failure rate of external successors doubled between 2000 and 2010.[97] Therefore, the

prevailing perspective is that executive succession is best facilitated from inside an organization,

selecting from internal candidates. However, researchers revealed that internal succession does

not complete the succession planning process. According to Berke, a successful succession plan

must identify potential successors early in the process and include an intentional element of

leadership training and development in preparation for the executive position.[98]

Internal Leadership Development

Several authors agree that the training and development of potential successors are vital

to realizing the succession process.[99] When candidates are placed into a leadership pipeline, they

should receive intentional mentorship, training, and continued development, so they are

proficient in the required leadership skills needed for the executive office. Electing a successor

who lacks the appropriate level of knowledge and skill required to assume the CEO or senior

pastor position is unfathomable.[100] Candidates in the pipeline must be groomed and sufficiently

developed to ensure their success. Organizations that train and develop internal pipeline talent

will benefit greatly.

According to a 2007 study conducted by Bersin & Associates, organizations that

implemented leadership development programs for their internal employees experienced

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[96] Ibid., 35.

[97] Saporito and Winum, *Inside CEO Succession*, 24.

[98] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 3.

[99] Adams, *Nonprofit Leadership,* 17; Berke, *Succession Planning and Management*, 3; Charan, *Leaders at all Levels*, 3; Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 35; Hehman and Hummel and Kochis, *Success and Succession,* 124-125; Mattone, *Powerful Succession Planning*, 3; Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 10-11; Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning*, 98.

[100] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 60.

dramatic increases (from 480 percent to 600 percent) in business operations, leadership bench strength, leader engagement and retention, and employee retention.[101] Despite the data supporting the many benefits of internal leadership development, Davis points out that leadership training and development is lacking in the African American Baptist church, failing to equip leaders for the executive position properly.[102] Flowers echoes Davis' sentiment. The author has found that although secular organizations have adopted and implemented modern leadership development programs, the church maintains its commitment to traditional methods of hiring external candidates.[103] The lack of a leadership pipeline forces the church toward external candidates because it has ignored the processes of developing its internal personnel.[104]

<center>Secular versus Biblical Leadership Succession Models</center>

When establishing a model for a successful transition within the Church, Flowers supports using methods and strategies from the secular business world.[105] Although Berke and Googer discuss the relay succession model,[106] Charan discusses the apprenticeship model.[107] Considered to produce better organizational performance,[108] relay succession promoted the idea of the CEO passing the "leadership baton" as if participating in a relay race. The CEO selects a successor and prepares the successor to receive the leadership baton, fully transferring leadership

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[101] Rothwell, *Effective Succession Planning*, 28.

[102] Davis, "Alternative Model," 3.

[103] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 27.

[104] Ibid., 33-34.

[105] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 25.

[106] Berke, *Succession Planning and Management*, 4-6; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 68.

[107] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels,* 2.

[108] Berke, *Succession Planning and Management*, 4.

position, power, and authority to that successor over a protracted period. The greatest benefit of the relay succession model is that it promotes a gradual acceptance of the successor by the organization's members.[109]

Like the relay succession model, the apprenticeship model includes identifying and selecting a potential successor by the CEO. However, the apprenticeship model gives greater attention to the intentional training and development of the successor by the CEO.[110] Designed to "fast-track" the development of a potential candidate who displays early signs of leadership ability, the apprenticeship model exposes the candidate to close mentorship by the CEO as the candidate performs onerous tasks customized to expedite leadership development.[111] Upon the complete training and development of a selected leader, the apprenticeship model charges that the leader is responsible for selecting, training, and developing a new leader, morphing the organization into a continuous leadership development apparatus.[112]

In addition to the apprenticeship model, Charan also presents the leadership pipeline model.[113] Citing global evolution and technological advancements as factors that greatly influence the competitive landscape of today's leadership, Charan suggests that effective leadership is needed for the executive position and across every level and position of leadership within an organization. For an organization to meet the increasing demands of its shareholders, every leadership level must be occupied by adequately trained and developed leaders.[114] An

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[109] Johnson, "Exploring Leadership Succession Planning," 24-25.

[110] Charan, *Leaders at all Levels,* 2.

[111] Ibid., 26.

[112] Ibid., 27.

[113] Charan and Drotter and Noel, *Leadership Pipeline,* 225-226.

[114] Ibid., 5.

organization must select and develop multiple candidates to meet the specific requirements for each leadership position, building a pipeline of potential candidates for positions throughout the company.[115] The leadership pipeline model combines theory and practice that influence the adoption and mastery of certain values, skills, and applications that transform leadership performance.[116]

Charan points out that historically, CEOs have not successfully selected, trained, and developed other leaders.[117] Davis and Googer warn against the church adopting and implementing secular succession models because those models do not acknowledge the spiritual or biblical nature and operation of the Church.[118] Bird and Vanderbloemen, Flowers, Davis, Logan, and Googer acknowledge that concerning the Church, God chooses the successor and governs the entire transition process.[119] Flowers, Strong, Logan, and Googer agree that although there are no biblically decreed approaches to succession planning, many scriptural passages provide transition principles.[120]

Flowers and Davis explore succession principles in the Old Testament relationship between Moses and Joshua.[121] Googer, Logan, Davis, and Flowers explore the Old Testament

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[115] Ibid., 6.

[116] Ibid., 225-226.

[117] Ibid., 10.

[118] Davis, "Alternative Model," 4; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 74.

[119] Bird and Vanderbloemen, *Next,* 96; Davis, "Alternative Model," 12; Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 65; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 31; Logan, "Passing the Baton," 13.

[120] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 91; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 31; Logan, "Passing the Baton," 34; Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 68.

[121] Davis, "Alternative Model," 4; Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 66.

succession between Elijah and Elisha.[122] Logan and Googer discuss the Old Testament

succession between David and Solomon.[123] While Davis reviews the New Testament succession

of Paul and Timothy,[124] the author also provides a New Testament example of Peter empowering

a search committee to appoint assistant leaders.[125] However, Googer explores succession

principles from the master disciple-maker himself, Jesus Christ, citing that Jesus' model is most

applicable to the Church because it can be easily reproduced.[126]

When considering the succession gap in the African American church, Jesus' leadership

model provides a comprehensive approach to intentional succession planning: identifying

successors, leadership training and development, and preparing successors to assume executive

leadership positions.[127] Examining the life of Jesus, Coleman extracts eight principles that guide

effective discipleship.[128] The eight principles extracted by Coleman are selection, association,

consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision, and reproduction.[129]

Building upon Coleman's observations, Bill Hull uses Jesus' disciple-making example as

a guide to teaching pastors how to train and develop others.[130] Succession planning is critical to

the continued advancement of the Church. Successful transitions require collaboration between

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[122] Davis, "Alternative Model," 17; Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 76-77; Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 24; Logan, "Passing the Baton," 35.

[123] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 35; Logan, "Passing the Baton," 27.

[124] Davis, "Alternative Model," 17.

[125] Ibid., 5.

[126] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 36.

[127] Ibid., 36.

[128] Ibid., 37.

[129] Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2010), 7.

[130] Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others on the Journey of Faith* (Baker Books, 2007), Kindle, 243.

the executive and search committee.

Creating a leadership pipeline helps the organization identify a pool of potential successors. Creating and implementing a leadership training and development program for pipeline candidates provides the organization with proficient leaders ready to assume the executive office when a transition occurs, ensuring leadership continuity and organizational success. Although there are several scriptural examples of biblical leadership succession to choose from, Jesus' disciple-making model may be most appropriate for a contemporary approach to succession planning in the MBC.

Theological Foundations

Church leaders should not commit the grave error of thinking that leadership succession is not important to God. The God of heaven, Father of Jesus Christ, is the Creator of human leadership succession and the driving force behind leadership continuity in His earthly kingdom. God's meticulous planning and execution of leadership selection, development, and transition of predecessors and successors have provided the framework for the continued advancement of His kingdom throughout the Old and New Testaments. Instead of a leader viewing himself as the sole owner and visionary of the church, he must view himself as a member of God's relay team. God's vision for the relay team is to share His message of redemption with the entire world.

Each relay team member is responsible for playing a temporary role in leading the Church toward fulfilling God's vision, understanding and accepting the high probability that the fulfillment of God's vision will outlive them.[131] Therefore, church leaders should be cognizant of biblical principles to prepare adequately for successful leadership transitions.[132] Considering that

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[131] Davis, "Alternative Model," 16.

[132] Clifford Hartley, "About My Father's Business: Pastoral Succession from Father to Son" (DMin diss., Liberty University, Lynchburg, 2012), 45.

God's redemptive vision and plan for humanity has outlived every human being for thousands of years, leaders should begin to recognize their mortality, submit to God's will for succession, and create a succession plan to ensure continued passing of the leadership baton. When this theme governs a leader's tenure, it is difficult to overlook the myriad Scriptures that support God's leadership succession plan.[133] While acknowledging the difficulty of changing the Baptist denomination's paradigm of succession planning,[134] the change in perspective eliminates humanity's perception that humankind is responsible for succession success; it is God's responsibility because succession is at the core of His redemptive plan.[135]

Biblically, there is no mandated method for leadership succession planning.[136] The Bible divulges God's leadership succession pattern throughout consecutive generations, but it does not mandate any particular method.[137] Therefore, the Baptist denomination, its missionary Baptist subsidiary, and its executive leaders should rely on biblical examples of leadership succession because God has the power, authority, and knowledge to execute successful leadership transitions.[138] As a theological foundation for leadership succession, this researcher will explore five Old and New Testament succession themes.[139]

The first theme will explore God as the superintendent of leadership succession. The second theme will explore the priority of succession throughout Israel's history. The third theme

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[133] Brueggemann, Robinson, and Wall, *Called to Lead*, 167.

[134] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 20.

[135] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 16.

[136] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 91.

[137] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 17.

[138] Bird, and Vanderbloemen, *Next,* 22.

[139] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 31.

will explore the future-focused leader. The fourth theme will explore leadership dispersion. The fifth and final theme will explore the establishment of senior leadership within the New Testament church.

God as the Superintendent of Succession

God appears as the superintendent of leadership succession in Numbers 27:18-23. As the leader of the Israelites, commissioned by God to lead them into the land of Canaan, Moses approaches the end of his leadership tenure. God notifies Moses that he would not live long enough to fulfill God's vision of leading the Israelites into the land of Canaan. To ensure leadership continuity, God instructs Moses to select Joshua as his successor (Num 27:18). Passing the baton, Moses would commission Joshua to continue advancing the vision of leading God's chosen people into "The Promised Land" after Moses' retirement and subsequent death. Thus, God's direct identification, selection, and commissioning of Joshua as Moses' successor reveal God as the superintendent of leadership succession.[140]

Israel's History of Succession

As the chief administrator of leadership succession, God continues His pattern of divine leadership transitions throughout the Old Testament. Israel's rich history includes various examples that serve as a model for God's prioritization of leadership stability within His earthly kingdom. Israel's demand of a king (1 Sam 8:4-6) invoked God to select Saul as Israel's first king (1 Sam 9-10). After King Saul rebels against God and loses favor with Him, God once again plans for the next leadership succession.

To secure leadership stability, God orders the prophet Samuel to anoint Jesse's young son, David, as the next king. God was so concerned about planning for leadership succession that

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[140] John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch As Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 1995), 413.

He anointed young David as Israel's next king at the age of eighteen, although David would not transition into kingship until the age of thirty, immediately following the death of his predecessor King Saul.[141] Beginning to display a pattern of succession, as David grows in age and nears retirement and end of life (1 Kings 1:15), God orchestrates a succession plan, instructing King David to name his son, Solomon, as his successor.[142] To aid in Solomon's preparation to rule as King of Israel and continue the work of advancing God's vision, David provides abundant resources and labor toward Solomon's kingdom mission of building God's Temple (1 Chron 22). Before David dies, he provides leadership development to Solomon by integrating him into the leadership structure and including him in leadership rituals (1 Kings 1:28-40).

Although God would continue to facilitate leadership transitions throughout the Old Testament, a final noteworthy example of biblical leadership succession in the Old Testament is the relationship between Elijah and Elisha. Elijah, a prophet of God in the Northern Kingdom, was commanded by God to anoint Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:16). Elijah consecrates his successor, Elisha, by throwing his cloak around him.[143] God takes Elijah up into heaven to facilitate the succession, and Elijah's cloak was left behind. As a sign that God's supernatural power has anointed the transition of power from Elijah to Elisha, God allowed Elisha to use the cloak to supernaturally divide the water, beginning his prophetic ministry as Elijah's successor. (2 Kings 2:11-14).

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[141] Leslie McFall, "The Chronology of Saul and David," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society vol. 53, 3 (2010): 477, accessed May 29, 2020, https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/53/53-3/McFall_JETS_53-3_pp_475-533.pdf.

[142] Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 28.

[143] James Montgomery, and James Alan, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1976), 316.

Future-Focused Succession

God governed leadership succession in the Old Testament and actively organized succession transitions throughout the New Testament. Through the earthly ministry of His Son Jesus, God revealed his desire for future-focused succession planning. Jesus' selection of His twelve disciples was based upon His vision for the future, and He intentionally trained and developed them to fulfill that futuristic vision upon His departure.[144] Mindful of His impending crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (Matt 17:22-23), Jesus knew that it was imperative to prepare His twelve successors for the eventual leadership transition. Future-focused succession planning is evident as Jesus informs Peter that he will someday be the founding leader of the first church, referring to the Christian assembly that will be recognized as the local church.[145]

Leadership Dispersion and Succession

Jesus continued His succession plan by transitioning from the training and development of His disciples to commissioning and appointing them. After His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus returned to His disciples and issued to them "The Great Commission" (Matt 28:16-20). He initiates succession by transferring His authority to them. He executes succession by issuing a command for them to disperse throughout all nations, baptizing people, and teaching them to obey the same lessons that He previously taught his successors. Although Jesus would no longer be physically present with the disciples as they embarked upon their mission, He assures them that His divine presence would always accompany them as they continued the ministry work that their Messiah began.

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[144] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 36.

[145] Arnold E. Clinton, and Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2010), 665.

As the superintendent of succession, God continued His pattern of preparing successors to replace His chosen leaders as they approached the end of their tenures. The Old and New Testaments chronicle the continued advancement of God's redemptive vision and plan for humanity. That plan included the continuation of a future-focused vision that would lead to the formation of the first church (Acts 2:14-47). As more churches are established through the dispersion of Jesus' successors, God's succession plan reveals the incorporation of leadership hierarchies within the church.

<div align="center">Establishment of Senior Leadership within the New Testament Church</div>

The hierarchy of leadership and authority begins with God. Succession planning requires the distribution of leadership authority unto others. God establishes His leadership hierarchy through succession planning when He distributes His authority to Jesus Christ by commissioning Him for earthly service (Matt 3:16-17). Subsequently, Jesus continues God's succession plan of leadership authority by distributing the power of the Holy Spirit unto His disciples (Acts 1:8-2:1-4). Anointed with Jesus' authority and power of the Holy Spirit (Matt 10:1-2), the disciples were acknowledged as apostles (Luke 6:12-16), authoritative agents "sent" that represent Jesus and God.[146]

The believers of the first church acknowledged the apostles as the church's senior leadership and submitted to their authority (Acts 4:32-35). Realizing they could no longer tend to every need within the church, the apostles established the first diaconate office to assist in serving its members.[147] Continuing to establish the leadership hierarchy, the apostles appointed

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[146] Clinton, and Osborne, *Matthew*, 394.

[147] Joseph B. Lightfoot and Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Newly Discovered Commentary*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 105.

elders to exercise leadership in each church congregation.[148] Although the additional offices of prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher would be established within the church leadership hierarchy (Eph 4:12), they would all submit to the leadership and authority of the apostle as the organization's highest executive officer. As an example of God's succession plan for the church, this hierarchy of leadership and distribution of power is modeled by the relationship between the Apostle Paul and Timothy, his successor of the church in Ephesus.

