

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

GENDERED PASTORAL CARE: A HERMENEUTIC
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED
EXPERIENCES OF PARISHIONERS

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Joshua D. Phelan

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

Pastoral care has a rich theological history which guides modern care applications. Pastoral care is generally understood as helping acts meant to guide believers toward spiritual formation (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1983). Gendered pastoral leadership could have an impact in how pastoral care is experienced by church parishioners. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of twelve parishioners who had received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor at three churches. Eagly's (1987) social role theory served as a theoretical framework for this study. This research utilized personal interviews to collect data from selected participants. Collected data were coded and analyzed using Heidegger's philosophical framework of interpretive hermeneutical phenomenology to attempt to understand the essential meaning surrounding the lived experiences of individuals surrounding the given phenomena (Crist & Tanner, 2003; Peoples, 2021). The provided initial data into the potential similarities and differences in how male and female lead pastors administer pastoral care and how these perceived differences may impact those under their care.

Keywords: Gendered leadership, pastoral care, adaptive leadership, masculine, feminine, relational leadership

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List of Abbreviations

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Interview Protocol Form (IPF)

Liberty University (LU)

Research Questions (RQ)

Social Role Theory (SRT)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

As far back as the scriptural account of the creation narrative in the Garden of Eden, biological and constructed differences between genders have been known to exist theoretically and empirically (Jewett, 1975; Padgett, 2008). As society progresses research studies are becoming more widely available related to gender differences in a wide range of areas such as leadership styles, personality, and dispositional tendencies (Chapman 1975; Gardiner & Tiggermann, 1999). In recent years, there has been an even greater increase in research dedicated to the differences in gender as it relates to leadership both in secular and religious organizations. Perhaps nowhere is the paradigm of gender and leadership effectiveness or acceptability more fiercely debated and studied than in the church. Academic research affirms that males and females lead differently, but the causes of those differences are the subject of scholarly debate (Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Kent, Blair, et al., 2010; Kiser, 2015; Merchant, 2012).

This research study sought to explore the differences in administration which may exist among male and female lead pastors as it relates to pastoral care from the perspectives of their parishioners. Information in this chapter included a background for the phenomena of parishioners who have experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively. A historical overview of gendered leadership was provided to serve as an initial background surrounding the theological concept of pastoral care, which offered the reader a lens for a better understanding of the selected topic of inquiry. Theoretically, this qualitative study employed an interpretive hermeneutic design which guided the research inquiry into the participants' lived experiences. Eagly's (1987) social role theory served as a framework for the theoretical lens through which the data was analyzed. A problem statement for this study is

provided, followed by a purpose statement and research questions that set the research design's parameters. In addition, assumptions and delimitations are outlined, as was an identification of a literature gap that explained how this study contributed to the broader knowledge base in the given academic discipline.

Background to the Problem

Pastoral leadership and care in the Post-Modern Era have taken on a different profile than at any other time in recorded church history. The landscape of what pastoral leadership and care look like is becoming more and more fluid in a diverse population, and therefore pastoral leaders must have a clear understanding of the changes they face and become adaptive to meet the changing needs of the parishioners they serve. "In recent years, the theory and practice of leadership have undergone significant shifts. As industrial era models of effectiveness, characterized by mechanistic thinking and authoritarian systems of control, have been augmented by newer models considered more appropriate to the knowledge-intensive realities of today's workplace (Kanter, 2001; Brown & Duguid, 2000; Senge, 1990), the concept of leadership has shifted in response" (Fletcher, 2004). Shifting paradigms continually usher in different views regarding the frameworks upholding leadership and care. For centuries, the image of leadership was characterized or dominated by patriarchal constructs of what constituted leaders, especially as it related to gender; the traditional consensus was that leaders are male (Northouse, 2019). However, this consensus is undergoing radical change as more and more women are advancing into upper leadership roles in organizations worldwide (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Bass & Riggio, 2006). With this changing landscape, male and female leaders must continually adapt to better serve those under their service.

As the landscape of pastoral leadership continues to undergo changes, the landscape of pastoral care also continues to shift. Pastoral leadership and pastoral care operate together (Senkbeil, 2019; Senkbeil & Woodford, 2019). Pastoral care is also referred to as *cure of souls* or *soul care* in biblical and religious scholarship (Petersen, 2007). Biblically, pastoral care is rooted in the shepherding motif of the Old and the New Testaments (Psalm 23; John 10; Lanik, 2006). The concept of pastoral care is also interwoven throughout the Pauline epistles (Evans, 2000; Holifield, 2007). Pastoral care was also discussed more in-depth in the pages below; however, it is essential to note the relationship between pastoral leadership and pastoral care here as the framework underpinning this study is constructed throughout this initial chapter.

Pastoral leaders who purposefully adopt an adaptive leadership methodology could be more effective in administering pastoral care to the parishioners they serve. This study explored the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under a male and a female lead pastor at different periods within the same church. Though this was an initial phenomenological study, the implications from the data collected could help pastoral leaders become more adaptive in adopting traditional masculine or traditional feminine characteristics of care regardless of gender.

Gendered Leadership

In recent years, a good deal of research has been dedicated to the differences in leadership styles between male and female leaders in secular and religious organizations or spheres of influence (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fogarty, 2010). Many scholars agree that men and women lead differently, but the theories explaining these differences offer a broad scope of conjecture. One of the leading scholars in the field of gendered leadership styles and role congruity is Alice Eagly. Eagly has published three books and several peer-reviewed articles related to gendered

leadership, not only styles of leadership and dispositional characteristics related to how men and women lead but also articles on leadership struggles related to male dominance in religious and secular climates. Eagly (2007) notes

Why might women and men display somewhat different leadership styles within the limits set by their leader roles? Women are faced with accommodating the sometimes conflicting demands of their roles as women and their roles as leaders. In general, people expect and prefer that women be communal, manifesting traits such as kindness, concern for others, warmth, and gentleness and that men be agentic, manifesting traits such as confidence, aggressiveness, and self-direction (e.g., Newport, 2001; Williams & Best, 1990). Because leaders are thought to have more agentic than communal qualities (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Schein, 2001), stereotypes about leaders generally resemble stereotypes of men more than stereotypes of women. As a result, men can seem usual or natural in most leadership roles, thereby placing women at a disadvantage. (p. 5)

As noted above, Eagly (2007) believes the differences between why men and women lead differently are stereotypes related to gender-constructed ideology around masculinity and femininity. The roots upon which Eagly has built much of her modern scholarship are rooted in her 1987 social role theory, in which she constructs the initial theory related to gendered divisions of labor and how those divisions could relate to dispositional differences between males and females (Eagly, 1987).