Theoretical Foundations

The literature review cites succession planning as the lifeblood of an organization. Without succession planning, organizations face uncertain futures in the event of an unplanned departure of their chief executives. Organizational success is sustained by developing succession plans that include successor identification, development, and selection. Several theories of succession have been developed and incorporated in the secular business arena, but a consensus among researchers suggests that no one approach to succession planning works universally.[149]

Traditional Design versus Non-Traditional Design

Rebecca Wolfe lists two types of planning: replacement planning and succession planning.[150] Replacement planning is a reactive approach to the unplanned departure of an executive. Replacement planning is a form of risk management that addresses the crisis of a vacant position by replacing the former executive with a substitution. The insufficiency of replacement planning does not provide enough time to adequately assess the organization's executive needs, train and develop the replacement, or facilitate cultural assimilation of the

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[148] Carl R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 291-292.

[149] Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning*, 15.

[150] Ibid., 16.

replacement. Dean Fink, a scholar on succession planning, also agrees that replacement planning is an ineffective strategy.[151] Conversely, succession planning is a reactionary approach to preparing for an executive's departure. Succession planning continues the predecessor's leadership with planning, foresight, and wisdom, developing the successor's talent and aligning him with the vision and culture of the organization. Wolfe provides two succession planning designs: traditional and non-traditional.

Table 1. Succession Planning versus Replacement Planning

Traditional Design	Non-traditional Design
New hire entry	Relocation
Transfers	Position redesign
Employee termination	Contracting out the work
Promotion	Talent pools
Demotion	Recruiting
Positioned career development	Job sharing
	Part-time employees
	Short-term outsiders
	Diversified assistant

Wolfe's traditional design offers six options for filling key positions in an organization.[152] The first option is a "new hire," who is hired from outside of the company. Although this person may bring a fresh perspective and enthusiasm to the organization, they may not fit the culture and vision of the organization. The second option is an employee transfer. Transitioning employees from one position within a company to another may be a solution to filling vacant positions. While this may be a viable option, it creates a need for the continuous training and development of employees moving into new positions.

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[151] Dean Fink, *The Succession Challenge: Building and Sustaining Leadership Capacity Through Succession Management*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 112.

[152] Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning*, 106.

The third option is employee termination. The termination of unproductive employees creates opportunities to hire more capable staff who increase company production. Although this option may work well for lower-level employee positions, it is not a wise strategy for the executive position, which should only be removed through a succession strategy. The fourth option is to promote internal employees. Internal employees possess a wealth of company knowledge, are already assimilated to company culture, and can be groomed over time to fill the leadership positions, making this option the most efficient and effective.

The fifth option is demotion. Poor-performing employees may be demoted to positions in which they are more effective. Demotion is a more favorable option than termination. Despite the benefits of employee demotion, this option does not apply to executive positions because CEOs or senior pastors are typically never demoted, but instead, terminated. The sixth traditional option is positioned career development. This option intentionally identifies future talent, provides opportunities for training and development, and prepares people for future promotion opportunities within the organization. This option is similar to developing a leadership pipeline, which the literature review identifies as a key contributor to successful succession planning and transitions.

In Wolfe's non-traditional design, there are nine options for filling key positions in an organization.[153] The first non-traditional option is reallocation, which distributes the workload of a vacant position among multiple employees. This option is also suitable for lower-level positions but does not apply to the executive position because the executive possesses intimate information regarding the company's overarching vision and mission. The second option is position redesign, which modifies or eliminates a vacant position to accommodate the

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[153] Wolfe, *Systematic Succession Planning*, 106-107.

organization's needs. Again, this would not be a viable option regarding the executive position because an organization's executive position would never be eliminated.

The third option is to contract out the work, bringing in an external expert to complete a project. This option may be appropriate for departmental projects but not for the executive position. The executive position is responsible for advancing and fulfilling the organization's long-term vision. The advancement of long-term vision cannot be accomplished with temporary contractors. The fourth option is talent pools, which develop talent and prepares individuals to fill positions when they become vacant.

Talent pool development is a very desirable option for succession planning because it provides a pool of qualified candidates who are trained and prepared to fill vacant positions. The fifth option is talent recruitment, an external search for new talent that can be trained for future jobs. Talent recruitment is a good succession plan option because it builds the talent pool of developed and prepared employees to assume new positions within an organization. The sixth option is job sharing, which divides one job between two individuals. This option is not a good succession option because although a chief executive can delegate responsibilities to others, no other employees can share the executive's job description and duties.

The seventh option is a part-time position, which operates on a schedule of reduced hours for positions that are not full-time. Reduced or part-time hours would not work because the executive position is a full-time position. The eighth option is short-term outsiders, allowing temporary employees to fill a vacancy until a permanent employee is appointed. Short-term outsiders provide a viable option, especially for churches, allowing an interim employee to maintain leadership continuity until a pastoral search has been completed. This option also provides an interim, based on performance, to be considered for the permanent leadership role.

The ninth option is a diversified assistant. The assistant is cross-trained in most areas of the organization and provides invaluable support to the senior leader. A diversified assistant is a good option for church succession planning because the assistant becomes a viable option as a successor in the event of an emergency vacancy. Overall, although Wolfe's succession designs provide a few beneficial options, they are massively inadequate for succession planning in the MBC. The two designs do not acknowledge any spiritual aspects of church leadership succession, nor God as the supreme predecessor.

<center>A New Approach to Succession Planning</center>

William Rothwell provides five characteristics of succession planning and management programs.[154] Those characteristics include (a) criteria that adhere to the organization's definition of critical leadership ability; (b) a consistent, specific readiness assessment process based on those criteria; (c) a guide for individual development for those in the plan; (d) well-defined roles and responsibilities for those responsible for succession planning; and (e) regular reviews of the plans and its effectiveness.[155] A study revealed that once potential successors have been identified, the main strategic goal of the company should be their development and preparation to assume office.[156] Rothwell also lists a "seven-pointed star model for systematic succession planning."

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[154] Rothwell, *Effective Succession Planning*, 58.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid.
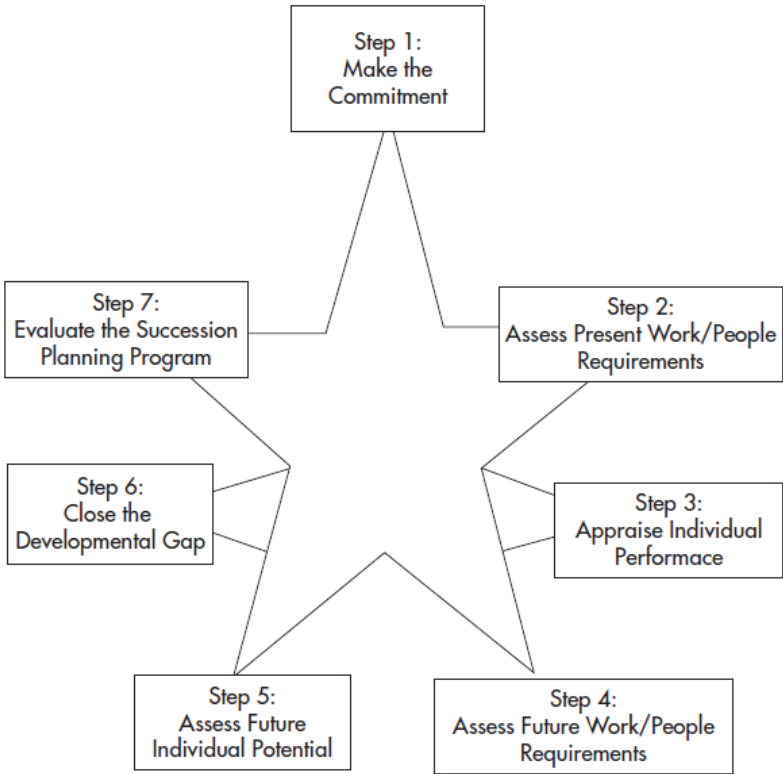
Figure 1. *Seven-Pointed Star Model*. Source. American Management Association.

Step one requires the top decision-makers to spearhead the succession planning initiative

and remain involved throughout the process. Spearheading the succession plan includes

determining the organization's needs, developing action plans, measuring results, providing

hands-on training, and clarifying group roles. The second step requires executives to play a direct

role in assessing the needs of key positions. The executive ensures that personnel possess the

appropriate skill level for the position and identifies which talent is expendable or irreplaceable.

The third step appraises employee job performance. Consideration for succession assumes that

an employee is meeting performance expectations.

The fourth step assesses future work and human resource requirements. The executive

must determine the needs of a position based on the organization's strategic plan. The successor

must align with the organization's strategic goals and objectives. The fifth step assesses future

individual potential. Talent must be identified early and assessed to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The executive must gauge how effective the potential successor might be in a new position.

The sixth step closes the developmental gap. Leadership development programs should be incorporated to prepare internal candidates for promotion to meet the organization's needs more adequately. Finally, step seven evaluates the succession planning program. The only way to determine whether the plan is successful is to examine it, evaluate it, and identify strengths or weaknesses.

Although some scholars believe that it is appropriate to utilize secular succession strategies within the Church,[157] other scholars warn against the dangers of adopting a purely professional approach to a purely spiritual endeavor. The Church must never forget that it is a spiritual organization created, owned, and governed by God. The Church has always been, and should always be, an organization that delivers a message that offends and contradicts the world, its ways of life, and its business practices.[158] Therefore, this project will shift its focus away from secular succession and examine biblical theories of pastoral succession planning and leadership development.

The Ten Commandments of Succession Planning

Although every church has its unique succession needs, several components appear to be consistent in most case studies performed by Bird and Vanderbloemen.[159] These components, called "the ten commandments of succession planning," [160] provide a practical approach to

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[157] Flowers, "Leading through Succession," 26.

[158] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 74.

[159] Bird and Vanderbloemen, *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works*, 590.

[160] Ibid., 522.

succession planning for church leaders of any age or tenure. The first commandment requires the pastor to share Bird and Vanderbloemen's book with the entire church board. The second commandment urges the pastor, church board, and staff members to schedule and adhere to a mandatory sabbatical policy to avoid ministry burnout.

The third commandment implores the pastor to devise an emergency succession plan that guides the church through transition during an unexpected pastoral vacancy due to death, health issues, or injury. The fourth commandment calls the pastor to create a non-emergency succession plan for pastors who feel called to pastor another church or leave ministry entirely. The fifth commandment requires the pastor to prepare for an eventual and inevitable retirement. The sixth commandment urges the pastor and board to commit to an annual succession plan review to determine its organizational and human resource needs. The seventh commandment directs the pastor to create a culture of leadership development within the organization so that it is ingrained in the church's DNA.

The eighth commandment mandates the pastor to share preaching and teaching opportunities with other capable communicators to prevent the organization from becoming too dependent upon one person. The ninth commandment charges the pastor to avoid creating a personality-driven dependent ministry by sharing senior-leader decisions with other executive-level leaders within the organization. Last, the tenth commandment charges the pastor to contemplate life after passing the baton to make it easier to transition into an identity beyond the ministry. Bird and Vanderbloemen's theory of succession planning is an appropriate guide for pastoral succession because of its practicality within a ministry context. One weakness of Bird and Vanderbloemen's theory is that as a spiritual process, it does not discuss God's guidance or the role of prayer and fasting in the succession process.

The Mosaic Succession Model

Sammie Logan also presents a succession model that is extrapolated from the 120-year

lifespan of Moses.[161] Moses' succession plan is chronicled in the book of Numbers 27:12-23.

> The LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain of the Abarim range, and see the
> land that I have given to the Israelites. When you have seen it, you also shall be
> gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, because you rebelled against
> my word in the wilderness of Zin when the congregation quarreled with me. You
> did not show my holiness before their eyes at the waters." (These are the waters of
> Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, "Let
> the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the
> congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall
> lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD may not be
> like sheep without a shepherd." So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of
> Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; have him stand
> before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and commission him in their
> sight. You shall give him some of your authority, so that all the congregation of
> the Israelites may obey. But he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall
> inquire for him by the decision of the Urim before the LORD; at his word they
> shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the Israelites with
> him, the whole congregation." So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He
> took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole
> congregation; he laid his hands on him and commissioned him—as the LORD had
> directed through Moses.[162]

The first step of Moses' eight-step succession plan is that leaders must be reminded of

their mortality. God reminds Moses that neither his ministry nor his life will last indefinitely.

Although Moses has been blessed to live for 120 years, he is not a divine being. The tenure of his

mortal life and as the Israelite leader will eventually expire (Num 27:12-14). In step number two,

Moses asks for God's divine guidance (Num 27:15-17). Moses realizes that his mortality also

equates to limited knowledge.

Acknowledging that God has infinite knowledge of everything and could determine

succession needs and solutions in a way that he is incapable of, Moses humbles himself and

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[161] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 19-22.

[162] New Revised Standard Version.

prays to the succession superintendent for help in choosing a successor. The third step

documents Moses waiting to receive an answer to his divine inquiry (Num 27:18a). Moses does

not depend on his intelligence. He does not rely on close relationships or his network of ministry

associates. He exercises discipline and restraint while he waits on God to provide the succession

plan.

In the fourth step, God provides a successor and a plan (Num 27:18b). The fifth step

includes the presentation of the successor to the community that he will lead. God chooses

Joshua as the successor and publicly anoints him as the next leader of the Israelites (Num 27:19).

The sixth step is to bestow power and responsibility incrementally. Because God knew that

Joshua, as a new leader, was not yet ready to lead, He commanded Moses to relay his power and

authority slowly to allow Joshua time to grow as a leader (Num 27:20).

The seventh step includes a plan to transfer leadership authority and responsibilities

completely to Joshua. At a certain point, Moses must transition out of his leadership role fully,

and Joshua will assume full command of the Israelites without the aid of a predecessor (Num

27:21). The eighth step is to put the plan into action. After seeking divine guidance, a divine

plan, and a divine timeline, the plan must be executed (Num 27:22).

A Twenty-First Century Framework for Succession Planning

Sammie Logan, in his Twenty-First Century framework for succession planning,[163]

extracts the following components from a combination of biblical texts to create a contemporary

succession plan:

1. Realize the importance of your leadership and lead well.

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[163] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 30.

Leaders with a history of leading well tend to have more influence with others. Good leadership earns the respect of followers and makes it easier to lead them amid unfamiliar circumstances.

2. Recognize your mortality.

   Good shepherds care about their flock. Therefore, upon vacating the leadership position, the pastor should place maximum effort toward finding and developing another good leader to assume the senior pastor position.

3. Receive a divine plan.

   Divine succession requires divine guidance. God, in His omniscience, knows everything. Therefore, He should be consulted throughout every step of the succession planning and execution process.

4. Receive a response.

   The pastor, board, and leadership team must exercise patience during the planning process. Just as one seeks God's help, one must patiently wait for God to respond. There is an amalgam of ways that God speaks. Before proceeding, it is imperative that an executive or board members wait for divine direction.

5. Recognize the successor as successor in front of leaders and congregants.

   Publicly naming the successor creates acceptance and trust throughout the ministry. A publicly named successor creates a smoother transition and allows the successor to begin working with the people they will lead.

6. Ready the successor through mentoring.

   Leaders should intentionally and adequately train their successors to do the job upon assuming the leadership position to reduce chances of decline in organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

7. Release the successor to work.

   The predecessor must have faith in the successor's ability to get the job done. The predecessor must not micromanage during the transition but instead set clear expectations and slowly relinquish his responsibilities and involvement to allow the successor room to grow into the new role.

8. Realistically increase responsibilities.

   The predecessor must establish an adequate pace for which he releases authority and responsibility to his successor. Careful evaluation must be performed to not overwhelm the successor in his new role.

9. Resign/retire/release when it is time.

   The succession plan exists to protect the longevity of the church and its congregants. Therefore, it is essential that pastors determine when it is time to transition out of their leadership roles.

   This contemporary succession plan is a robust guide to pastoral leadership succession. The succession plan acknowledges every aspect of leadership transition within the church context. The plan is a spiritual and practical approach to evaluating succession needs, planning, execution, and post-transition concerns. Overall, many theories include similar succession components, identifying leader development as a key factor of successful succession. What is lacking in most plans are practical models for leadership development. An adequate pastoral

succession plan should outline specific training activities and phases of development specific to the senior pastor position.