This research study was written through the lens of a biblical and Christian worldview which speaks to these gendered dispositional differences not as social constructs but as innate within men and women. Several studies are available asserting the reasoning behind the differences related to male and female leadership as it relates to masculinity and femininity as God-given physiological traits of masculinity and femininity rather than socially constructed stereotypes (Chesebro, 2001; Labuschagne, 2021; Phillips, 2006). Nevertheless, both men and women can gain insight from both secular and religious scholarship related to these topics.

For decades mainline pastoral leadership was reserved for males with little exception (Burnett, 2017). While the focus of this study will be limited to the religious sphere of influence,

it should be noted that females have traditionally had limited opportunities for top executive leadership positions in secular spheres as well (Longman, 2018; Longman & Anderson, 2016; Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). Over the past decades, women in church leadership roles are becoming more accepted in many denominations. As women in pastoral leadership increase in religious denominations, scholars are dedicating more research to understanding and analyzing the differences between male and female pastoral leadership. This is important in understanding the lived experiences of parishioners in churches who are pastored by both genders.

Pastoral Care

The historical context of pastoral care cannot be understood without a background discussion around the biblical and theological concept of the role of the pastor and the ministry of pastors. Pastoring in the Old and New Testament is demonstrated through the shepherding motif (Laniak, 2006; Senkbeil, 2019; Senkbeil & Woodford, 2019). Petersen (2007) discusses the concept of *pastor* as more than a title. He states, “in fact, the word *pastor* comes from the Latin word *pascere* or *shepherd*. It means ‘to feed’” (p. 3). Laniak (2006) also affirms the epistemological connection between pastor and shepherd, which illuminates the holistic approach to ministry that is seen in both ancient and contemporary times. The biblical metaphor denotes the pastor as a shepherd and the parishioners as sheep. Laniak (2006) traces the shepherding motif into the Pauline epistles through which Paul reveals the five-fold ministry with its relative obligations in Ephesians 4:11. “The pastoral role was central to the ongoing life of local churches in the Christian movement, just as it is today” (p. 22). The shepherding motif is demonstrated in the pastor’s leadership and care concerning the *sheep*. (Oden, 1987; Tidball, 1997). Jesus’ interwove the concept of love or care into the very act of shepherding in his teaching, which is perceived in his discourse with Peter, “He said unto him the third time, Simon

son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things thou knowest that I love thee, Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:17).

The Christian ministry of pastoral care has a long and rich historical and theological history dating back to scriptural times (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994; Doehring, 1981; Patton, 1993; Redding, 2012). Pastoral care is not a field easily defined within a set framework of care because at the very core of care lies complex situations found within the human being. “Pastoral knowledge cannot be transmitted in objective, non-personal terms. Pastors are persons representing the wisdom, resources, and authority of Christian faith as that faith helps troubled individuals” (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994, p. 2). A Benedictine monk known as Gregory the Great became the foremost influential author shaping methods, establishing care patterns, and establishing vocabulary surrounding pastoral care when he authored *Pastoral Care* in 590 C.E. Gregory’s book was exceedingly influential and became a mainstay for early pastors in Europe and has since established the historical precedents surrounding pastoral care (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994). For the purpose of this study, pastoral care was defined using Clebsch & Jaekle’s (1994) definition, “the ministry of cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns” (p. 4). While this definition served as the framework for further analysis of pastoral care in Chapter Two, it is important to define it here to give the reader a clear picture of what pastoral care consists of as it pertained to this research study. Christian pastoring is defined as helping acts performed by persons who represent Christianity’s resources, wisdom, and authority. Healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling are the four distinct pastoral functions

outlined by Clebsch and Jaekle (1994). Each function uses more than one mode and a multitude of means. Clebsch and Jaekle's definition is a key that unlocks pastoral care and yields its rich resources for those seeking to be used by God in the cure of souls (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994).

This section surveyed the scholarship surrounding both gendered pastoral leadership as well as pastoral care. It demonstrated how both topics were not only rich with study but were also essential aspects in Christian leadership. Although there is a great deal of research related to both topics individually, there is a gap in research investigating how male and female pastoral leaders may administer pastoral care differently in their congregations and how these differences may affect the care experience by their parishioners. The topic of this study should be of interest to pastors and Christian leaders alike because as the fields of gendered leadership and pastoral care continue to develop, adaptive leaders can utilize the research data to make more targeted and informed decisions in how to care for the parishioners under their watch. It was the focus of this study to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care in an environment of gendered pastoral leadership or, in other words, within a church that has been pastored by both a male and a female pastor during the church's history.

Statement of the Problem

This research study sought to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female pastoral leader at different times within the same church setting. The results of this study could affect how pastoral leaders utilize adaptive leadership practices in their pastoral care methodologies to meet the diverse needs of the parishioners they serve.

Available research studies investigating and analyzing male and female pastoral leadership styles are increasing and while the topic of pastoral care is also studied with greater

frequency, the research related to whether male pastoral leaders and female pastoral leaders administer pastoral care differently is not common (Danberry, 2017; Silo, 2022; Sironen, 2020). An initial search of dissertations related to “pastoral care” in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global database system returned over 10,000 search hits. Many of these dissertations were related to various subtopics in pastoral care, covering hospital care, congregational care methodologies, and general counseling. The search did not yield many results related to pastoral care regarding gender. Laura Lea authored a phenomenological study entitled, *A Womanist Perspective of Pastoral Care Ministry: The Power of Presence in Pastoral Care within the African American Church/Community*. While this study offers a feminine perspective on how pastoral care is conducted in African American churches specifically, it does not consider the perspective of parishioners as it relates to the care they have received under both a male and female lead pastor in diverse churches. A search of Liberty University’s doctoral dissertation database also returned many studies related to pastoral leadership and pastoral care. Some of these studies concentrated on gendered pastoral leadership, offered pastoral care models, and even linked the relationship between pastoral leadership and congregational spiritual formation (Danberry, 2017; Silo, 2022; Sironen, 2020); however, there is a noticeable gap linking pastoral care with gender.

This study sought to bridge the noticeable gap between gendered leadership and pastoral care in an initial exploration of the topic. This is an essential problem as pastoral leaders seek to grow and administer more effective care to their parishioners. Pastoral leaders should desire to understand from the parishioners’ perspective how they view their experiences under gendered pastoral care. Once an established study offers data related to this topic, pastoral leaders can be

adaptive regardless of their gender and be more purposeful in the care they provide to each gender.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively at three selected churches. For the purpose of this research, pastoral care was defined as helping acts done by pastoral leaders directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of parishioners (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994). The guiding theory that framed this research study was Eagly's (1987) social role theory which argues that shared gender stereotypes develop from gender division of labor within society.

Research Questions

This phenomenological study was designed to explore the meaning of the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under a male and a female lead pastor. The data gathered from these experiences will facilitate learning around gendered pastoral care and leadership and better equip pastoral leaders to serve those in their congregations with diverse needs. Each research question was designed to provide an open and unbiased platform through which participants could communicate their thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs surrounding the care they each experienced.

RQ1. What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under a male and a female lead pastor?

RQ2. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received due to gender?

RQ3. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

There are several assumptions and delimitations to note for this research study. One overarching assumption was that male and female dispositional qualities are naturally different due to biological gender (Jewett, 1990; Padgett, 2008). Another assumption was that male and female lead pastors may minister to others based on natural differences as a result of their gender. A final assumption was that all participants would utilize their personal lived experiences as a basis for their answers related to the pastoral care they received under each lead pastor and not the lived experiences of another person they may have heard about in their church.

Delimitations of the Research Design

One of the delimitations of this research project is related to the study's participants. For example, only individuals above eighteen years of age who received pastoral care under both pastors for a minimum of two years each (total of at least four years in the church) were considered. Therefore, other individuals who were below eighteen or who experienced care by only one gender or by both genders for a time period under two years were not considered, although they also may have unique perspectives to offer.

A second delimitation of the study was that it only examined three charismatic or spirit-filled churches, all of which were pastored by both a male and a female pastor during the church's history. Thus, churches that fall outside the range of charismatic or spirit-filled were not included in this study. Additionally, charismatic or spirit-filled churches that may have had more than one pastor of the same gender in their history were not considered.

A third delimitation was that churches were selected from Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee as part of the researcher's convenience sampling technique. While the geographic

range offers a diverse setting, spirit-filled churches that may have been pastored by a male and female at some point in their history outside of these areas were not considered as part of this study.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions provided clarity to this research:

1. *Pastoral Care*: helping acts, done by a senior pastor, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and nurturing of congregants toward spiritual formation” (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994; Laniak, 2006; Oden, 1987; Petersen, 2013).
2. *Lead Pastor*: For the purpose of this study, a lead pastor is one of God’s undershepherds (whether male or female) as so recognized within each church. The lead pastor is responsible for pastoral care for each parishioner. (Laniak, 2006).
3. *Guiding*: assisting perplexed persons in making confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action when such decisions are viewed as affecting the present and the future state of human wholeness (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994, p. 9).
4. *Reconciling*: seeking to re-establish broken relationships between man and fellow man and between man and God. Historically, reconciling has employed two modes – forgiveness and discipline (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994, p.9; Petersen, 2013).
5. *Nurturing*: enable people to develop their potentialities throughout the life journey with all its valleys, peaks, and plateaus. Nurturing and guiding are the pastoral care functions in which education and counseling are most intertwined. (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994, p. 10).
6. *Adaptive Leadership*: “Adaptive leadership is an approach to making progress on the most important challenges you face in your piece and part of the world...our concepts, tools, and tactics aim to help you mobilize people toward some collective purpose, a purpose that exists beyond your ambition” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 2).
7. *Social Role Theory*: Social role theory is a social psychological theory that pertains to gender differences and similarities in social behavior. Its fundamental principle is that differences and similarities arise from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2016).

Significance of the Study

Spiritual and natural leadership within churches is generally understood to be centered around fostering spiritual formation and maturity in believers’ lives which seeks to bring a state

of peace with God and man. (Ephesians 4:12-14; Lutz, Dowden, & Norsworthy, 2018; Pettit, 2008). As spiritual formation develops in believers' lives, they begin to live out in peace the two great commandments Jesus gave in the Gospels: to love the Lord with the totality of one's being and then to love others as oneself. These two great commandments are quoted by Jesus from the Book of Deuteronomy and are known in Judaism as the *Shemah* (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22: 34-40; Mark 12: 28-31; Luke 10: 25-37). Pastoral care is critical to this process and to churches' overall health and vitality. Evans (2000) states, "the foundation text of the theology of pastoral care is Jesus' summary of the commandments in the form of the exhortation to love God with all one's heart and mind and soul, and to love one's neighbor as oneself" (p. 1). Therefore, pastoral care and spiritual leadership are interconnected as pastoral leaders seek to provide the necessary framework for solid pastoral care to be effective in the congregations where they serve (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994; Roberts, 2012).

In addition to pastoral care being paramount to the effectiveness of spiritual formation and maturity in believers, the differences in spiritual and natural leadership between a male and female are also significant. In recent years, more research has become available related to the differences between male and female leadership styles, personality styles, and overall acceptability of male and female leaders both naturally and spiritually (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fogarty, 2010). These two issues, pastoral care and gendered leadership, are significant to church leaders because as data is collected and studied as to the effectiveness of pastoral care under male and female lead pastors, that data can provide starting points for how gendered pastoral leadership can be more effective. Both male and female pastoral leaders will find this research significant because they will be able to preview from the perspective of parishioners how each gender administers pastoral care and how the parishioners perceive the effectiveness of the

pastoral care they receive from each gender. Based on the data, adaptive pastoral leaders can then be more purposeful in their administration of pastoral care based on gender-specific needs.

Summary of the Design

This study employed a qualitative research design that utilized a phenomenological framework to explore the lived experiences of targeted parishioners in the phenomena of pastoral care being administered by both a male and female lead pastor. All participants in the study were selected from Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. A total of twelve individuals were selected from three churches. The participants ranged in age and were diverse in gender and race in an attempt to gather data that offered a well-rounded perspective. A phenomenological design was chosen for this study to better understand the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care from a male and a female lead pastor at the same church. The same church offers a more controlled environment where parishioners are able to have a balanced view of the care they receive under each consecutive pastor. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) state, “A phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation. In other words, a phenomenological study tries to answer the question, what is it like to experience such-and-such” (p. 255).

Qualitative research approaches aim to explore and understand the meaning individuals ascribe to their experiences as they attempt to make meaning of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2018). This approach allowed this researcher to explore and investigate in order to learn more about the social phenomenon and then unpack the meanings the participants ascribed to the activities, situations, events, or artifacts surrounding the phenomenon. Qualitative research contributes to depth of understanding of dimensions of social life. (Leavy, 2017; Creswell, 2018). “Qualitative researchers rarely try to simplify what they observe. Instead, they recognize

that the issue they are studying has many dimensions and layers and try to portray it in its multifaceted form” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015, p. 269).

The first stage of this project included convenience sampling (Leavy, 2017, p. 149). The researcher contacted each targeted parishioner to determine whether they were willing to participate in the study. The contacts followed the established protocols outlined in Chapter Three of this study as approved by Liberty University’s IRB.

The second stage of this project involved developing the interview questions and conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with a potential follow-up interview (See Appendix D). The interview was the primary source of data collection (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019 & Leavy, 2017). The semi-structured interview format meant that a general set of questions guided each interview. A semi-structured interview approach was desirable because it allowed the researcher to follow a general format while allowing flexibility to ask additional questions as the experiences are explored with each participant. Each interview followed the Interview Protocol Form (See Appendix D).