Biblical Leadership Development

Pastoral succession planning requires more than just the selection and appointment of a successor. A successor must not merely occupy a position and title of senior pastor or organizational leader. From a biblical aspect, much more is required. The term *discipleship* in Matthew 28:19-20 envelops the idea that God's chosen leaders must receive training, mentorship, and ongoing development to ensure proficiency in their leadership roles.[164] Biblical leadership development does not absolve the disciple of the arduous process of adopting a Christ-like character and practically applying Christ's teachings to daily Christian life. Neither does biblical leadership permit the disciple to cling to the more desirable facets of Jesus' image while denying spiritual truths that contradict secular philosophies of leadership "greatness."[165]

Character development is the foundation for biblical leadership. Biblical leadership's unified cognitive and moral attributes form a distinct moral fortitude and reputation that differentiate biblical from secular leadership development.[166] When developing leaders biblically, however, environment and culture greatly impact development outcomes. If an organization's culture does not adopt leadership training and development as a core value, the most creative and strategic planning and developmental "best-practices" will likely fail. At every level of operation, the culture of a church must communicate that leadership development

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[164] Stuart W. Boyer, *Biblical Leadership Development: Principles for Developing Organizational Leaders at Every Level* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 4.

[165] Ralph E. Enlow Jr., *Servant of all: Reframing Greatness and Leadership through the Teachings of Jesus* (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2019), 7.

[166] Dave Anderson, *How to Run Your Business by the BOOK: A Biblical Blueprint to Bless Your Business* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2011), 79.

prioritizes an individual's character development over an individual's accomplishments, achievements, and perceived greatness.[167]

"Competitive comparisons, achievements, and hierarchical status do not determine great" leadership in God's kingdom but instead, "great" leadership in God's earthly kingdom is developed and measured by transformed moral character and servitude unto others.[168] Conceived by Robert Greenleaf, this form of "servant leadership" develops leaders by entrusting them to be stewards of God's resources, serving others as they corporately advance the organization's mission toward vision fulfillment.[169] A church's succession plan should include a sound strategy for its leadership development. The strategy should intend to intentionally develop leaders who possess godly character, are well-versed in theology and Scripture, and are skilled in practical ministry.[170] Additionally, a leadership development strategy should cultivate a servant-leader's ability to develop other leaders through teaching, community engagement, and ongoing mentoring and supervision.[171]

Biblical leadership development calls for a form of pastoral supervision in which the teacher and disciple establish a mutual covenant. Within that covenant, the teacher provides instruction on practical ministry skills. As the disciples perform ministry work, the supervisor evaluates their performance and provides feedback to promote spiritual maturity, ministry

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[167] Rowland Forman, Bruce Miller, Wayne Cordeiro, and Jeff Jones, *The Leadership Baton: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders in Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 24-25.

[168] Ibid., 13.

[169] Ruth Tucker, *Leadership Reconsidered: Becoming a Person of Influence* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 44.

[170] Rowland Forman, et al., *The Leadership Baton*, 47.

[171] Ibid., 48-51.

proficiency, and leadership growth.[172] A teacher's disciples are not the only ones expected to meet a certain standard of performance. The teacher, supervisor, or predecessor must also meet certain requisites that impact the outcome of the discipleship development process.

The teacher must possess a passion for developing other leaders, sacrificing their lives as they invest themselves into the lives of others.[173] The teacher must possess an unrelenting will to persevere and overcome every impediment to the disciple development process.[174] Biblical leaders must possess and exhibit Christ-like character and kingdom values as they inspire their students to do the same.[175] Additionally, teachers must be visionaries, constantly casting a future vision for kingdom leadership, kingdom mission, and world evangelism.[176] Biblical leaders must understand the culture and people they are called to engage, modifying their leadership methods as necessary to navigate ministry challenges.[177]

As leadership developers, teachers should possess the ability to modify and utilize various practical teaching methods that promote the proficient performance of ministry duties.[178] Finally, biblical leaders must manage time wisely, prioritizing kingdom objectives, ministry goals, leader selection, leader development, and leader transition.[179] Jesus' vision for biblical

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[172] Michael Paterson and Jessica Rose, *Enriching Ministry: Pastoral Supervision in Practice* (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2014), 96.

[173] Richard Koch, and NetLibrary Inc., *Moses on Leadership, Or, Why Everyone is a Leader* (Oxford: Capstone, 1999), 129.

[174] Ibid., 130.

[175] Ibid., 130-131.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Ibid., 131-132.

[178] Ibid., 132.

[179] Ibid.

leadership development is to influence the world by teaching disciples to command spiritual commanders, advise spiritual advisors, and provide pastoral care to spiritual caretakers.[180] The Church has a biblical mandate, in Matthew 28:19-20, to develop leaders. There are many approaches to leadership development, but the only way for the Christian to truly understand biblical leadership is to examine and replicate the leadership methods of the fully human and fully divine life of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ.[181]

<center>Jesus' Method of Leadership Development</center>

The New Testament reveals three principles found in Jesus' method of leadership development. The first principle is the prayerful selection of men who desired to learn from Him. The second principle is one of commitment and loyalty; disciples pledged their lives to remaining in a close relationship with Jesus Christ. The third principle is academic and practical on-the-job training, teaching controversial moral and ethical truths while providing disciples with opportunities to physically perform ministry work.[182] In the same way that Xenophon was discipled by Socrates in the development of a good and honorable character,[183] Jesus invited his disciples to embark upon a similar journey.

Jesus' discipleship strategy was not limited to "good and honorable" character. Jesus' call to discipleship was a call to willingly sacrifice one's life, even to the point of death, as one learned about, adopted, and advanced His earthly mission.[184] Leadership in the kingdom of

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[180] Gary Black, Jr., *Exploring the Life and Calling* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 64.

[181] Sharon Henderson Callahan, *Religious Leadership: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2013), 6.

[182] Boyer, *Biblical Leadership Development*, 9.

[183] Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 74.

[184] Suzanne Watts Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.

heaven is not based upon a leader's lordship over others. Leadership position, authority, and power were never meant to be used as tools to control, abuse, or manipulate others. On the contrary, leadership development should reflect Jesus Christ's positive pattern of development principles.

Kenneth O. Gangel outlines four of Christ's leadership development principles that lay the foundation for leadership in the New Testament church. The first principle of Christ's biblical leadership development program is to focus on others, investing His life and ministry mission into his disciples. The second principle is to emphasize the Holy Scriptures, keeping the truth of God's word pure from distortion or dilution. The third principle is self-evaluation, ensuring the maintenance of a Christ-like character and image so that others will develop a better understanding of God. The fourth principle is to concentrate on kingdom purpose, urgently striving toward achieving concretized goals within limited amounts of time.[185]

None of the four principles precede the most important component in Jesus' leadership development method: prayer. Jesus spent time in solitude praying to God for divine direction in selecting His twelve disciples.[186] Once chosen, the disciples were expected to follow Jesus wherever He went, sharing their lives with Him as they cultivated a mutual rapport of commitment and affection.[187] Jesus desired more than an emotional and half-hearted decision of salvation from His disciples. Those types of empty decisions generate an insufficient knowledge

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[185] Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1997), 72.

[186] LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 29.

[187] Don Hawkins, *Master Discipleship Today: Jesus's Prayer and Plan for Every Believer* (Chicago: Kregel Publications, 2019), 28.

of Christ, which over time, in the lives of believers, typically produces a weak and temporal faith that eventually fails.[188]

After prayerfully selecting his disciples, Jesus' leadership development method included the call of His future successors to a life of radical self-denial, relinquishment of their former lives, and suffering for Christ's sake.[189] The commitment to a lifestyle of self-denial and suffering in service to Christ's mission provides a theological framework for a method of leadership development that brings God's grace and healing to a hurting world.[190] God's grace and healing were manifested through Jesus' prominent message of "The Gospel," also called "The Good News." As part of Jesus' method of leadership development, He provided his disciples with opportunities to preach a message of good news to those who were politically, economically, and materially restricted to the margins of society and to comfort the pain of a hurting world by promising an eventual eternal change in their social condition.[191] Despite instances where many people have been called to ministry but have not yet, over the course of many years, been provided with opportunities to preach even their first sermon,[192] Jesus' method of development mandates practical ministry opportunities.

Many scholars emphasize the relational aspect of Jesus' leadership style; however, they often overlook the purpose for Jesus' selection of his twelve disciples. Jesus equally valued and

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[188] Jonathan Lunde, *Following Jesus, the Servant King: A Biblical Theology of Covenantal Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2010), 284.

[189] John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 20-21.

[190] Jonathan Lunde, *Following Jesus, the Servant King*, 289.

[191] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship: Understanding Jesus Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 36-38.

[192] David Putman, and Ed Stetzer, *Breaking the Discipleship Code: Becoming a Missional Follower of Jesus* (Nashville: B & H Pub. Group, 2008), 37.

prioritized the creation of a leadership pipeline and ministry training process to train and develop

his successors. Jesus not only wanted to cultivate deep relationships with His students, but

according to Mark 3:12-15, he also wanted to teach them sound theology and doctrine, provide

practical ministry training and opportunities, elevate them as leaders in God's kingdom, and

commission them with the authority to preach the gospel, heal infirmities, and drive out

demons.[193] Jesus fostered intimate relationships with his disciples to earn their trust as He

modeled for them the true message of the cross, being rejected by others as they suffered for

their devotion to Him.[194]

To comfort the disciples' fears as they participated in Christ's leadership development

process, Jesus promised to be with them every step of the way, providing them with power,

perseverance, and companionship.[195] Disciple-making was Jesus' model and method of

leadership succession throughout the New Testament.[196] Jesus' discipleship process reveals eight

principles of his leadership development methodology. The first principle is selection; Jesus

prayerfully selects his twelve disciples. The second principle is relationship; Jesus and his

disciples share every aspect of their lives with one another.

The third principle is consecration; the disciples submit themselves fully to obedience to

Christ. The fourth principle is impartation; Jesus fully invests his teachings and lifestyle into His

disciples. The fifth principle is demonstration; Jesus shows His disciples how to perform

ministry work. The sixth principle is delegation; Jesus sends His disciples to perform ministry

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[193] Ibid., 39.

[194] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Victoria Barnett, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 52.

[195] Greg Ogden, *Essential Guide to Becoming a Disciple: Eight Sessions for Mentoring and Discipleship* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 106.

[196] Googer, *Senior Pastor Succession*, 36.

work. The seventh principle is supervision; Jesus monitors their ministry service, evaluates their performance, and provides corrective feedback to enhance ministry proficiency. The eighth principle is reproduction; Jesus commands His disciples to create other leaders through the same leadership development process.[197]

Bill Hull provides a simplified six-step version of Jesus' leadership methodology.[198] In step one, communicate to the disciples what you want them to do. In step two, tell the disciples why you want them to do it. In step three, as the leader, show them how to do it. Step four requires the leader to perform the ministry action with the disciples. In step five, let the disciples perform the ministry action themselves under the leader's supervision. In step six, release the disciples to go out and perform the ministry work unsupervised.

Dave and Jon Ferguson of Community Christian Church in Chicago, Illinois, have developed a similar five-step leadership development method. In step one, the leader performs the work. The disciple observes the leader, then the leader and disciple discuss what took place. In step two, the leader performs the ministry work. The disciple provides "hands-on" assistance, then the leader and disciple discuss what took place. In step three, the disciple performs the ministry work. The leader provides hands-on assistance, then the leader and disciple discuss what took place. In step four, the disciple performs the ministry work, the leader observes, then the leader and disciple discuss what took place. In step five, the disciple transitions into leadership by performing the ministry work while a new disciple observes. Jesus' methods of leadership development ventured well beyond cultivating relationships and moral character. The

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[197] Ibid., 37.

[198] Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 243.

nurturing of deep personal relationships and moral teachings were His means of developing His successors to continue practical ministry work in His absence.

The ultimate goal of Jesus' discipleship development process is not merely a self-help philosophy. The goal is not to develop followers who greatly revere and idolize their Master. Jesus' sole purpose for His leadership development methods was to glorify His Father in heaven by advancing and expanding His heavenly kingdom on the earth.[199]

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[199] Don Hawkins, *Master Discipleship Today*, 59.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The researcher embarked upon a mission to explore the research question, which identifies the problem of a recognized lack of succession planning, for the senior pastor position, in the Missionary Baptist division of the General Baptist denomination. The literature review identifies a lack of succession planning for CEO transition, in most small to medium-sized secular organizations, as a leading contributor to an organization's decline. Although research is limited regarding the current state of succession planning within the African American church, the research literature contends that a similar problem exists in the church. A lack of succession planning for the eventual transition of the senior pastor can produce congregational stress and possible church dissolution. Therefore, the researcher aspired to determine the current state of pastoral succession planning within the MBC, specifically among churches in the KEMBA, to determine if they will benefit from creating a biblical succession plan framework that will guide their senior pastors and churches through pastoral transitions.

To accomplish this, the researcher utilized a purposive study method that selected and interviewed ten senior pastors of various churches within the KEMBA. The development of a biblically-influenced and practical pastoral succession planning framework was the researcher's desired outcome. The purpose of this document is to provide the senior pastor and governing officers with a guide that will assist them in identifying potential successors, develop and equip them with the required skill set of an executive leader, and select successors to assume senior leadership positions during times of transition.

Intervention Design

This project required the researcher to perform multiple tasks to execute and complete the project successfully. No field research began until the researcher received approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB); see page 121 for IRB approval. Every task received careful consideration and was executed with the highest degree of attentiveness to achieve the desired outcome that suitably addressed the research problem. The researcher devised a list of tasks to help maintain focus, adhere to project timelines, and create a replicable methodological protocol for other researchers.[200] In-person interviews and electronic surveys were the two selected methods of gathering data.

To begin the project, the researcher created interview and electronic survey request letters that were emailed or mailed via United States Postal Service (USPS) to select senior pastors within KEMBA. The letters invited individuals to participate in the research project. The invitations were first extended through email to expedite the initial contact and response. Senior pastors who possessed email accounts were prioritized for expediency in communication. Individuals selected for an interview but did not utilize email communication were sent an invitation letter through the USPS. Although the researcher intended to interview and survey only ten senior pastors, email invitations were extended to all twenty-five KEMBA churches to expedite the response process. A second invitation message was drafted and distributed to churches that were unresponsive to the first invitation.

Next, the researcher drafted a participant consent message that provided detailed information regarding the goal and criteria of the research study. The consent message included interview instructions, participant compensation, risks, confidentiality, and anonymity options.

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[200] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 66.

Prospective participants were alerted to options to withdraw from the study at any point in the interview process. To maintain expediency during the invitation, acceptance, and interview process, the interviewees were sent the message of consent, along with terms and conditions, and were required to return a signed written consent to the researcher either by USPS, fax machine, or cell phone text message, prior to being interviewed. At the start of the recorded interview, the researcher confirmed receipt of the participants' written consent to the terms and conditions before proceeding with the interview.

The next task required the creation of standardized interview questions for ten senior pastors. A subsequent task necessitated the creation of survey questions or statements for those same ten senior pastors. The researcher targeted senior pastors only because the research literature suggested that leadership transitions were most successful when the senior executive-led and facilitated successions. Churches with vacant senior pastor positions were not invited to participate in the study. During participant interviews, the senior pastor was asked questions from the following categories:

- Current ministry position and background

- Present state of succession planning

- Clergy leadership training and development programs

- A vision of eventual leadership transition

Senior pastors were asked multiple questions designed to establish their current ministry position, age, congregation size, and length of service as the senior pastor. Several more questions were designed to explore the senior pastor's ministry background: how they became the church's senior pastor, how they perceived their process of being elected as senior pastor, and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of that process. Additional questions also explored

the present state of succession planning (whether they have established a succession plan for their eventual departure and what that entails) role of the governing board in the succession process and the extent of collaboration between the senior pastor and governing board. Further questions were developed to explore the current process of leadership development and training of ministry clergy and the senior pastor's expected goals and outcomes for leader development. Finally, questions were developed to explore the senior pastor's vision for their eventual retirement and transition and the perceived requirements for a successful retirement, transition, and succession. See Appendix A for senior pastor interview questions.