The third stage of the project was analyzing the data. At the onset of this stage, the researcher transcribed the interviews using Otter.ai, an online professional transcription service. The transcriptions produced by Otter.ai was checked for accuracy against the recorded interviews. Creswell (2018) states that phenomenological research uses the analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of what Moustakas (1994) called an essence description in the analysis process. Data were coded following Saldana’s (2021) exploratory coding methods (p. 213). The themes were then organized into groupings and categories for further analysis to ascertain the patterns emerged from the data.

The overall purpose of this study sought to gain an authentic understanding of the impact pastoral care had upon parishioners based on the gender of the lead pastor. Analyzing the experiences of each parishioner gave the researcher a better understanding of the parishioner's perspectives related to the care they received. This research offers implications on how pastoral leaders can employ adaptive leadership models to better serve the needs of the congregations they serve. Chapter Two explored the relevant and surrounding literature which provided the framework for this study. Chapter Three examined in greater detail the specifics of the study's design. Additionally, Chapter Four provided an analysis of the findings, and Chapter Five offered conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This research study explored the lived experiences of church parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively. This chapter provided a review of the related literature surrounding this phenomenon. Gendered leadership, gendered pastoral leadership, and pastoral care are the three-main theological and theoretical topics that provided the context for this study. Particular focus was given to Alice Eagly's (1987) social role theory as the guiding theory for the theoretical framework of this research design. This chapter provided the reader with a solid understanding of the scholarship underpinning the study, the necessity of this research topic, and how this study can help shape and foster mutual respect between both male and female pastors regarding how they may administer pastoral care differently yet complimentary.

The debate over the mutual roles and collective authority of men and women within the Christian church has a long and rich history dating back to the Biblical era (Klawiter, 1980; Madigan & Osiek, 2005; Miller, 2012; Pagels, 1988). Embedded within the scope of this debate are the role of men and women in church affairs, the role of men and women in pastoral ministry, and the role of pastoral authority and responsibility in general (Madigan & Osiek, 2005). The early foundations of pastoral care can be traced back to the Bible. In the sixth chapter of Acts, the Apostles appointed seven men over certain ministry services so that they could more fully devote themselves to prayer and ministering God's Word (Acts 6:3-4, KJV). From Biblical times forward, Christian ministry involves varying aspects of both natural and spiritual services (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994). The study of pastoral care and pastoral leadership go together, and therefore this review explored these topics in an interrelated way as it related to gender or what

was referred to in this study as gendered pastoral leadership and care. This chapter also examined the related literature surrounding these topics, provided a rationale for the current study, a gap in the literature, and detailed a profile of the current study.

Theological Framework for the Study

This section provided a biblical and theological analysis of gendered pastoral leadership and pastoral care as it was found within biblical and theological scholarship. A survey of Biblical examples of leadership display a variety of both men and women actively engaged with God's Plan (Howell, 2003; Eisen, 2000; Lanik, 2006). Both Old and New Testaments characterize these men and women as leaders who utilize diverse personalities, dispositions, and skill sets to accomplish the will of God in service to mankind. There is not one theoretical style of leadership that can serve as a blanket upon which to lay the diverse group of leaders in the Bible. Scriptural leadership profiles reveal that biblical leadership is adaptive in nature (Borek, et al., p. 4).

Leadership Biblically Defined

Bredfeldt (2006) offers clear guidance on the importance of defining leadership from a biblical perspective, "Christian leaders need to recognize that the most potent principle of leadership is fundamentally a biblical principle" (p. 18). While secular constructs of what leadership is and how it relates to male and female Christian leaders are important, having a solid biblical worldview of leadership defined by scripture is critical. "In a broad, functional sense, what seem to be central to every level and context of true leadership are initiative and influence" (Howell, 2003, p. 1). Howell (2003) discusses how initiative and influence are at the heart of authentic leadership. These two adjectives span the literature to anchor one's understanding of biblical leadership. When one sees a need, and based upon one's governing conviction they exercise initiative to address the need then they are exhibiting leadership initiative. Influence is

brought to bear when others join this person's initiative to contribute to the accomplishment of a stated objective. Whether or not the exercise of initiative and influence is constructive or unhealthy depends on the leader's character (a leader's character is paramount to successful adaptive leadership and will be discussed in some depth below). "Leadership has most often been defined in a single word---influence. That is to say, leaders are those individuals who, through their personality, position, or power, shape the outlook and future of others. Whether positively or not, leaders influence others" (Bredfeldt, 2006, p. 19).

Howell (2003) exerts the theological concept of God's lordship over the hearts of his people as a central defining element of biblical leadership. God is calling people to himself and to a community with others under his rule. This community assists in bringing people into conformity to his holiness so that they can declare his excellence and bring others out of darkness into his marvelous life (Mr. 4:17, 1 Pet. 2:9, Mt. 28:18-20). Howell (2003) defines biblical leadership as, "taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and to passionately promote the extension of God's kingdom in the world" (p. 3).

Pastoral Leadership

Understanding and defining the specific role of pastoral leadership in a local church encompasses various factors depending on church size, location, denomination, etc. (Grusendorf, 2016). However, some commonly understood factors defining the role of pastoral leadership are important to define in this body of work so the reader will better understand the responsibility of the church pastor as it relates to pastoral care and how the administration of that care may change based on the gender of the pastor. There is a well-defined body of literature examining and defining the roles pastors have within churches with varying size dynamics (Boersma, 1998; George, 1994; Green, 2005; Grusendorf, 2016; Hawco, 2005; Keller, 2006; Moates, 1981;

McIntosh, 2009; Schaller, 1983; Taylor, 2020; Wollschleger, 2018; Woodruff, 2004). Equally, there is a good amount of theological scholarship examining the differences in pastoral leadership styles related to gender (Burnett, 2017; English de Alminana & Olena, 2016; Enzer-Probst, 1998; Ferguson, 2018; Lehman, 1993; Purvis 1995; Sandstrom, 2016; Soriano, 2016).

A common theme emerges from the literature, which seems to agree that one of the most defining factors in determining the role of the church pastor will be congregational size (Grusendorf, 2016). The small church pastor will have a different role than the large church pastor, and the mid-size church pastor will have a different role than either the small or the large. Regardless of church size, however, there are some commonly agreed-upon factors across the spectrum that help define the role of the church pastor. The first parameters which help define a pastor's role must be grounded in scripture. Grusendorf (2016) states, "certain aspects of pastoral leadership are static no matter the size of a church. For instance, any lead pastor should meet the foundational biblical qualifications for church leadership as laid out in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1" (p. 28). Grusendorf (2018) also argues that church pastors should meet a set of competencies regardless of church size. "These competencies should include, at a minimum, effective Bible teaching, interpersonal skills, and decision-making skills (Broersma, 1988, Moates, 1981, Woodruff, 2004)" (p. 29). These core competencies help outline the basis for a pastor's role across denominational lines and congregational size. These pastoral leadership competencies emerge from the literature and directly affect how the pastoral leader will administer pastoral care within their congregation.

Leadership Differences between Men and Women

In 2017 Barna conducted a study entitled, *What Americans Think About Women in Power*, they found that a clear majority of American adults (94%) are comfortable with a female

CEO. Women were more welcoming of the idea than men (97% vs. 90%). Evangelicals exhibited the lowest level of comfort with this idea (77%). The study also noted, “though large numbers of Americans embrace the presence of female leadership at work and in politics, they are least comfortable, comparatively, with women leading the church.” However, the study noted: that most are *accepting* of a female priest or pastor (79%). Gendered leadership is about investigating how men and women lead differently, but it also goes beyond that. The reason for the study of how men and women lead differently is not so that they can compete one to the other, but it provides a basis so both genders can utilize the God-given innate talents of the other for the greater good. Masculine and feminine leadership concepts should be used by both males and females who are true adaptive leaders to better serve those under their respective care.

Gender and pastoral responsibility have been debated within Christianity since the time of Christ and the Apostles (Madigan & Osiek, 2005; Pagels, 1988). On the more restrictive side of the denominational spectrum of acceptability, denominations accept women as lay clergy, such as Sunday school teachers or missionaries, while on the more liberal side of the spectrum, others accept women for pastoral roles over congregations and even to serve as executive managers and leaders in top tier positions of denominational leadership. (Purvis, 1995; Fogarty, 2010; Marrow, 2014; Burnett, 2017). Burnett (2017) states:

Cyclical seasons of proactive feminism have generated an increase in leadership roles for females within various congregations and/or denominations. During the 1970s religious congregations in the US began to develop attitudinal differences regarding urbanization and the movement of women into nontraditional roles (Stump, 1986). The sharpest rise in women becoming clergy occurred within that time frame when numbers soared from 7,000 to 16,000 (Stump, 1986). Representing one of the most male-dominated occupations in the US (Stump, 1986). Women clergy increased from 4% in 1977 to 8% in 1986 (Hunter & Sargeant, 1993). (p. 16)

The theological literature related to the pastoral leadership similarities and differences between women and men pastors is considered in this study as it may directly correlate how

pastors administer care to their congregations. Lehman's (1993) research shows that over the last two decades, a growing body of literature has defined two significant approaches to carrying out pastoral responsibilities in local churches. The literature has labeled these approaches as "masculine" and "feminine," with the masculine approach related to males and the feminine approach associated with females. The masculine leadership approach is viewed as the traditional role of pastoral authority, which has characterized Christian culture from its conception. This approach is characterized by "impersonal hierarchies, segmental relationships, hypercompetitive, power over lay people, authoritarian decision making, mastery over nature, rigid theology, legalistic ethics, and exclusion of women and minorities" (Lehman, 1993, p. 4). By contrast the feminine approach is contemporary and is characterized by incorporation of "personal communities, holistic relationships, egalitarianism, empowerment of lay people, democratic decision making, cooperation with nature, open and flexible theology, existential ethics of responsible sharing, and inclusion of women and minorities" (Lehman, 1993, p. 4). Eagly & Wood (2013) argue that attempting to explain leadership differences between men and women evolve from the common notion that women and men are different. This paradigm reflects more traditional viewpoints about the dichotomy between men and women in American society. The perceived differences between men and women are often assumed to be natural consequences of innate differences (Lehman, 1993).

Biblical Examples of Male and Female Leadership

Biblical examples of male and female leadership are displayed throughout scripture in both the Old and the New Testaments (Borek, et al., 2005; Howell, 2003; Lanik, 2006). Biblical scholarship demonstrates that both men and women held leadership positions throughout the biblical era, with some scholars asserting that women had equal offices with men in such roles as

bishops and even apostles in the New Testament Era (Eisen, 2000; Madigan & Osiek, 2005; McCabe, 2011). Men and women complimented each other in leadership roles, offering perspectives to lead God's people. This section will illustrate a few examples of male and female leadership in the Bible and analyzed in theological scholarship.

Biblical Profiles of Male Leaders

There are many examples of male leaders throughout scripture. Arguably the most famous leader in the Old Testament was Moses. Howell (2003) describes Moses as a leader whom preservers to continue leading and advocating for a stubborn community of believers. Moses is described in Howell's (2003) book, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*, as a leader who is characterized as one who is not afraid of confrontation, is obedient, and prayerful (Exodus 7:8-11:10). He is steadfast in times of crisis (Exodus 12:1-15:21), is a patient shepherd of a grumbling flock (Exodus 15:22-17:15), has the wisdom to delegate responsibilities to other lay-leaders (Exodus 18:1-27), is a prayerful mediator with God and is chosen as God's lawgiver (Ex. 19:1-24:18), a skillful organizer of the tabernacle building project (Ex. 35:4-40:38), disciplines the community of believers when needed (Numbers 25:1-18), and prepares the people with a succession plan upon his death (Numbers 27:12-23; Deuteronomy 31:1-34) (Howell, 2003, pgs. 28-37). Joshua is another example of a leader who is described as a courageous successor to Moses (Howell, 2003). He identifies the following four characteristics with the leadership profile of Joshua: he has the humility to follow and courage to lead, he is a man of strategy and prayer, is a judicious administrator, and is also seen through the shepherding motif as a shepherd of the Lord's flock (Howell, 2003). Other Old Testament examples of leadership include Joseph, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, David, Solomon, Daniel, and Nehemiah. Each of these leaders displayed unique dispositions for leaders. Samson is seen as a

leader who squanders his highest purpose due to character flaws. David is characterized as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), Daniel exercised spiritual fortitude in a secular setting, and Nehemiah is seen as both a motivator and a mobilizer.

The New Testament also displays male leadership profiles, which character dispositional qualities valuable in leaders. Perhaps the Moses of the New Testament (in infamy) is seen as the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul is seen as a leader who establishes and builds communities of faith. Howell (2003) describes the six dynamic leadership qualities of the Apostle Paul: authoritative, exhortational (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10), accountable (Romans 15:9-12; Col. 1:28-29), affirmatory (Romans 12:1; 1 Tim. 1:12-17), sacrificial (Philippians 3:4-11), and missional (2 Cor. 2:12-13). Although pastoral care will be discussed in the next section, the Apostle Paul is a dynamic example of a New Testament leader who engaged in pastoral care specifically to the Gentile churches, "the nine letters to congregations and the four letters to individuals are testimony to Paul's commitment to follow up those who have come to Christ in the sphere of his ministry" (Howell, 2003, p. 284). Other examples of New Testament male leaders include Peter, John, Barnabas, Timothy, and Titus.

Biblical Profiles of Female Leaders

One of the most famous examples of female leadership in the Old Testament is seen through the profile of Deborah, who Niditch (2011) describes as *God's Fiery Woman*. The biblical narrative of Deborah is found in Judges 4-5. "The Book of Judges tells the story of a remarkable woman, a prophetess named Deborah, seated under a palm tree as she judged the Israelites, who were oppressed by the Canaanite king Jabin. Deborah is the only female judge in the book of Judges. She is fourth in a series of heroes who rise after the death of Joshua" (Schroeder, 2014). Niditch (2011) details the responsibilities and spiritual gifts of Deborah.