Once the invitations, consent letters, interview, and survey questions were drafted, they were distributed to the KEMBA churches. During the first method of data collection, the researcher strived to schedule in-person or telephone interviews with ten senior pastors. All in-person and telephone interviews were audio-recorded. At the start of each interview, the researcher confirmed that written consent had been obtained, then the interviewee was notified that the call would be recorded. The researcher used two recording methods during the interview.

The first method of recording utilized an Apple iPhone application by the name of "Voice Memos." Voice Memos is a standard software feature that is embedded within all Apple iPhone mobile cell phone devices. The second recording method that served as a backup to the first method was a digital voice recorder purchased from Amazon.com. The digital recorder could store sixteen gigabytes of recorded data, had audio playback capability, and was purchased for approximately $40.00.

Both recording methods were used simultaneously during the interview. The researcher began the call once the consent to record was given and ended recording once the interviewee fully answered the last interview question. Although many of the telephone interviews were

conducted in the researcher's home office, the mobility of cell phones and digital recording

devices and software allowed the researcher to conduct interviews from any remote location. In

addition to the first data collection method, the second method of data collection administered

electronic surveys to the same ten senior pastors within the KEMBA. The researcher utilized

surveymonkey.com to conduct electronic surveys. Surveymonkey.com is a website that enabled

the researcher to send surveys electronically, record and tabulate results, and target specific

groups or audiences.[201]

The researcher selected and created a basic SurveyMonkey user account, which is free of

charge and permits the survey to contain up to ten survey questions. The ten selected participants

received an email containing a brief salutation, invitation to complete a ten-question survey,

website link to the electronic survey, and a terms and conditions notice informing the participant

that clicking the survey link served as their consent to participate in the study. Each survey

statement prompted the study participant to select the best response from a Likert-style response

set of the following options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree. See

Appendix B for senior pastor survey questions.

Senior pastors selected the best survey responses to tenure-related statements. The first

question sought to disclose the senior pastor's thoughts regarding an expected length of tenure.

An obstacle to succession planning is a senior pastor's unwillingness to relinquish the leadership

position at an age when most people are eligible to retire. Senior pastors who refuse to retire face

higher probabilities of illness or death, making the church vulnerable to stress and decline during

unexpected transitions. The second question sought to connect a senior pastor's potential

unwillingness to develop and appoint a successor to the financial stability or uncertainty of

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[201] "Online Research with Surveys and Polls," SurveyMonkey, www.surveymonkey.com/mp/online-research/.

ministry retirement income and benefits.[202] Will the ministry continue to support the predecessor financially upon departure, or will the predecessor be left in a weakened financial or health state due to loss of income or benefits?

The third question sought to discover whether the pastor is aware if KEMBA has created a pastoral succession protocol for its member churches. Since KEMBA, despite the autonomy of its member churches, provides ministry and human resource support to those churches when needed, does the senior pastor also expect KEMBA to assist with succession planning? The fourth question explored the interviewee's perspective regarding succession planning practices among fellow churches within the KEMBA association. A senior pastor may have thoughts regarding succession planning for their individual church, but what do they think about their fellow KEMBA churches and succession planning? Do senior pastors consider how succession planning impacts their local association of churches, or do they only limit thoughts of succession planning to their church?

The fifth question was designed to explore the pastor's perceived level of responsibility for selecting the successor. Do senior pastors view themselves as responsible for selecting their replacements, or do they view themselves as having any responsibility in the selection process? Questions six and seven divulged the senior pastor's perspective regarding internal successors and pipeline candidates.

Additionally, authors point to the training, development, and continued mentorship of the successor by the predecessor as vital contributors to effective transitions. Questions eight and nine probed the senior pastor's perspective on training, developing, and mentoring successors. To end the survey, question ten examined the predecessor's presence and role within the church

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[202] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 11-12.

after completing the transition. Research indicates that the continued presence of a predecessor undermines the successor's authority and hinders the transition.[203] Will the predecessor make a swift and permanent departure from the church, or will they remain in some type of consulting or leadership capacity?

To fulfill the researcher's ethical responsibility of protecting study participants, and in the process, inspire truthful responses from them, the surveys and in-person interviews were confidential and anonymous. Senior pastors being interviewed and surveyed were not required to provide their individual names or the names of their church. The criterion for determining the study's impact on leadership succession within the KEMBA churches was the development of a biblical framework for leadership succession, and through the implementation of the framework, churches would be equipped to commence the process of developing leaders to assume the senior pastor position.

The following timelines guided this research study:

- Preparation activities (creation of participant invitations, consent letters, email, and USPS delivery)—two weeks

- Interviews/data collection—four weeks

- Evaluation and synthesis of interview data—four weeks

- Development of succession plan framework—four weeks

Implementation of the Intervention Design

To begin the implementation of the intervention design, the researcher executed a predetermined list of activities. The list of activities included creating, revising, and distributing participant invitations and consent letters via email and USPS. Additional correspondence such

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[203] Logan, "Passing the Baton," 9.

as follow-up letters, interview questions, and electronic survey questions was also created. All documents were submitted to the IRB for approval, incorporating necessary revisions until all documents satisfied their requirements and were approved.

The next step in advancing through the predetermined list of activities was creating an electronic survey using surveymonkey.com. The electronic survey questions were entered into the online survey system. All electronic survey questions were developed using the five-point Likert-type scale (i.e., Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). The electronic survey contained a total of ten questions and did not require any personally identifiable information to access or complete the survey.

The researcher contacted the KEMBA moderator to compile a contact list of KEMBA senior pastors. The KEMBA moderator provided a contact list of senior pastors and personally contacted several senior pastors on the researcher's behalf to invite them to participate in the study. Upon compiling a telephone and email contact list of KEMBA senior pastors, the researcher prepared to make initial contact with potential study participants. The researcher distributed the study participant invitation and consent documents to all senior pastors of MBC within the KEMBA. To facilitate expedited responses, the first method of distribution of the IRB-approved documents was email.

Senior pastors who confirmed a desire to participate in the research study were emailed a consent form containing detailed information regarding the study's purview. In addition to the consent form, the participant email also contained a digital link to the electronic survey previously created on surveymonkey.com. Finally, the participant email included a request to establish a date and time for the telephone interview, instructions for accessing and completing the online survey, and a reminder that consent forms must be physically signed, dated, and

returned to the researcher before participation in the study could be granted. All study

participants and interviews were confirmed within five days of the initial invitation. All consent

forms were signed and returned to the researcher before the telephone interviews were

conducted. All electronic surveys were completed by participants either the day before the

telephone interview or immediately after the interview.

The researcher compiled data from telephone interviews and electronic surveys for four

weeks. Each telephone interview began by notifying the participant that the interview would be

audio-recorded, as stated in their signed consent letter. After starting the digital audio recorder,

the researcher began interviewing the study participant. Each study participant interviewed was

asked multiple questions listed in Appendix A. An outline of these questions also appears in the

intervention design section of this research study.

Once all interview questions were answered, the researcher discontinued audio recording

on the digital recording device. The researcher offered to provide participants with a copy of the

completed research study once approved and published by the university. The researcher thanked

each participant and concluded the telephone interview. Due to COVID-19 pandemic

precautions, no in-person interviews were conducted. All interviews were conducted over the

telephone.

The necessary resources, as mentioned earlier in the intervention design, were minimal.

The researcher utilized an iPhone equipped with "Voice Memos," a software application for

recording telephone conversations. A digital recorder, purchased from Amazon.com, was also

used as a backup recording method. The researcher used a notepad to document detailed

information during each interview. To maintain simplicity and efficiency in the interview

process, the researcher chose to forgo computers, online video conferencing technology, visual

presentations, or guest panelists. Due to its embedded options for survey analysis, Surveymonkey.com was the only resource necessary to gather and analyze all survey data. All data from the telephone interviews and electronic surveys were compared to achieve accurate compiled data and generate a complete research findings report.

Based on the review of literature and data analysis, the researcher's desired method of addressing the problem was to develop a pastoral succession planning framework. Every ministry will experience a time of expected or unexpected transition.[204] Crippling outcomes can be avoided when ministries develop a framework for pastoral succession.[205] This biblical framework for pastoral succession was developed to guide KEMBA churches through periods of pastoral transitions.

The biblical framework guide for pastoral succession is divided into eight sections. The first section identifies the principle of "selection." In this first step, church leaders identify and select succession candidates who desire to learn and develop as leaders. An emphasis is placed on limiting the number of succession candidates as the candidate pipeline is formed to increase their leadership training and development effectiveness.

The second section, labeled "association," guides church leaders in building relationships with pipeline candidates. Leaders are provided with a scriptural foundation for developing intimate, personal, and loving relationships with their disciples. This section also allows leaders to provide their disciples with deeper theological truths and clearly communicate the necessary leadership sacrifices in God's kingdom.

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[204] Davis, "Alternative Model," 1

[205] Strong, "Pastoral Succession Plan," 5.

The third section, called "consecration," guides leaders in the divine commissioning of their disciples. As the disciples are set apart for the holy work of continuing God's plan, their spiritual status is assessed and confirmed. Additionally, they are presented with a charge to execute their duties faithfully and declared sacred workers within God's Church and mission field.

The fourth section, "Impartation," highlights the theological and spiritual development of the consecrated disciples. Leaders impart knowledge of the work and function of the Holy Spirit. Disciples discover the impact of the Holy Spirit on their lives and ministries as they learn to rely on Him during ministry service. During this stage, disciples are monitored by leaders to evaluate their spiritual growth.

The fifth section, labeled "demonstration," guides leaders as they provide their disciples with leadership training. In this section, disciples have the opportunity to apply their theological education to practical ministry contexts. Leaders teach their disciples how to perform various ministry tasks in preparation for ministry work.

The sixth section of "delegation" expands the disciples' leadership training by assigning them specific ministry tasks. The execution of assigned ministry tasks serves to develop proficiency in ministry work and exposure to various ministry challenges.

In the seventh section of "supervision," disciples complete assigned ministry tasks and report their experiences and outcomes to their leaders. Leaders assess the outcomes to determine the theological and practical growth of their disciples. As leaders supervise their disciples, corrective action is suggested when appropriate.

The eighth section of the biblical leadership succession framework guide is "reproduction." This section explores when a leader should transition. Disciples that complete

the leadership training and development requirements are equipped to assume internal or external leadership positions. As disciples are elevated to senior leadership positions, they begin to train and develop new disciples.

Chapter 4

Results

Sixteen weeks afforded the researcher an opportunity to devise a biblical succession planning framework. The biblical framework guides the KEMBA and its autonomous churches through the intricate process of filling the senior leadership position within the local church. The goal of the biblical succession framework is to reduce the amount of ministry stress or decline often associated with the absence of a succession plan or a poorly planned and executed leadership transition. Although the adoption and implementation of the biblical succession planning framework are not mandatory for the KEMBA churches, the document has been made available to them for future use should they need it (see Appendix C).

Surveys

Ten senior pastors completed the electronic survey. Some participants completed the survey before being interviewed, while others completed the survey after their interview. The survey questions explored several topics related to leadership succession in the KEMBA churches. The first survey question addressed the perspective of senior pastors regarding the topic of ministry retirement age. When asked if senior pastors should retire at sixty-five, fifty percent strongly disagreed, forty percent disagreed, and ten percent remained neutral on the matter (see Figure 3).

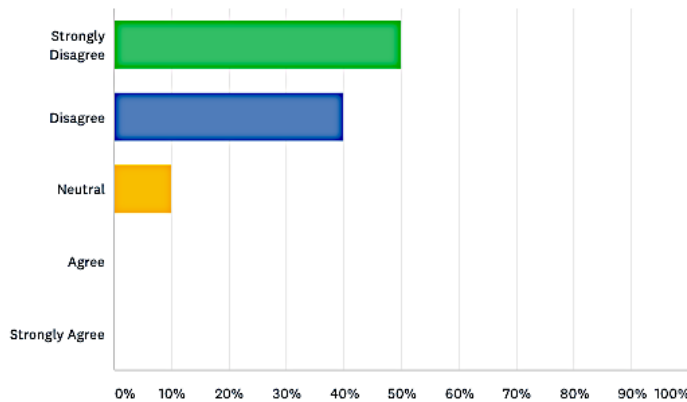Question 1: Senior pastors willingly retire at age sixty-five.

Figure 2. *Survey Question Number One.* Source. Surveymonkey.com.

Question one survey responses revealed that KEMBA senior pastors did not adopt secular views on retirement age. Although the eligible age for full secular retirement benefits in North Carolina is sixty-seven,[206] the survey reveals that pastors have alternative views of the ministry retirement age for senior pastors.

Question two survey responses explored the topic of the church's continued financial support of the senior pastor after retirement and revealed inconsistent views regarding ongoing financial support to retired senior pastors. While some senior pastors believe the church should provide a financial benefits package upon retirement, almost half of those surveyed believed the church should not provide financial support after retirement.

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[206] "Retirement Benefits," Social Security, accessed March 07, 2021, https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/learn.html#h1.

Question 2: Retired senior pastors are financially supported by their former church.
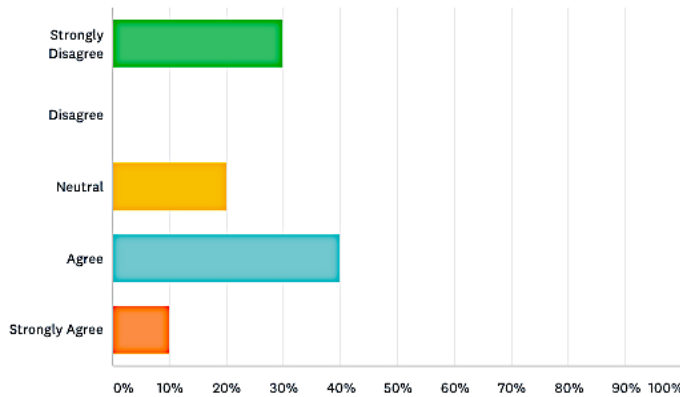

Figure 3. *Survey Question Number Two*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

Thirty percent of senior pastors strongly disagreed that the church should provide a financial retirement benefits package upon ministry retirement. Forty percent agreed that the church should support the senior pastor financially after retirement. Ten percent of senior pastors strongly agreed to the ongoing financial support provided by the church upon retirement. Twenty percent of senior pastors remained neutral on the topic of ongoing financial support (see Figure 3).

Question three examined the KEMBA's role in succession planning for its member churches. Forty percent of survey participants strongly disagreed, thirty percent disagreed, and thirty percent agreed that KEMBA provides a succession plan to its member churches (see Figure 4).

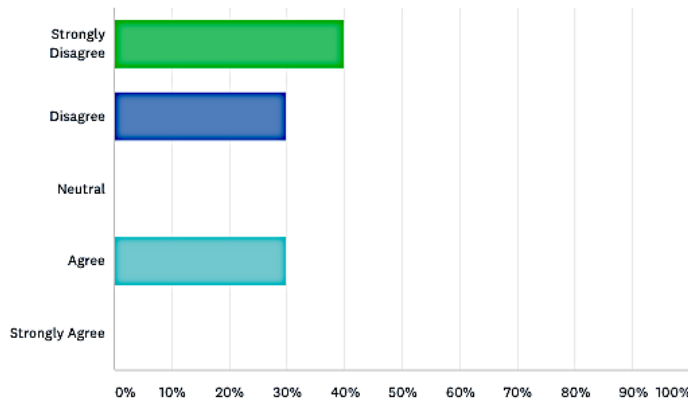Question 3: KEMBA provides a succession plan to its member churches.

Figure 4. *Survey Question Number Three.* Source. Surveymonkey.com.

Question three survey responses revealed that only thirty percent of member churches are aware of an existing succession plan provided by KEMBA, while seventy percent of member churches are not. The absence of neutral responses may indicate an issue with KEMBA's communication to all of its member churches, notifying them of an available succession plan. Another potential issue revealed by question three's survey responses could be a lack of member church participation in the KEMBA. Member churches would not be knowledgeable about succession plans provided by their association if they are not active participants of association meetings and events.