Deborah as a prophetess, is capable of mediating between God and human beings, and she is perceived as having gifts of divination and charism. She is a conduit to God and a vessel for divine communications. Deborah is a prototype for women leaders in the Bible and throughout history as a woman who received recognition as both competent and daring. The Song of Deborah (Judges 5:2-31) may be one of the most ancient works of the Hebrew Bible (Niditch, 2011). The song characterizes the role of women in Israel's victory over Jabin, "Deborah the poet-prophet, charismatic leader, and 'mother in Israel'; Jael, a guerrilla warrior and archetypal seducer-killer who exemplifies the folk motif of the iron fist in the velvet glove" (Niditch, 2011). The Prophetess Deborah has been a prototype for women's movements for centuries which continues into the present day. Schroeder (2014) states:

As in earlier times, twentieth and twenty-first-century women and their male supporters celebrated the prophetess as a paradigm for female heroism, virtue, and leadership. Furthermore, Deborah was enlisted to help the cause of feminism, peace activism, liberation theology, and lesbian rights. She was likewise pressed into service by some evangelical women, many of whom eschewed the title "feminist" but nevertheless participated in the social changes occurring in the last three decades. Deborah, a "mother in Israel," was a working mother approved by God and, presumably, her supportive husband Lappidoth. (p. 194)

Deborah's partnership with Barak (Judges 5) fits within the framework of both heroic and relational leadership models. Deborah and Barak had a synchronistical relationship that led to Israel's victory and further development. This is a model for male and female leaders to work in tandem utilizing each gender's unique God-given capabilities for organizational success. The story of Deborah and Barak shows how traditional masculine and feminine qualities can be purposefully used across gender lines. In the biblical narrative, Barak is seen with fear in need of support or the weaker vessel, while Deborah is seen as the courageous or stronger one. These characteristics illustrate essential points for the purposeful utilization of both sets of masculine and feminine qualities, which will be discussed in more detail in succeeding sections.

While traditionally, less attention is given in theological scholarship to female leadership in the New Testament, there were undoubtedly female leaders in the New Testament era. Eisen (2000) asserts,

it is clear that women were active in the expansion and shaping of the Church in the first three centuries; they were apostles, prophets, teachers, presbyters, enrolled widows, deacons, bishops, and stewards. . . . In short, to the question of whether there were women officeholders in the Church's first four centuries our study returns a resounding answer: yes! (p. 224)

Madigan and Osiek (2005) discuss the most frequently understood texts in the New Testament which refer to women in leadership as being Romans 16:1-2 and 1 Timothy 3:11. The Apostle Paul addresses a lady named Phoebe in Romans 16:1 as being a servant of the church at Cenchrea. The term servant in this verse is the Greek word *diakonoi* and is most frequently translated as deacon or deaconess (Madigan & Osiek). While there is some debate on the exact leadership functions surrounding the word *diakonoi*, Madigan and Osiek (2005) state Phoebe along with Euodias and Syntyche in Philippians 4:2, were probably leaders or pastors of local house churches. In fact, the Apostle Paul asserts that both Euodias and Syntyche “laborured with me in the gospel, with Clement also and with other fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life” (Philippians 4:2-3). Origen (185-253) was a preeminent biblical theologian of his time and was head of the famous catechetical school in Alexandria. In his commentary on Romans 16:1-2 he writes:

This passage teaches by apostolic authority that women also are appointed in the ministry of the church, in which office Phoebe was placed at the church that is in Cenchrae. Paul with great praise and commendation even enumerates her splendid deeds...and therefore this passage teaches two things equally and is to be interpreted, as we have said, to mean that women are to be considered ministers in the church, and that such ought to be received in the ministry. (Madigan & Osiek, 2005, p. 11)

While little is recorded beyond the mention of the women's names and the short descriptions analyzed above, it is clear there were women who were considered leaders in the early church during the New Testament era.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care has a rich history in both secular and religious fields but remains a fluid term. Pastoral care is rooted in pastoral theology and is defined differently depending on situational context. "Pastoral care is the practical arm of pastoral theology, and usually refers in a broad and inclusive way to all pastoral work concerned with the support and nurturance of persons and interpersonal relationships" (McClure, 2011, p. 20). The ministry of pastoral care is theologically based upon the Christian belief that God created mankind as relational beings. People desire a relationship with God and with others. As a part of this innate creation, God remembers and hears mankind as part of its relationship with him. God demonstrates excellent care over his creation. At its core, pastoral care is engrained in the fact that God cares for his creation, and therefore his creation must care for each other (Patton, 1993).

Intertwined within the discussion of biblical leadership is pastoral care. This section outlined how pastoral care was defined within theological scholarship and showed how emerging trends surrounding pastoral care gave shape to this study. Pastoral care is a Christian ministry that has been exercised throughout the history of the church. "Pastors rude and barely plucked from paganism, pastors sophisticated in the theory and practice of their profession, and pastors at every stage between these extremities" (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1983, p. 1) have practiced pastoral care in their attempts to help troubled people overcome their dilemmas.

Pastoral Care and The Shepherding Motif

Pastoral care in the Christian tradition is inextricably linked to the biblical image of the shepherd (Laniak, 2006; Oden, 1987; Patton, 1993). Shepherding, as a metaphor for pastoring, illustrates a figurative meaning in religious settings. Many denominations use the language of pastoral care exclusively to refer to ministry among the sick or needy. However, such associations are not anchored in cultural realities or biblical truth. Pastoral care and pastoral leadership go hand in hand, and the shepherding motif captures the interconnectedness of the relationship between the two (Patton, 1993). The Bible characterizes pastoral care, as demonstrated through shepherding images, as “robust, comprehensive shepherd leadership, characterized as much by the judicious use of authority as by sympathetic expressions of compassion” (Laniak, 2006, p. 21). Patton (1993) and Laniak (2006) both discuss the Apostle Paul’s inclusion of the shepherd as one of God’s gifts to the church as illustrated in Ephesians 4:11: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors (shepherds) and teachers.” The role of the shepherd or pastor was a central part of the ongoing life of local churches within the early Christian movement, just as it is today. The shepherding motif is also found throughout the Old Testament and is clearly defined in the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah frequently applied the shepherding image to Israel’s leaders. God promised through Jeremiah, “I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15). God promises his people both in the Old and New Testaments that he would give them leaders or pastors who would guide and care for them as shepherds’ care for their flocks. Shepherds not only provide care, but they also provide leadership to the sheep under their watchful eye.