Given the conflicting responses from survey question three, survey question four delved into participants' opinions regarding whether each KEMBA church should follow a prescribed succession plan. Survey results revealed that forty percent disagreed, ten percent remain neutral, forty percent agreed, and ten percent strongly agreed regarding KEMBA churches following a prescribed succession plan (see Figure 5).

Question 4: In your opinion, should each KEMBA church follow a prescribed succession plan.
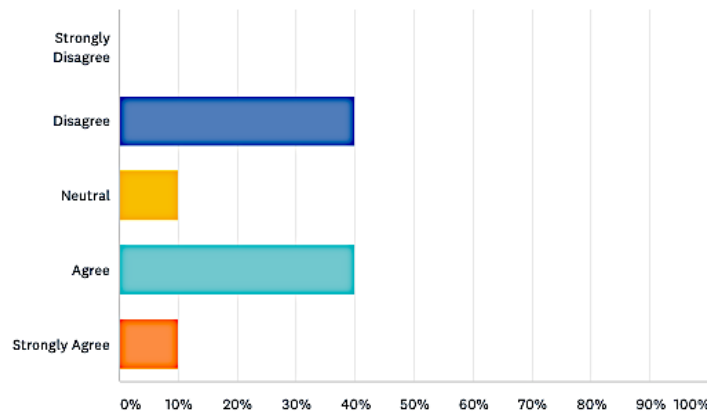

Figure 5. *Survey Question Number Four*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

Question four responses led the researcher to perceive that whether KEMBA provided a succession plan to its member churches or not, forty percent still disagreed with following any prescribed succession plan. Although the rejection of a prescribed succession plan amplifies the autonomous liberty of individual MBC, not creating or following a succession plan could become problematic. Therefore, the fifty percent who believe in following a prescribed succession plan support the researcher's perception that a biblical succession framework is needed.

Survey question five probed participants regarding the senior pastor's role in selecting the successor. Responses reveal mixed views among senior pastors regarding their perceived role in the succession process. Ten percent strongly disagreed, twenty percent disagreed, forty percent remain neutral, twenty percent agreed, and ten percent strongly agreed that the senior pastor is responsible for selecting their successor (see Figure 6). While three senior pastors disagreed that selecting their successor is their responsibility, three senior pastors take full responsibility for the task. At least half of all survey respondents believe that the senior pastor should not select their

successor, indicating their trust in and reliance on the search committee process that is customary in Baptist churches.

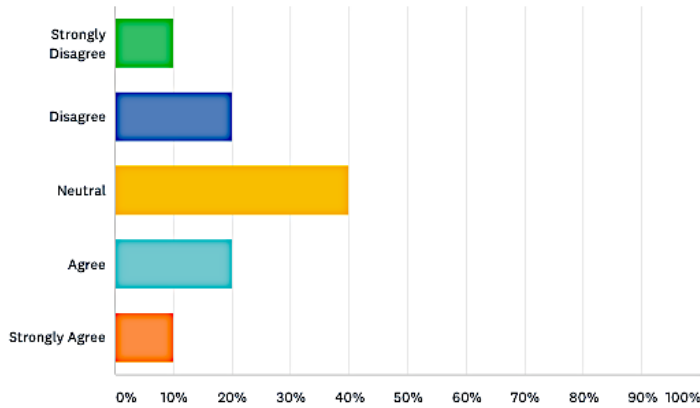Question 5: The senior pastor is responsible for selecting the successor.

Figure 6. *Survey Question Number Five*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

Considering the importance of successful transitions and leadership continuity within the church, the researcher finds it alarming that forty percent of the senior pastors surveyed did not have an opinion on their role in succession. Senior leaders of organizations typically possess great influence that can affect their organization's leadership culture. A church's senior pastor should use that same influence to impact the pastoral leadership succession planning and transition process positively.

Question six analyzed participant views regarding whether their successor should be an internal candidate. Ten percent strongly disagreed, forty percent disagreed, thirty percent remained neutral, and twenty percent agreed that pastors should select successors from within their church (see Figure 7). Survey responses revealed that the majority of participants opposed the selection of internal candidates, while thirty percent declined to take a position on the matter.

Question 6: In your opinion, should the senior pastor select his or her successor from within their church?
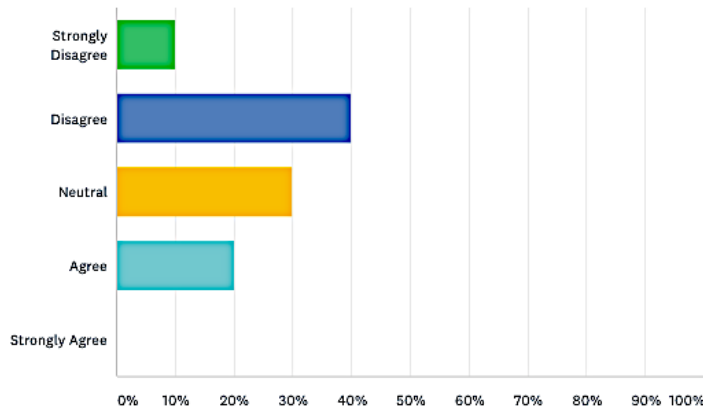

Figure 7. *Survey Question Number Six*. Source. Surveymonkey.com

Question seven explored survey participant views regarding the probability of choosing the best successor. The purpose of this question was to audit the senior leader's thoughts on identifying only one potential successor versus searching from within a cohort of qualified candidates. When asked whether having multiple candidates would increase the probability of choosing the best successor, ten percent strongly disagreed, ten percent disagreed, twenty percent remained neutral, thirty percent agreed, and thirty percent strongly agreed (see Figure 8).

Question 7: Having multiple candidates to choose from increases the probability of selecting the best successor.
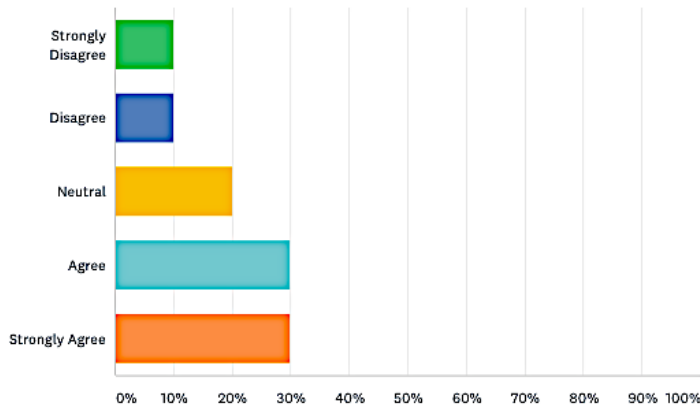
Figure 8. *Survey Question Number Seven*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

When investigating if the senior pastor should be responsible for training the successor, question eight's survey data revealed twenty percent strongly disagreed and twenty percent disagreed. Thirty percent agreed, ten percent strongly agreed, while twenty percent remained neutral (see Figure 9).

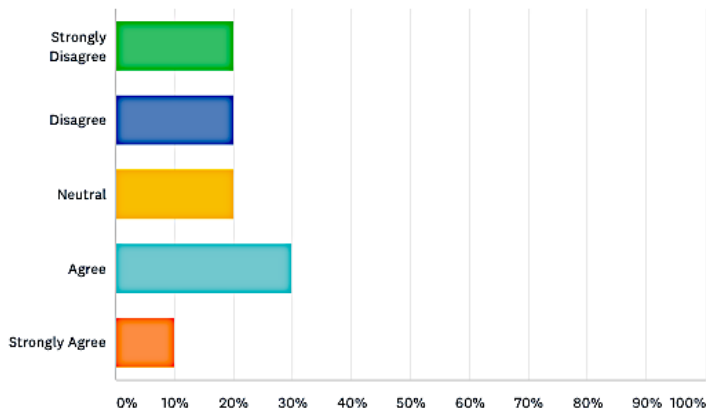Question 8: The senior pastor is responsible for training the successor.

Figure 9. *Survey Question Number Eight*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

This survey response raises an important question for the researcher regarding leadership succession. If the senior pastor does not take responsibility for training the successor, then who

will? Senior pastors who take responsibility for training their successor will need to develop some level of leadership training and development to ensure the adequate preparation of that successor before executing the transition. Senior pastors who remain neutral on this matter leave their succession needs to chance and will likely benefit only from external candidates who have previous senior leadership experience. A central leadership training and development program offered by the KEMBA would potentially resolve any clergy training challenges within its member churches.

Question nine inquires of the senior leader what their perceived role is regarding an ongoing relationship with the successor. When asked if the senior pastor is responsible for providing mentorship to the successor after training, the survey yielded surprising results. Question 9: The senior pastor is responsible for providing mentorship to the successor after training.
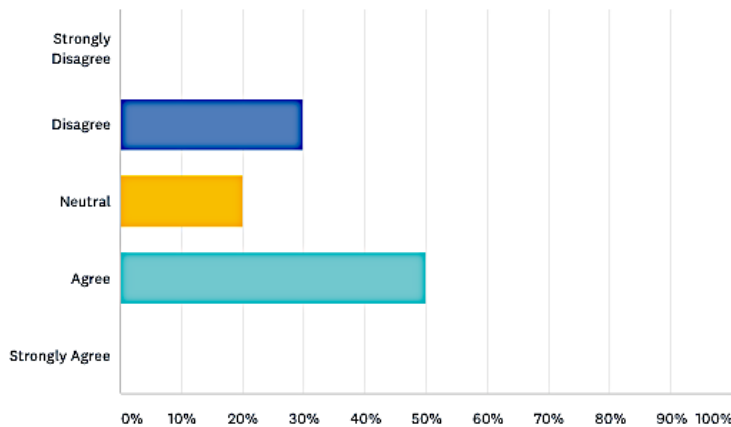
Figure 10. *Survey Question Number Nine*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

Although a majority of participants throughout the survey seem to disagree or remain neutral regarding their direct involvement in the succession process, question nine reports fifty percent of senior pastors believe they are responsible for providing mentorship to the successor after training. Thirty percent disagreed, while twenty percent remained neutral regarding the

senior pastor's ongoing mentorship of the successor (see Figure 10). The data suggest senior

pastors are evenly split on the idea of training successors. Forty percent agree with training their

successor, while forty percent prefer a "hands-off" approach to leadership succession and

training but would still like to provide mentorship to the successor after the transition.

Question ten researched survey participant views regarding their role and presence within

the church after passing the leadership baton to the successor. Ten percent disagreed, fifty

percent agreed, and forty percent strongly agreed that the senior pastor should distance

themselves from the congregation once the successor assumes authority over the church (see

Figure 11).

Question 10: The senior pastor distances themselves from the congregation once the successor

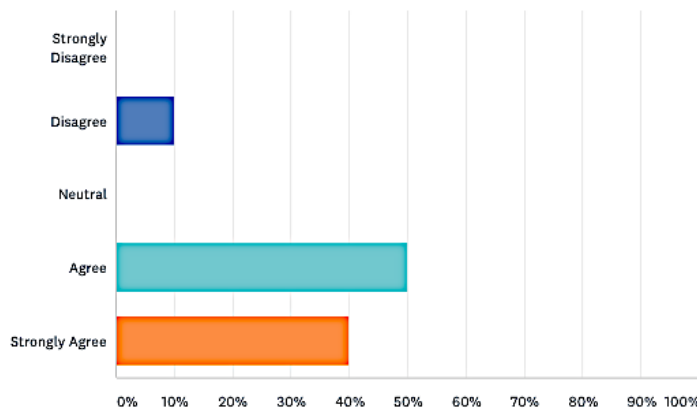assumes authority over the church.

Figure 11. *Survey Question Number Ten*. Source. Surveymonkey.com.

While some senior leaders choose to remain at their church after their transition, holding

emeritus status, this survey revealed that ninety percent of survey participants viewed their

complete departure from the office and church as most beneficial to the succession and transition

process.

Senior Pastor Interviews

The researcher interviewed ten senior pastors of KEMBA member churches. The interviews yielded fascinating insights regarding current views of succession planning within the KEMBA member churches. During the interviews, several themes emerged that either confirmed or contradicted the online survey data analysis. The overall goal of the participant interviews was to explore in detail theological beliefs and methodologies, barriers, successes, new revelations, or conflicts regarding succession planning. Information deduced from interview data analysis confirmed the absence and potential benefit of a biblical succession planning framework.

The issue of age is central to planned leadership succession. When the ages of senior leaders are ignored, the church exposes itself to potential emergency vacancies within senior leadership positions due to the unexpected health decline of senior leaders. Demographic information revealed that all ten interview participants were fifty-five and older (see Figure 12).
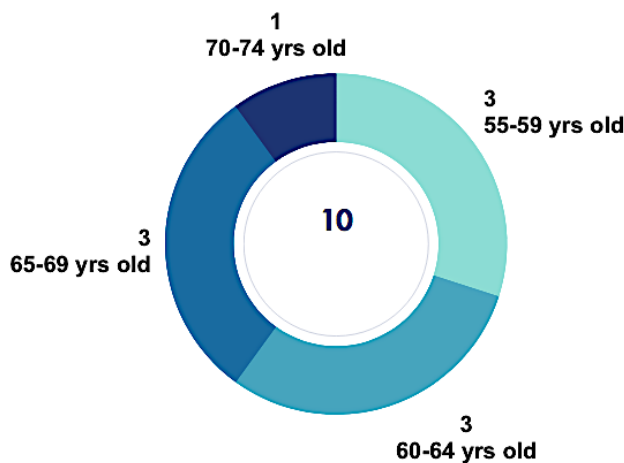
Figure 12. *Age of the Senior Pastor*. Source. Participant Interview.

At the time of the participant interviews, three senior pastors were between fifty-five and fifty-nine. Three senior pastors were between the ages of sixty and sixty-four. Three senior pastors were between sixty-five and sixty-nine. Only one senior pastor was between the age of seventy and seventy-four. The ages of the interview participants support the views of online

survey participants regarding retirement age. Ninety percent of survey participants disagreed that senior pastors should retire at sixty-five (see Survey Question Number 1).

Fascinated by the senior ages of interview participants and their rejection of the suggested secular retirement age, the researcher inquired why the senior leaders were unwilling to retire although they were advancing in age and, in most cases, have already served long tenures. Interview analysis revealed the primary contributing factor to the senior leaders' unwillingness to retire was an absence of a clergy benefits package. Although fifty percent of survey participants agreed that retired senior pastors are financially supported by their churches (see Survey Question Number 2), interview analysis revealed that none of the KEMBA senior pastors have a clergy retirement benefits package and do not expect to receive ongoing financial support from their churches upon retirement.

During the interviews, KEMBA senior pastors pointed to the historic pattern of the MBC regarding clergy retirement benefits. Because KEMBA churches typically had smaller rural congregations, church finances could not sustain adequate senior leader compensation or ongoing clergy benefits packages. Since many of the KEMBA MBCs only hold worship services twice monthly, only employing the senior pastor part-time, senior leaders must remain bi-vocational to supplement their income and maintain adequate health insurance coverage and benefits for themselves or their family members. Therefore, many senior pastors do not retire at the North Carolina State age of eligibility because their churches do not provide retirement benefit packages or ongoing financial support upon retirement.

Considering that seven of the ten senior leaders interviewed were at or above the eligible North Carolina retirement age of sixty-five for minimum retirement benefits, and age sixty-seven for full retirement benefits, succession planning should have been considered a ministry priority.

However, when asked if the senior pastors or their churches had succession plans, only one of them possessed a formal plan (see Figure 13). Although ninety percent of the senior pastors were near or had reached North Carolina's eligible retirement age and agreed that leadership succession was important to the church's longevity, ninety percent of senior pastors interviewed had not devised a formal succession plan. At the time of the interviews, however, one senior leader had developed two-thirds of a succession plan, while another pastor cited an article in the church constitution and bylaws as the guiding reference for formulating a search committee to fill pastoral vacancies in the church.
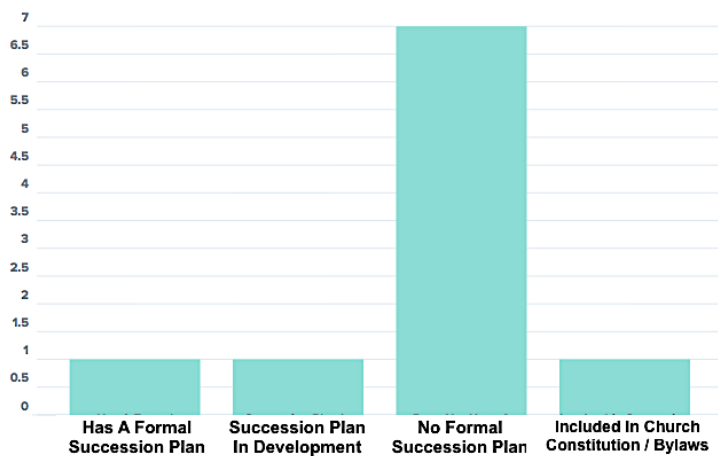
Figure 13. *Current State of Succession Planning.* Source. Participant Interview.

Discovering that ninety percent of the senior leaders interviewed did not have a completed succession plan but had mixed views regarding whether KEMBA provides a succession plan to its member churches (see Survey Question Number 3), the researcher sought to clarify these conflicting data by directly querying the senior leader and moderator of the KEMBA. When the researcher asked if KEMBA provided a formal succession plan to its member churches, the moderator confirmed that KEMBA does not provide a succession plan.

Further demographic information provided during participant interviews disclosed participant ages and present state of succession planning and the length of their senior leadership

tenures. Four pastors have been the senior leaders of their churches between zero and five years. One pastor has occupied the senior position for between five and ten years. One senior leader has led the church for between ten and fifteen years. Three senior pastors have had the privilege of leading their ministries between twenty and twenty-five years, while only one leader has reached the longest tenure milestone of remaining the senior pastor of a church for nearly thirty years (see Figure 14).
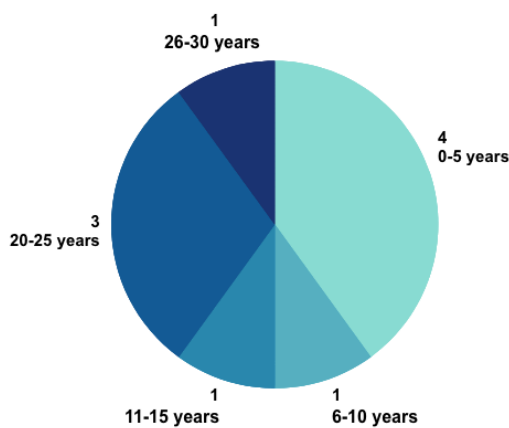
Figure 14. *Leadership Tenure*. Source. Participant Interview.

The researcher was fascinated to find that although all ten KEMBA senior pastors were fifty-five and older, and fifty percent of those senior pastors served leadership tenures between ten and thirty years, only one had developed formal succession plans to ensure leadership continuity within their churches. Online survey results revealed that five of ten KEMBA senior pastors prefer following a prescribed succession plan but have not created a plan, nor are they provided one by their association. Conversely, four senior pastors disagreed with following a prescribed succession plan, which led the researcher to conclude that if KEMBA had developed and provided a succession plan to its member churches, almost half of them would exercise their autonomy by not utilizing it (see Survey Question Number 4). This data analysis supports the researcher's theory that KEMBA and its member churches that desire to follow a prescribed plan

would benefit from a biblical succession planning framework. In an attempt to rationalize why KEMBA churches did not devise a biblical succession plan despite the ages and tenures of their senior leaders, the researcher investigated the hiring processes of those senior leaders to help shed light on the matter.
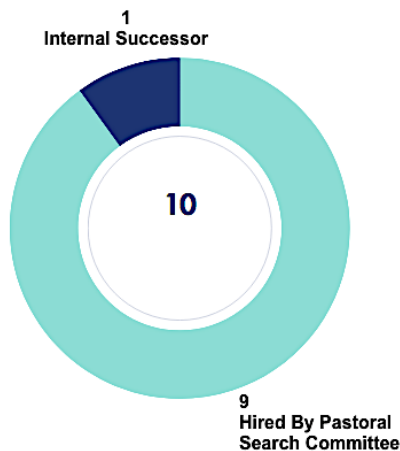
Figure 15. *Hiring Process*. Source. Participant Interview.

Interview analysis revealed that one senior leader was appointed to the senior leadership position through the process of internal succession, while the remaining nine interview participants were hired as the senior pastor by a pastoral search committee (see Figure 15). The large number of search-committee-appointed senior pastors may explain why forty percent of KEMBA senior pastors refuse to follow a prescribed succession plan, and ninety percent of them have not created a succession plan at all. When asked to evaluate their experiences with the search committee process, nine senior leaders expressed favorable views preferring the search committee process over succession. However, favorable views of the search committee process were also accompanied by perceived issues within the process.

The greatest and most common issue with search committees cited by senior leaders is that the search process is too long. Instead of executing the search process in a timely manner, search committee members vacillate in selecting a candidate, and as a result, the church exists

without a senior leader for months or years. One senior pastor revealed that the church membership had declined to less than ten members due to a prolonged search committee process.

Many congregants joined other churches with stable senior leadership. Other congregants replaced their church attendance with televised worship services, able to view them from the comfort of their homes. The remaining congregants who left church lost faith in the church and vowed never to attend church again. The senior leader directly connected the ministry decline to the extended search committee process and length of vacancy in the senior leader position.

Another perceived issue of the search committee process is the transferal of leadership and authority from the senior leader to senior search committee members. When there is no succession plan in place, and the senior pastor is absent or excluded from the pastoral search process, individuals who may be spiritually immature or theologically inept assume control of the direction and future of the church. Unspiritual, uneducated, or unrepentant search committee members have a greater propensity to select candidates based solely on preaching style and charisma instead of biblical moral character, biblical preaching, and a divine vision for the future of God's Church.

Search committees also make the mistake of considering too much of an applicant's moral history during the application process. Senior pastors believed that a relationship with Jesus Christ and the call of God into ministry are transformational processes of identity and moral character. Therefore, much of a candidate's past prior to salvation should not be a sole factor for disqualification, as it so often is.

Additionally, senior pastors perceive that external hiring through a search committee invites a relative stranger to lead an unfamiliar congregation, assimilate to an unfamiliar culture, and introduce an unfamiliar vision for the church. When the applicant is an external candidate,

the process of developing trust between the senior pastor and congregants is lengthened. Senior pastors also believed KEMBA should play a central role in the succession process of its member churches. Instead of being viewed as merely a clergy ordaining authority recognized by the General Baptist Convention, senior pastors perceived that KEMBA should facilitate the succession process that implements and enforces a consistent standard for theological education, leadership training, and experience, salary, and clergy benefits. Without KEMBA's participation and influence in these various areas, its usefulness to its member churches, beyond clergy ordination, is questionable.

The affinity toward the pastoral search committee process is further expressed by the senior pastors' perception of a governing board's role within the local church. One pastor believes the governing board exists to assist the pastor in determining the church's succession needs. If the pulpit becomes vacant due to the emergency absence of the senior leader, the governing board should oversee the facilitation of the formal succession plan. The remaining nine senior pastors had differing views regarding the role of the governing boards within their churches. Ninety percent of the senior leaders insist the governing board is responsible for forming a search committee immediately upon the senior leader's notice of retirement, resignation, or emergency health issues.

Although online survey responses conflicted regarding the senior leader's role in selecting the successor (see Survey Question Number 5), interview analysis confirmed only ten percent of senior pastors prefer a dominant role in successor selection, while ninety percent prefer being excluded from the process entirely, giving the search committee full authority over the process (see Figure 16).
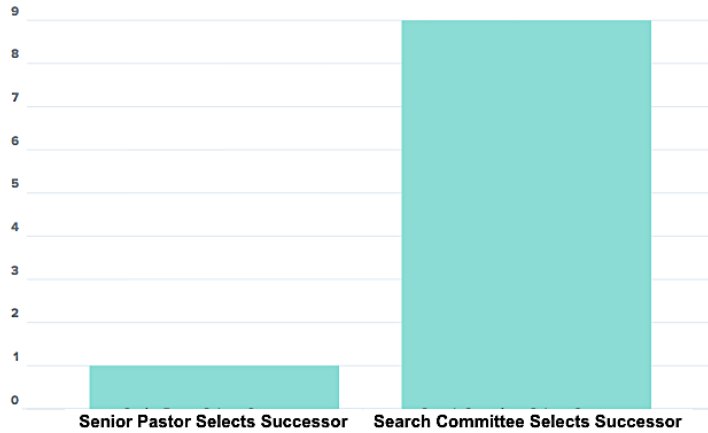
Figure 16. *Successor Selection.* Source. Participant Interview.

When exploring the theme of leadership selection and training, the researcher found that senior leaders favored selecting both internal and external candidates. The online survey reported that the majority disagreed with internal successors (see Survey Question Number 6), and senior leader interviews revealed similar findings. According to the interview data, regarding the one situation where a succession plan does exist, internal succession candidates are preferred. Contrarily, external candidates are more widely desired when pastoral search committees assume responsibility for filling pastoral vacancies. However, senior pastors provided the benefits and detriments of both options.

Internal successors possess a preexisting relationship with the predecessor, congregational trust, closely observed leadership training, development, and growth. Internal successors have intimate relationships with church families, a knowledge and sense of ownership of the ministry vision and mission. Internal successors benefit from being groomed for leadership and growth in leadership ability in the presence of the very congregation they will someday lead. Because the congregation is so familiar with internal candidates, church leaders and members will be more aware of the candidate's past history of mistakes or moral failures, which can be detrimental to consideration as the senior leader. Additionally, because some church leaders and

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members may have known the internal candidate since their youth, they may hold on to their adolescent view of the candidate and reject the idea and authority as the senior leader.

Unlike internal candidates, external candidates lack a preexisting relationship with the predecessor and congregation. Churches and congregations are not always privy to past incidences, indiscretions, or details regarding previous pastoral appointments. Therefore, an external successor can maneuver the candidate application process without any red flags alerting the search committee to any potential issues. External candidates may also find it difficult to assimilate to the existing church culture and ministry administration and operations methods. Finally, external candidates hired by a search committee will be viewed as employees of the governing board instead of having the full leadership authority to execute divine guidance toward a church vision. If the external candidate's leadership performance is insufficient, the governing board can simply terminate and replace that leader.

However, a church may benefit from an external successor if the church needed to create a new vision, mission, and culture. In the case of moral failure by the predecessor, corruption among the leadership ranks, or sharp decline in finances, attendance, or morale, an external successor may provide renewed hope and enthusiasm within the church. External successors may also bring an amalgam of skills and experience that may breathe new life into the church's ability to engage the community and attract new parishioners. Finally, external successors who are theologically educated and preach sound doctrine may facilitate ongoing spiritual growth in the lives of church members. When interviewed, seven of ten senior pastors favored internal successors over external successors (see Figure 17).
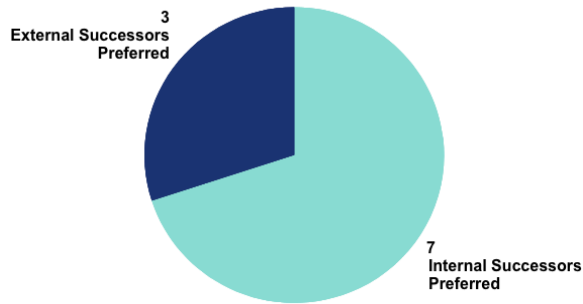
Figure 17. *Internal Versus External Successors.* Source. Participant Interview.

In addition to the topic of successor selection, interviewees were probed on the issue of leadership pipelines and whether having multiple candidates increased the probability of successfully choosing the best successor. Five senior pastors reported having multiple associate clergy trained to assume the senior leadership position, whether within their current church or another church. Two senior pastors rejected the idea of multiple candidates, perceiving that it is more beneficial to focus on only one potential successor at a time.
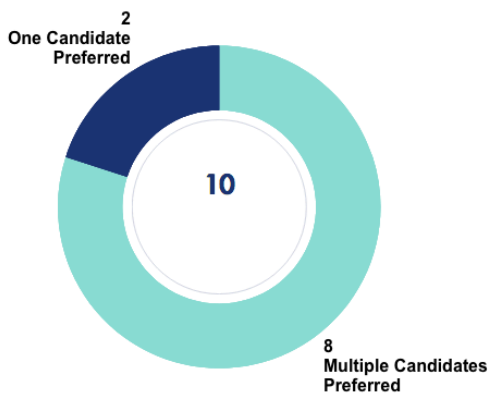
Figure 18. *Leadership Pipeline.* Source. Participant Interview.

The remaining senior pastors preferred the idea of having a leadership pipeline but did not have assistant clergy who felt the desire to assume a senior leadership position (see Figure 18). Multiple senior pastors reported having assistant clergy committed to a supporting leadership role within their current church setting but wholeheartedly reject the possibility of

leaving their church to assume a leadership role elsewhere. Interview analysis regarding multiple succession candidates was consistent with online survey responses (see Survey Question Number 7).

The preference for multiple candidates is further reflected by the search committee process. Although the candidates are external, the search committee invites multiple applicants with wide varieties of education and experience to increase the probability of selecting the most proficiently trained candidate for the senior leader position. When exploring the theme of candidate proficiency, senior pastors were asked if they trained their potential successors themselves. Seven senior pastors confirmed they provided ongoing leadership training and development to assistant clergy identified as potential successors, while the remaining three have no assistant clergy to train (see Figure 19).
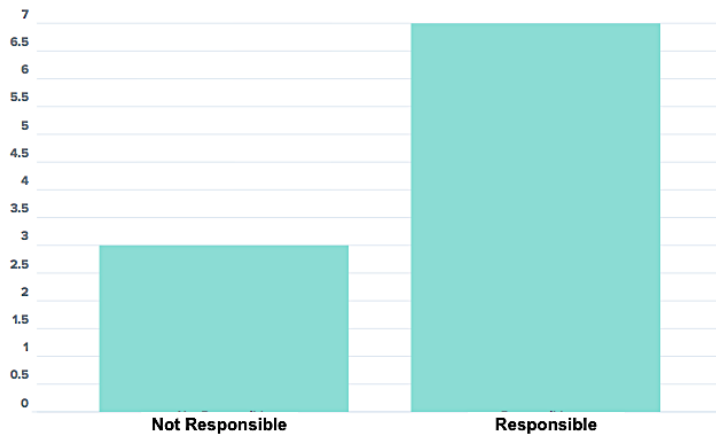
Figure 19. *Actively Training Potential Successors.* Source. Participant Interview.

Senior pastors shared a range of leadership training and development activities and schedules. Some senior leaders provided potential successors with monthly practical ministry training of various ministry operations and functions. Some senior leaders encourage potential successors to take individual seminary courses. Some senior pastors mandate assistant clergy to attend all training programs offered by the KEMBA. Many interviewees believe "hands-on"

training helps clergy to "learn-by-doing" and is the best method of leadership training and development: designating assistant clergy to officiate and preach worship services in the absence of the senior leader. All seven senior leaders identify the purpose of their leadership training and development initiatives to create fully equipped leaders able to conduct every aspect of ministry operations and worship services.

However, the online survey revealed only forty percent of senior leaders believe they are responsible for training their successors. Forty percent believe they are not responsible for training their successors, while twenty percent remained neutral on the matter (see Survey Question Number 8). When senior pastors were asked if they used biblical examples of leadership training and development to train their clergy, they cited the relationships of Paul and Timothy, Jesus and the twelve disciples, Moses and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha, but they did not provide specific details regarding the training methods or strategies of the biblical characters. This online survey analysis raises concerns regarding the training and development of potential successors. If the senior leader does not take responsibility for training their successor, who will?