Patton (1993) describes the Twenty-Third Psalm as the primary text that defines the pastor's character as shepherd. The terms "pastor" and "pastoral" are associated with the image and function of the shepherd. Throughout the Psalm, the shepherd is seen as serving the sheep. Phrases such as "He restores my soul," "He leads me in paths of righteousness," "I will fear no evil" are all written by David as a result of the shepherd being with him. The Psalm displays the essential ministry of the shepherd, which is guiding the sheep and restoring their souls in the darkest valley, even in the shadow of death. Restoring the soul of the sheep speaks to those who are lost or separated from God or the church. "Care is pastoral when it looks deeper than the immediate circumstances of a person's life and reminds that person that he or she is a child of God created in and for a relationship. What is essential for pastoral care is developing the theological and practical wisdom to do this (Patton, 1993, p. 32).

Pastoral Care Defined

Pastoral care can be a fluid term in theological scholarship and is sometimes referred to as *congregational care*, *soul care*, or *the care of souls* (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1983; Cole, 2010; Oden 1987). Oden (1987) describes pastoral care as:

that branch of Christian theology that deals with care of persons by pastors. It is pastoral because it pertains to the offices, tasks, and duties of the pastor. It is care because it has charge of, and is deliberately attentive to the spiritual growth and destiny of persons. Pastoral care is analogous to a physician's care of the body. Since that particular sphere over which one exercise care is the psyche...pastoral care is also appropriately the care of souls. (p. 5)

Pastoral care specifies the functions of both the minister and the congregation in responding to the church's needs (McClure, 2011). Patton (1993) describes pastoral care as a "caring community, inclusive of both laity and clergy. The ministry of pastoral care should be understood holistically rather than hierarchically" (p. 3). Doebling (2006) also notes that pastoral care should be viewed as a trifocal lens with premodern, modern, and postmodern approaches to

care utilized for the highest form of pastoral care. Utilizing strategies from all three eras of church evolution, the pastor will be able to connect to the laity in a way that will yield deeper and more authentic relationships delivering satisfaction and spiritual formation. For this study a definition of pastoral care begins to emerge from a survey of the scholarship. It will be used to define pastoral care within this study: helping acts done by a senior pastor, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of congregants toward spiritual formation (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994; Laniak, 2006; Oden, 1987; Petersen, 2013). Helping acts will further be defined through Clebsch and Jaekle's (1994) work. They describe the meaning of helping acts as, "Christian pastoring performed by persons who represent the resources, wisdom, and authority of Christianity in one or another of its versions" (p. 10)

Administration of Pastoral Care

Patton (1993) is a leading scholar in pastoral care theology and practice. Patton has authored articles and books related to the subject dating back to the 1970s. Patton (1993) frames the theological applications of pastoral care not as a hierarchical system of care between the lead pastor and laity alone but as a circular methodology that exists as a cyclical relationship between the pastoral leader and the faith community at large. The paradigm that pastoral care is most effective when only administered by the leading pastor is rejected by Patton. This paradigm makes the research of pastoral leadership and pastoral care effectiveness as it relates to gender even more critical. As noted in the discussion above related to pastoral leadership and gender, scholars note that feminine qualities of pastoral leadership tend to lend themselves more to an open and communal feel rather than a formal church body. This begs to question if a female pastor creates a more communal-based open environment within the local church then the cyclical role of pastoral care between the laity and the pastoral leader may be more effective.

Patton (1993) describes this form of pastoral care as communal contextual paradigm. “I do not believe that either the classical or the clinical pastoral paradigm is negated by the communal contextual but that all three are needed to rethink and carry out the pastoral care of the church at this point in history (p. 5). The administration of pastoral care as helping acts done by representative Christian persons still has a place within Patton’s cyclical care model. Although the lead pastor in many churches, especially smaller to mid-size churches, will personally oversee many aspects of pastoral care, there can still exist a cyclical model of congregational care as well. This can take the form of care calls, food preparation, or other support measures that may be implemented structurally or occur organically within the church body.

Domains and Functions of Pastoral Care

The administration of pastoral care through helping acts has been defined within the literature through four helping domains or functions (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964; Kenny, 2016). These domains provide a framework for how parishioners are ministered to or cared for in the church (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). McNeill (1951) states that pastoral care "is never merely a method, even a method derived from a doctrine, or a task for certain hours in the week, but that it involves both the faith we live by and all our daily activities and contacts" (p. 87). Clebsch & Jaekle’s (1964) work formed the foundation for the modern understanding of the functions or framework for pastoral care administration. The four functions of pastoral care first defined by Clebsch & Jaekle’s were used in this dissertation to help further define what pastoral care looked like as it was administered to church parishioners. “The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns” (p. 4).

The Four Pastoral Care Functions

As previously discussed, Clebsch and Jaekle identify four pastoral care functions or domains through which helping acts are ministered. Kenny (2016) states:

Clebsch and Jaekle identify four different pastoral functions which emerged from their study of pastoral care moments throughout history and across cultures. Certain functions featured more prominently at different historical points of the church — not to the exclusion of any, one function, but sometimes with a polarizing effect (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964). The four pastoral care functions include the work of guiding, healing, reconciling, and sustaining. (p. 3)

Guiding

Kenny (2016) states, “Guiding involves helping people determine a course of action in response to difficult or dubious situations or circumstances” (p. 16). Pastoral guidance must be rooted in a biblical and Christian worldview and the guidance given framed with the best interest of the parishioners at heart and in mind. Key to the pastoral function of guiding is the practice of listening. Listening offers believers the opportunity to communicate emotional and spiritual problems that include issues such as guilt, shame, frustration, and confusion. Reflective listening as a form of guiding is a particularly useful pastoral tool as it allows a pastor to let the person under care ‘hear’ or ‘see’ their own interior thoughts or struggles (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964). Fundamentally, the guiding function assumes that useful wisdom, which is meant to edify and illuminate the direction of a person’s life, can be made available to a person using biblical wisdom in the helping act (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964, p. 50). Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) identify three areas where guiding is utilized as a specific helping act within pastoral care: advice-giving, listening, and the importance of making decisions.

Healing

Healing as a helping act aims to facilitate a parishioner in overcoming some impairment by restoring wholeness and leading them to advance beyond the previous condition (Kenny,

2016). “The wholeness which pastoral healing seeks to achieve is, therefore, not simple restoration of circumstances that prevailed before impairment began” (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964, p. 34). The ending goal of pastoral healing seeks to exalt the person to a higher spiritual level of growth and development than previously existed. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) identify five main ways that the function of healing is practiced by pastoral leaders: anointing, through prayer to saints or the use of relics, charismatic healers, exorcism, and through medicine.

Reconciling

Reconciliation involves the work of reconciling people to God and one another.