If the expectation is to appoint the most proficient successor, but the senior pastor refuses to train their internal assistant clergy, external candidates with previous senior leadership experience will always be preferred over untrained internal candidates. When the senior leader also refuses to participate in the succession process, in its attempt to find the most qualified candidates, the search committee must search among external trained and experienced candidates. The conflict between the survey and interview analysis is that although senior pastors are training their assistant clergy specifically to assume the senior leadership position, external clergy appear to be the preferred option despite the qualifications and preparedness of the

internal clergy. The consideration of internal clergy as potential successors requires a senior

pastor's leadership and some level of involvement in the selection process for succession.

In addition to successor training, senior pastor interviews discussed the post-transition

relationship between predecessor and successor. The topic of ongoing mentorship of the

successor by the senior pastor emerged as a great concern for the senior pastors. Only two senior

pastors expressed a desire and need for ongoing mentorship between predecessor and successor

(see Figure 20).
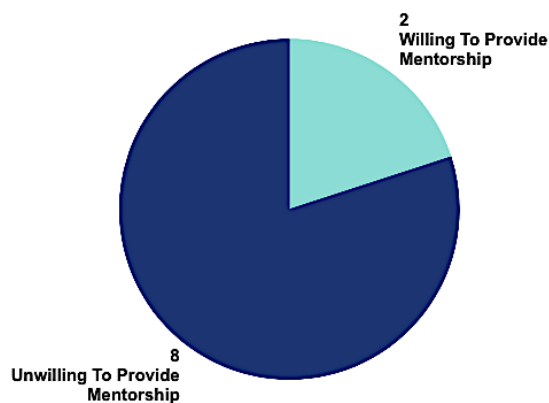
Figure 20. *Ongoing Mentorship.* Source. Participant Interview.

According to the pastors, ongoing mentorship is vital to the smooth transition of

leadership. Predecessors provide valuable mentorship because they have personally experienced

many situations and issues unique to their ministry with which the successor is unfamiliar. If

willing to provide ongoing mentorship, the predecessor can assist the successor in navigating the

intricate and arduous task of providing pastoral care to a very diverse congregation of

personalities, cultures, and family challenges. Far greater value can be found in a predecessor

capable of helping the successor navigate and resolve personal family and marital challenges as

they seek to provide leadership and guidance to others.

The remaining eight senior pastors rejected the idea of providing ongoing mentorship

after transition. One reason given for not providing ongoing mentorship was the possibility of

hindering the successor from developing their unique leadership style. If the predecessor is not

mindful, they may unintentionally create a "cloned" leader who will become dependent upon the

direction of the predecessor instead of learning to submit to the divine will and direction of God.

Another trepidation of providing mentorship is the possibility of hindering God's plan to

execute a new vision, mission, and direction of a church through a new leader. Senior pastors

believe their ministry vision may have been sufficient for the church during their tenure but may

be insufficient for a new leader, during a new time, in an evolving church, serving a new

generation. Senior pastors report a final reluctance to provide ongoing mentorship is simply a

desire to move on to the next phase of enjoying their senior years. Because pastors have devoted

so many years of their lives to ministry, experiencing so many deeply emotional issues and

trauma, they have a great desire to leave ministry behind completely and permanently upon

retirement.
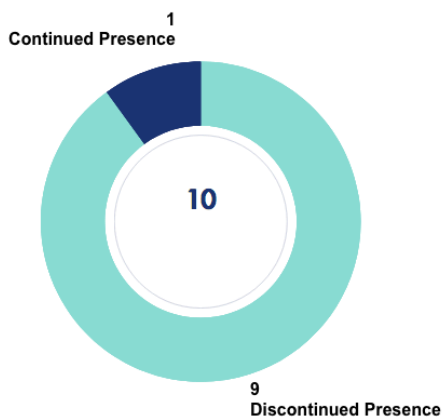
Figure 21. *Predecessor Presence after Transition.* Source. Participant Interview.

A final theme of the participant interviews researched the pastor's eventual transition and

whether they should maintain a continued presence at their church once the successor assumes

the senior leadership position. Nine of ten senior pastors believe it is best for the predecessor to

distance themselves completely upon leadership transition, while only one senior pastor finds it

beneficial to remain connected to the church (see Figure 21), which is identical to survey analysis. Senior pastors report that the predecessor's presence undermines the leadership and authority of the successor in the eyes of the congregation. As long as the predecessor is present, congregants and leadership staff consult the predecessor regarding ministry issues. This continued presence hinders the successor from becoming the new and respected senior authority of the church. This post-transition philosophy is inspired by the senior pastors' concerns regarding their successors.

One hundred percent of the senior pastors report their greatest concern regarding succession is their hope to be succeeded by a successor who genuinely loves the church and its congregation. All ten pastors recognize the plausibility of the church electing and installing an external successor who possesses hidden corrupt and harmful motives. Many candidates seek to apply to senior pastor vacancies for financial gain. Others seek senior pastor opportunities merely as a resumé-builder and stepping-stone to leading larger ministries. Therefore, the predecessors hope to be succeeded by a genuine leader who wants to advance God's vision for the church and love God's people as God loves them.

During the interviews, new revelations were discovered regarding succession planning. Regarding retirement, one senior pastor raised a fascinating point that no secular system should determine a senior pastor's retirement age; since God is the one who issues the call of a senior pastor, God should decide when the senior pastor retires. A senior pastor should continue to assume the leadership position as long as mental acuity and God permit. A second revelation included the issue of gender and succession within the MBC. Senior pastors reported the MBC traditionally did not consider women for the senior leadership position.

As a result, female clergy were not afforded the same leadership training and development opportunities extended to male clergy. As the MBC became more progressive in its views toward female clergy, more women were ordained as ministers, and some were appointed to senior pastor positions through emergency pastoral vacancies only. However, appointments of female clergy to the office of senior pastor through succession planning have not yet occurred. Female senior leaders elevated to the senior leader position by a search committee due to emergency vacancies reported a great decline in membership, attendance, and financial contributions upon assuming office. Female senior leaders attributed drastic ministry decline to an unwillingness of male leadership and congregants to accept and submit to a female leader.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Succession planning increases the probability of successful transitions and leadership continuity in the church. At its core, successful succession has potential candidate identification, leadership training and development, and ongoing mentorship. The lack of succession planning in the MBC can result in undue and irreversible congregational stress, ministry decline, or permanent closure. Because change is inevitable, a lack of planning for eventual leadership transitions makes the church vulnerable to rapid physical, emotional, and spiritual deterioration. The purpose of this study was to research the current state of succession planning and its benefits within the KEMBA MBC.

Multiple conclusions resulted from the closure of this research project. The researcher's first conclusion was neither the KEMBA nor its member MBCs possessed a formal succession planning document to guide them through the senior leadership transition process. This conclusion confirmed previous assumptions regarding the lack of succession planning in the church and a need for the church to adopt a new paradigm about leadership transitions. Additionally, the literature review warned of the impending consequences of the church's refusal to abandon traditional leadership transition methods. This study validated that warning by confirming one case of sharp membership and financial decline of a KEMBA church due to its lack of succession planning and void in leadership, engaging instead in a flawed and poorly executed pastoral search process.

Because the literature review contained more information regarding corporate succession planning than it did regarding succession planning in the church, it did not uncover the primary contributing factor for the lack of succession planning in the church. The researcher's second

conclusion was that the absence of clergy retirement benefits directly contributed to a lack of succession planning in the KEMBA MBCs. The uncertainty of post-retirement financial and health security produced a reluctance by senior pastors to plan for their eventual transitions. Inadequate healthcare and insufficient income necessitate that senior pastors be and remain bi-vocational to stabilize health benefit needs and supplement incomes. Therefore, instead of succession planning being perceived as something that will create stability in the future of the church, it can also be perceived as something that will create instability in the future lives of senior pastors. The fear of future instability is a contributing cause of pastors entering the succession process only to abandon the process, deciding to stay in office indefinitely although a successor has been selected. To ensure the predecessor and successor remain fully committed to completing the succession transition process, the researcher has created a leadership Succession covenant (see Appendix D).

Succession planning, while effective in a secular context, is not completely adequate for a ministry context. Corporate succession planning is typically accompanied by employee income, investments, and retirement benefits and bonuses that provide present and post-transition security for the predecessor and successor. However, succession planning in the smaller MBC church does not. Therefore, for succession planning to be viewed as a more favorable option by senior pastors, the KEMBA and its member churches will need to partner to provide clergy with health and income benefits during their tenures and post-transition. Otherwise, senior leaders may continue to resist succession planning and retirement, assuming their positions until unexpected health emergencies result in unplanned pastoral vacancies.

The researcher's third conclusion was that although assistant clergy in the KEMBA churches received leadership training and development to prepare them to fulfill the duties of a

senior pastor, they were not part of a formal succession plan that clearly identified them as prioritized candidates for the senior pastor position. The literature review cites leadership pipelines as a vital component in sourcing multiple fully equipped internal candidates to succeed the outgoing CEO or senior pastor. The trust between internal candidates and congregants, familiarity of church culture, vision, and mission, along with the validation of being personally trained and developed by the senior leader, make internal candidates preferred options as successors. When multiple proficient internal candidates exist, the probability for smooth leadership transition and continuity is much greater. However, in the absence of a formal succession plan, internal candidates are not viewed as viable senior candidates but only as ministry assistants. Therefore, internal candidates are often overlooked, while attention is focused on the search for external candidates.

The fourth conclusion of the researcher was that there were benefits and detriments to internal and external succession candidates. As the literature review emphasizes, external candidates are beneficial when an organization desires to overhaul the vision, mission, and culture of an organization. A complete internal overhaul may be needed when an organization experiences the traumatic results of poor leadership. When organizational decline occurs due to the failures of the CEO and senior leadership team, it is highly probable that elevating an internal successor from within the same organizational culture will yield the same outcomes. Therefore, external candidates bring a fresh, unbiased, and uncontaminated leadership approach to an organizational turnaround.

Unfortunately, external candidates can be a detriment because they may add to the existing problems or create new challenges for an organization in search of new leadership. Hiring an external candidate may be disruptive to company success because external candidates

are unfamiliar with organizational operation, administration, vision, and mission. External

leaders who struggle to assimilate to the organizations they lead can cause stress on employees

and leadership staff that causes a ripple effect that negatively impacts morale, profits, and

shareholders. Scholars report the failure rate of external successors to be double that of internal

successors.

A fifth conclusion of the researcher was that although the literature review could support

internal succession as the most successful strategy, external successors become the default

succession option when senior leaders exclude themselves from the succession process. Internal

succession requires the predecessor or church leaders to identify with and select potential

candidates for succession. When senior leaders are absent from the succession process, a Baptist

church's written constitution and bylaws may authorize the formation of a search committee to

facilitate the senior leader search process.

Corporate organizations often have highly educated and experienced board members who

are extremely knowledgeable regarding every aspect of their organization's operations. The same

may not always be true for the KEMBA churches. When the senior pastor is absent from the

succession process, a pastoral search committee may be formed by church members who are

rarely theologically educated, ministry-trained, or highly knowledgeable regarding the senior

pastor functions or ministry operations. However, the church should not be viewed in the same

light or operated the same as a secular business. Members of the church do not solely rely upon

high degrees of education or savvy business strategies and practices to lead the church. Because

God's Church is a living, breathing, and growing organism, church leaders rely upon the Spirit of

God to guide and fulfill the church's leadership needs.

Traditionally, pastoral search committees immediately consider external candidates, looking only to internal clergy as interim pastors. Because MBC search committees are often uneducated regarding succession planning, they believe that an amalgam of external applicants will produce the best pastoral candidates. Because many senior pastors have been hired through the pastoral search process, they prefer to exclude themselves from the process entirely, trusting the search committee members to make the best leadership decisions on the church's behalf. While many pastors are willing to advise pastoral search committees when asked, they do not desire to be a governing authority over the succession or pastoral search process. As a result, pastoral search committees may sometimes resort to inadequate criteria to select the next senior leader, basing their selection solely on preaching ability, level of education, or charisma.

The researcher's sixth conclusion is that secular leadership succession strategies should be used in corporate America, but senior leadership succession in the church should be biblically based. Some scholars in the literature review support the church's use of secular succession planning strategies used in the business world, while others warn against it. Warnings against the church's adoption of secular business practices are issued because those practices do not acknowledge the church's divine sanction or its biblical nature and operation. The Old Testament lists multiple senior leader succession examples: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and David and Solomon.

While God does not mandate senior leadership succession, He clearly establishes a pattern of leadership succession principles throughout the Old Testament. The New Testament also displays God's pattern of leadership succession. Jesus Christ appointed twelve disciples to succeed him as senior leaders over all newly formed churches. The Apostle Paul appointed senior leaders to lead newly formed churches. The eleven apostles consulted a search committee

to replace the Apostle Judas in Acts 1:12-26, and the Apostle Peter commissioned a search committee to find and appoint assistant leaders within the church in Acts 6:1-7.

Therefore, the Old and New Testament accounts of God's leadership succession strategies led the researcher to a seventh conclusion: when it comes to biblical succession planning in God's Church, He divinely inspires both senior leaders and search committees to plan and execute leadership succession strategies to ensure leadership continuity in His church. Therefore, it is imperative that senior pastors and church leaders create succession plans and help guide the process as much as is practical. When senior pastors fail to create succession plans or succumb to emergency illness, the search committee becomes the church's only hope for filling senior pastor vacancies.

The researcher also concluded that there is another situation that makes the role of the pastoral search committee very important. When the senior pastor refuses to train internal clergy for the senior pastor position, the absence of fully prepared leaders requires the pastoral search committee to recruit external candidates who are fully prepared to lead a church and execute the duties of a senior pastor. Internal candidates are prepared to lead when they receive practical ministry skills from their predecessor. Viable internal succession candidates are intentionally trained to facilitate every aspect of worship services and congregational spiritual care. Internally trained successors also increase in leadership proficiency when they receive ongoing mentorship from their predecessors.

The literature review attributes increased organizational success to internal leadership development programs. Internal leadership development programs produced higher-quality leadership performance and increased leader retention. Increased leadership performance resulting from internal leadership development applies to secular organizations and holds true for

God's Church. For more than two thousand years, God's Church has been an exemplary leadership succession, training, and development model. To find an epitome of organizational advancement and leadership development and retention, one must look no further than God's Church for a sustainable model of leadership continuity and success.

The aforementioned Old Testament and New Testament senior leader succession examples include leadership training and development of potential successors or candidates for other pastorates by a senior pastor. However, the most insightful example of biblical senior leader training and development is displayed by the master teacher, Jesus Christ. Jesus developed the most successful leadership development program to date. He trained and developed the most proficient leadership team in the kingdom of God. The Messiah's succession plan, including his leadership development strategy, proves the leadership baton can be passed on successfully through trained successors.

If God was the superintendent of succession throughout the Old Testament, and Jesus Christ was God in the flesh throughout the Gospels, the researcher concluded that God, Himself, has provided His church with a biblical leadership succession framework modeled by Jesus Christ. God not only supervised and executed succession planning from His heavenly throne, He also came down to the earth in the form of a human being to provide practical models of leadership succession, training, and development to advance His kingdom and Church. Examining Jesus' succession planning model, he began the first step of the process by identifying and selecting potential senior leadership candidates (Matt 4:18-20).

Jesus' invitation, "Come follow me," was an invitation to share an intimate relationship as they learned His teachings and observed his practical ministry. The second step of Jesus' succession planning process was to define the intended purpose and outcomes of His

development plan. Jesus' purpose for teaching and modeling practical ministry work for His

disciples was to develop them into leaders that had the same knowledge He had, capable of

doing the same ministry work He did, at the same level of proficiency He performed it. His

intent for leader training and development was expressed in the second part of his invitation, "I'll

make you fishers of men."

Step three of Jesus' succession planning process reveals Him developing a leadership

pipeline. Upon selecting His first two succession candidates, Jesus invited two more succession

candidates to His leadership pool (Matt 4:21-22), ultimately building a pipeline of twelve senior

leader mentees. As the twelve disciples followed Jesus throughout the eighth and ninth chapters

of the book of Matthew, they received a theological education, pastoral care instruction, and

various examples of the practical performance of divine miracles. As the predecessor, Jesus

exposed His successors to ministry functions they would be required to perform as senior

leaders. Jesus did not merely tell His disciples what they needed to do or how to do it. He

personally showed them.

In step four of His leadership succession plan, Jesus commissioned His successors to do

the work of ministry (Matt 10:1-8). After modeling theology and ministry work, Jesus gave His

trainees the authority to put what they had learned into action. Effective leadership development

requires predecessors to create opportunities for trainees to develop proficiency in practical

ministry skills. Jesus afforded His successors with opportunities to do exactly what they

witnessed Him do.

The fifth step of Jesus' succession plan included the developmental assessment of trainee

proficiency. After the disciples performed ministry work, Jesus assessed their performance and

gave them corrective instructions for improvement (Mk 9:29). Jesus did not only provide

practical ministry opportunities, but He also monitored His trainees closely to observe their performance and provide corrective action that further developed their ability to execute the duties of a senior leader. Jesus' hybrid strategy of developmental instruction and assignment taught His trainees what to do, how to do it, why they did it, and how to analyze results.

The sixth step of Jesus' succession plan is the establishment of a timeline for senior leader transition. In Matthew 16:21, Jesus notified His successors of His intended leadership transition. After selecting, teaching, and developing His leadership trainees, Jesus informed His disciples of His planned transition and their eventual elevation. Jesus did not intend to assume His earthly leadership position indefinitely. Knowing that His transition into the indefinite role of leader over the Church was inevitable, Jesus prepared for the next stage of His eternal kingdom rule by establishing timelines for His successors to fill earthly senior leadership positions in God's kingdom.

Jesus' crucifixion provided today's church with an important example of what can happen if the senior leader suffers from unexpected illness or death. The literature review establishes succession planning as a cure to emergency or unplanned senior leader departures. When a formal succession plan is not complete, internal successors will not know how to facilitate the succession process. Upon Jesus' death, the disciples were paralyzed with fear, and all their ministry training and development halted indefinitely. The disciples responded to the trauma of losing their predecessor by pausing all ministry operations, hiding in fear for their lives. When a succession plan does not exist in the wake of emergency or unplanned senior leader departures, the church is exposed to trauma-related decline or inactivity.

However, Jesus' resurrection afforded Him another opportunity to complete His succession planning process. Step number seven documents Jesus issuing a vision and mission

statement for His successors. Jesus gave His successors a vision in Matthew 28:19: He commanded them to "Go and make disciples of all nations." The mission Jesus commanded His successors to carry out was to "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus added to the mission by instructing His successors to "Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

By issuing His successors a vision and mission, Jesus brilliantly provided them with the same leadership development strategy that He used to train them. The disciples were commanded to identify and select disciples, teach and train them, and assess their performance. Succession planning should clearly communicate to the successor the vision, mission, and desired outcomes for the church, church leaders, and the congregants.

Step number eight of Jesus' succession plan is to transfer authority (Matt 28:18). Jesus explained to His disciples that His authority was transferred unto them for the purpose of executing the vision and mission for God's kingdom on the earth. The literature review emphasizes that succession planning should include a clear transferal of senior leader authority once the replacement leader has been voted into office, so there is no confusion within the organization as to who is at the leadership helm. Once the transferal of authority is complete, the predecessor should step aside and allow the successor to lead without interruption, acting only as a mentor to the successor upon transition.

After transferring authority to His successors, Jesus revealed the ninth step of succession by providing ongoing mentorship to His new senior leaders (Matt 28:20b). Jesus ensured his successors that He would always be with them as they continued God's kingdom work. Like their predecessor, Jesus would be available at all times to give His successors ministry direction or advice. All of Jesus' knowledge, experience, and power would be at the disposal of His

successors, should they desire it. The literature review suggested that ongoing leader

development after transition will only occur when the successor receives mentorship. Scholars

believe mentorship offers successors experienced, objective, and candid ministry leadership

advice essential to their continued development.

The tenth and final step of Jesus' succession plan highlights Jesus' earthly departure from

His successors' ministry (Acts 1:9-11). Scholars warn that predecessor presence post-transition

undermines the authority of the successor. Therefore, the successor should be mindful of their

physical exposure to the ministry once the transition is complete. Although Jesus continued to

lead His Church in Spirit, His physical presence was limited. Jesus' continued spiritual

leadership and mentorship allowed His disciples to exercise their authority as senior church

leaders in the physical absence of their predecessor.

Although the Bible does not mandate a specific succession plan for the Church, God's

use of senior leader succession planning throughout the Bible provides various principles that the

Church can utilize. However, the adoption and implementation of any succession framework

exemplified in the Bible are fully dependent upon the autonomous will of each MBC. When

considering the continued existence and advancement of present-day autonomous churches, the

researcher concluded that although the Bible reveals principles of God's planned leadership

development and succession facilitated by predecessors, God has also blessed the processes of

alternative succession approaches, such as pastoral search committees, to fill senior leadership

positions.

During the implementation of this research project, the researcher learned several lessons.

The first lesson the researcher learned was that biblical succession planning is vital to the future

leadership continuity of the Church. Second, the researcher learned various secular succession

planning strategies and methods used by scholars and corporations. However, God's Church necessitates a biblical succession strategy. Third, the researcher discovered that scholarly perspectives and perceptions regarding implementing secular succession strategies in the church do not acknowledge God's divine leadership or presence. Fourth, the researcher identified a biblical example of Jesus Christ's succession strategy. Fifth, the researcher learned from participant interviews that many senior pastors do not consult the Bible for leadership succession, training, or development.

The researcher believes this project would yield similar results throughout many other southeastern rural churches. Church size, income, and ability to provide clergy benefits are major factors that impact succession planning. Churches that cannot adequately support the senior leader during their tenure will likely not develop succession plans. The researcher believes this project reflects the majority of MBCs within the KEMBA and the General Baptist denomination.

An area that emerged during this research project that requires further study is the role of female senior leaders and their experiences and results with succession planning. Since women are not traditionally appointed as senior leaders, an area of required research should explore female clergy within the KEMBA and their ability to create and facilitate succession plans and leadership development training. Additionally, required study is also needed regarding the remaining tenures and transition of the current KEMBA senior pastors who participated in this research project. Documenting the senior pastors' transitions out of the senior role, whether through formal succession planning, pastoral search committees, or emergency vacancies, would add rich insight to the continued study of leadership succession in the KEMBA churches.

The wealth of knowledge provided by the literature review, its scholarly sources, online survey, and interview analysis has added greatly to the theological and academic development of

the researcher. The data and analysis gleaned led the researcher to make a final conclusion. Secular succession planning for the senior leader position included identifying and selecting multiple potential candidates. Potential successors within the candidate pipeline entered into a process of leadership development by the incumbent senior leader. Candidates were trained, assessed, and cultivated to assume the office and duties of a senior leader. The predecessor established a transition timeline and communicated it to the successor.

The predecessor commanded the successor to guide the organization toward the previously established vision. A mission statement was issued, and the predecessor facilitated the transition of authority to the successor. Upon transition, the predecessor departed the organization while continuing to serve as a mentor to the successor. After examining Jesus' succession plan, the researcher concluded that every component of secular succession planning also existed in Jesus' two-thousand-year-old succession strategy.

God is the superintendent of leadership succession. He is also the Creator of the Christian Church. His principles of leadership succession in the Old Testament magnify His principles of selecting, appointing, and facilitating the transition processes of senior leaders. God's direct involvement, as Jesus Christ, in the New Testament continues to amplify his principles for succession planning during the establishment of His newly formed church. God's continued pattern of succession planning within His church is further displayed through the apostles that succeeded Christ.

Therefore, it is imperative that the Church establishes and executes formal biblical succession plans. The researcher exhorts senior pastors to assume an exemplary role of serving the Church by providing biblical guidance and assisting where practical in selecting their

successors. Biblical succession planning is key to leadership continuity in God's Church and kingdom.

Appendix A: Senior Pastor Interview Questions

The senior pastor will be asked the following questions during the in-person interview:

Current Ministry Position and Background

1. Would you please provide your full name and leadership title?

2. What is the name of your church?

3. How long have you served as the senior pastor of this church?

4. How did you become the senior pastor of this church?

5. In your opinion, what changes should be made in the hiring process?

Present State of Succession Planning

6. Does your church currently have a succession plan?

   - (If the answer to question #6 is yes, proceed to question #7)

   - (If the answer to question #6 is no, proceed to question #11)

7. Can you describe the main components that are included in that succession plan?

8. What is the role of the governing church board in the succession process?

9. How will you, as the senior pastor, collaborate with the church board during the succession process?

10. Are there any biblical examples of leadership succession that you follow?

Clergy Leadership Training and Development Programs

11. Do you have other clergy assisting you in ministry?

    - (If the answer to question #11 is yes, proceed to question #12)

    - (If the answer to question #11 is no, proceed to question #14)

12. How do you train and develop your ministry leaders?

13. What is your goal or outcome for training and developing your ministry clergy?

14. Are there biblical examples of leadership training and development that you employ?

A Vision of Eventual Leadership Transition

15. What comes to mind when you think about your eventual retirement and ministry

   transition?

16. What have you done to prepare for your eventual transition?

17. What concerns do you have regarding your retirement?

18. What concerns do you have regarding the next pastor who will succeed you?

19. Do you have any final thoughts, regarding pastoral succession, for the senior pastors,

   search committees, and researchers who will read your interview?

Appendix B: Senior Pastor Survey Questions

1. Senior pastors willingly retire at age 65.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Retired senior pastors are financially supported by their former church.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. KEMBA provides a succession plan to its member churches.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. In your opinion, should each KEMBA church follow a prescribed succession plan?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. The senior pastor is responsible for selecting the successor.

1	2	3	4	5

Strongly   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly

Disagree   Agree

6. In your opinion, should the senior pastor select his or her successor from within their church?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Having multiple candidates to choose from increases the probability of selecting the best successor.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. The senior pastor is responsible for training the successor.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. The senior pastor is responsible for providing mentorship to the successor after training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. The senior pastor distances himself or herself from the congregation once the successor assumes authority over the church.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix C: Biblical Leadership Succession Framework Guide

Step Number 1	Selection (Leadership Pipeline)	Luke 6:13 (NKJV) And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them, He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:
• Build a leadership pipeline by prayerfully identifying and selecting multiple disciples who are willing to learn (Matt 4:19; Mk 1:17; Lk 5:10; Jn 1:35-42).		
• Keep the group small enough to work effectively with them.		

Step Number 2	Association (Relationship Building)	Matthew 28:20 (NKJV) "…Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
• The senior pastor and/or church leaders should spend intimate time with disciples, getting to know them personally and allowing the disciples to get to know their leader(s).		
• Use this intimate time together to assess the disciples' spiritual standing, wisdom, and moral character (Acts 6:3).		
• Use this intimate time together to teach the disciples about Jesus Christ's ministry and discuss the deeper spiritual meanings of Christ's teachings (Matthew 28:20).		
• Use this time together to emphasize the requirements and costs of following Jesus Christ (Matt 8:19; Luke 9:57-58).		

Step Number 3	Consecration (Commission For Ministry)	Matthew 11:29 (NKJV) "Take my yoke upon you."
• The senior pastor and church leaders must confirm that pipeline candidates have received salvation by faith through Christ (Eph 2:8-9), have been born again, and received the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:3-9)		
• The disciples are charged with the burden of continuing Christ's ministry and commissioned as future church leaders (Mk 3:14-15; Lk 13:16; Matt 10:1-4).		
• The senior pastor and/or church leaders declare the disciples "sacred," setting them apart specifically for God's divine purpose.		
• According to autonomous MBC church protocols, this may be done informally or through formal ordination processes.		

Step Number 4	Impartation (Theological & Spiritual Development)	John 20:22 (NKJV) And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."
• The disciples must be taught about the function and work of the Holy Spirit and His impact on their ministry (Acts 1:8; Lk 4:18).		
• Disciples must learn to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide their ministry instead of their flesh (Jn 6:63).		
• Senior leaders should monitor and assess the spiritual growth of disciples (Gal 5:22-23).		

Step Number **5**	Demonstration (Leadership Training)	John 13:15 (NKJV) "For I have given you an example…"

- Provide candidates with examples of how to live a spiritual life (1 Cor 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21; Phil 2:3-8; Jn 13:12-15; Jn 13:34; 1 Jn 2:6).

- Provide candidates with examples of practical ministry work (Matt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4; Matt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37; Matt 18:15-17)

- In a church ministry context, provide disciples with practical examples of how to conduct worship services from start to finish. Using the church's printed or digital program that lists the weekly order of service events, demonstrate for the disciples how to execute each function of the worship service. For example, the leadership trainers should provide practical examples of how to execute various ministry functions such as call to worship, invocation, responsive reading, offering prayer, collection of tithes and offerings, sermonic message, altar calls, wedding and funeral ceremonies.

Step Number **6**	Delegation (Leadership Training)	Matthew 4:19 (NKJV) "I will send you out to fish for people"

- Once disciples are provided with practical ministry examples, provide them with opportunities to perform the work (John 4:2; Matt 10:5-8, Lk 10:1)

- Provide specific and detailed instructions regarding the work the disciples are to perform (Lk 9:3-5; Matt 10:5-42; Mk 6:8-11)

- Counsel disciples regarding the adversities of the ministry work they are assigned to perform (Matt 10:17-18; Matt 10:22-23; Acts 9:16)

Step Number 7	Supervision (Theological Leadership Development)	Mark 8:17 (NKJV) "…Do you still not see or understand?"
• Upon completing assigned ministry tasks, disciples should immediately report their activities, experiences, and outcomes to their supervisor (Mk 6:30; Lk 9:10)		
• Leaders should supervise disciples, monitoring and assessing theological growth, and provide theological corrections when necessary (Mk 8:17).		
	Supervision (Practical Leadership Development)	Matthew 17:19 (NKJV) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"
• Leaders should supervise disciples, monitoring and assessing practical ministry growth and provide practical skills corrections when necessary (Mk 9:14-29; Matt 17:14-21; Lk 9:37-42)		

Step Number 8	Reproduction	Matthew 28:19 (NKJV) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,.."
• Disciples should become leaders that build new pipelines filled with new disciples.		
• Disciples that successfully complete the leadership training and development program should be equipped to rise to senior or associate pastor levels within their current ministry or assume ministry leadership positions externally.		

Appendix D: Leadership Succession Covenant

(Church Name) hereby institutes the following predecessor/successor covenant agreement that facilitates your future senior leadership succession transition. This leadership covenant agreement describes the terms of your leadership succession transition.

Predecessor
1. Separation Date.
   a. The succession separation date establishes the date the predecessor intends to vacate the senior pastor position and transfer full executive ministerial power and authority to the selected successor. Once the new successor is identified by the senior pastor and/or search committee, a predecessor separation date will be established. Upon the establishment of a separation date, the predecessor also agrees to submit a letter of resignation reflecting the established separation date.

2. Title and Duties
   a. During the Transition Period, you will remain employed by the church in your current position and will be expected to continue executing executive duties. Executive duties will include, but are not limited to, providing transition assistance and other support within your areas of expertise.

   b. After the transition period, you will have no authority to represent the church to third parties or to bind the church to any contractual obligations, whether written, oral or implied, or represent that you have such authority, unless authorized to do so in writing by an officer of the church. During the Transition Period, you shall continue to abide by all of the Company's general policies and procedures and perform your job duties in good faith to the best of your abilities.

Successor
3. Transition and Inauguration Date.
   a. The succession transition date establishes the date the successor intends to assume the senior pastor position and receive full executive ministerial power and authority from the successor. Once the new successor is elected by the senior pastor, search committee, or congregation a date will be established for the successor to assume the senior pastor position.

Predecessor Separation Date: _____

Predecessor Signature: _____

Successor Inauguration Date: _____

Successor Signature: _____

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

2020-10-27

Roger Bush
Morris Baker

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-147 Leadership Succession in the Missionary Baptist Church

Dear Roger Bush, Morris Baker:

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

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

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form 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 should be made available without alteration.

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

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

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

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