Theologically the term is defined in the Homan Illustrated Bible Dictionary as:

“bringing together of two parties that are estranged or in dispute. Jesus Christ is the one who brings together God and man, with salvation as the result of the union. Reconciliation basically means ‘change’ or ‘exchange.’ The idea is of a change of relationship, an exchange of antagonism for goodwill, enmity for friendship. Attitudes are transformed and hostility ceases.” (Brand, England, & Draper, 2003, p. 2130)

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) differentiate the work of pastoral reconciliation from the specific accomplishment of God in Jesus to reconcile humanity to himself. Under this pastoral care function, the pastor and community seek to help restore a person toward wholeness in unrepaired relationships. Kenny (2016) describes the work of reconciliation as existing in two modes: forgiveness and discipline. Forgiveness through the spoken or written word or in the form of gesture (i.e., a word of absolution or the sign of the cross) can break down the emotional and spiritual barriers that isolate and alienate people from each other and God. Discipline functionally establishes guardrails for acceptable behavior within a community. It can also create a healing path that must be undertaken to achieve restoration where relationships have been severed or broken. The pastoral care function of reconciling seems to enjoy prominence in the

literature. Reconciling people who suffer from ruptured relationships is an aim that is interwoven into the very fabric of the gospel.

Sustaining

Kenny (2016) describes sustaining as follows:

Sustaining involves helping a person persevere and overcome a circumstance or situation when it is impossible or unlikely for the person to be restored to wholeness. Functionally, sustaining is the work of helping someone move beyond simple acceptance of their circumstances or situation to a place where they can spiritually grow and endure what might seem to be an impossible situation — with a greater spiritual understanding or insight into their loss or tragic circumstance. (p. 3)

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) describe the helping act of sustaining as fourfold, which involves: preservation, consolation, consolidation, and redemption. Sustaining is one of the central functions of pastoral care and is seen in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. In the parable of the sower, there were four classes of soil that personified the condition of the Christian heart. Only in the good soil was the seed able to be sustained toward bearing fruit at thirty, sixty, and hundredfold levels of fruitful growth (Matthew 13:18-23). Sustaining one's relationship with God through the trials and tribulations of life is the forefront work of pastoral care. "The sustaining function of the cure of souls in our day continues to be a crucially important helping ministry, sufficiently versatile to be adapted to circumstances of urban living. Today busy pastors are called upon to sustain troubled persons" (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964, p. 81).

This section demonstrated how pastoral leadership and pastoral care are interwoven concepts in biblical and theological scholarship. Leadership and care go hand in hand to facilitate growth and development within the hearts of God's people. The following section detailed the theoretical framework underpinning this research study and provided the reader with an understanding of the important concepts of leadership and social theories relative to this study.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

This section explores the related literature supporting the theoretical framework for this research study. The theoretical framework for this study will be guided by Alice Eagly's (1987) social role theory (SRT). A review of the SRT will be given within this section. Additional supporting theories surrounding pastoral leadership, gendered differences in leadership, and pastoral care will also be discussed. These theories work collectively to offer the reader a clear picture of the goal of this dissertation which is to examine the phenomena of parishioners' experiences under gendered pastoral leadership.

Social Role Theory

Eagly's 1987 Social Role Theory asserts that widely understood and shared gender stereotypes develop from the gender division of labor that characterizes a society. The key principle of SRT is that differences and similarities between genders arise primarily from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society. Through socialization and the formation of gender roles, the behaviors of men and women support and sustain the division of labor (Eagly, 1987). Eagly and Wood (1999) state, "because men and women tend to occupy different social roles, they become different in ways that adjust them to these roles" (p. 2). SRT asserts that because men tend to work in positions of higher power and status and less in positions pursuant to nurturing roles, stereotypes that associate agency with men and communion with women arise (Smelser & Baltes, 2001). SRT predicts that women will generally act more communally and less instrumentally than men in the same context of labor division.

This theory is important to the research of this study in that the study seeks to understand the lived experiences of parishioners who have received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor. Historically, the role of the church pastor has been a divided role dominated

by males. Therefore, historically there has been a division of labor within the Christian church that may construct the stereotypes of traditional masculine or feminine characteristics associated with males and females. This study sought to understand the data through the lens of SRT and see if this theory holds true for people's lived experiences. For example, when the division of labor between women and becomes more salient, will the same dispositional qualities be seen, or will women take on more masculine qualities and vice-versa? Perhaps, even when the labor roles are salient, men and women will maintain the traditional dispositional attributes associated with their God-given gender.

Leadership Secularly Defined

“Leadership has been defined in many ways: individual traits, behavior, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, etc. Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves an influence process between two or more persons whereby intentional influence is exerted by the leader over followers (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1981)” (Park, 1997). Leadership arouses strong feelings in people, both in the leaders and in those being led. “Research (Collins, 2001; Conger 1992; Covey, 2004; Goleman, 1998; Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2006; Kouzes and Posner, 2002; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2001; Van Velsor and Drath, 2004; Yukl, 2006; Zenger and Folkman, 2002) strongly suggests that competent leaders generate genuinely positive impact in organizational effectiveness” (Costin, 2008). Heifetz defines leadership through a robust discussion of an individual's value system. The exercise and even the study of leadership stir feeling because leadership engages our values. Indeed, the term itself is value-laden. When we call for leadership in our organizations and politics, we call for something we prize (Heifetz, 1998). Christian leaders, whether male or female, should be guided by an innate

biblical and Christian worldview that informs their value system and guides their leadership and decision-making processes.

A common theme that emerges in both biblical and secular scholarship when it comes to defining leadership is the idea of *influence* (Maxwell, 1993). In fact, Robert Cialdini, a psychology and leadership professor, wrote *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, which discusses how leaders exert influence in a positive and healthy way to foster organizational change. Since Christian leaders seek to facilitate organizational and individual change, the character and value system of both male and female leaders are important to discuss when providing a framework of character and dispositional qualities both genders should seek to embody as their respective leadership influence grows.

The term leadership involves self-images and moral codes (Heifetz, 1998). One concept defining both self-images and moral codes is integrity. Henry Cloud's book, *Integrity*, is an eye-opening, self-evaluative treaty for adaptive leaders seeking to develop integrity, raise self-awareness, and come to a stronger understanding of their own moral code. Cloud (2009) analyzes six dimensions of integrity a leader can cultivate to achieve success: establishing trust, oriented toward truth, getting results, embracing the negative, oriented toward increase, and oriented toward transcendence. He states, "these character traits supersede gifts, talents, and ability and show the ones who have them succeed, and the ones who don't, ultimately fail" (Cloud, 2009). For adaptive leaders, these traits are critical.

Leadership Theories

This section will include a summary of relevant leadership theories pertinent to this study. A survey understanding of the most effective leadership models is key to correlating links between pastoral care and gendered leadership.

Adaptive Leadership Theory

Adaptability has been at the heart of surviving and thriving from the beginning of creation and is the essential ingredient for every species spanning across plant, animal, and human life. “This has surely been true for human systems trying to meet difficult challenges and flourish in the face of uncertainty and change, for whatever forms that system takes: global networks, nations, a tribe, a town, company, a family, or a person” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 4). While adaptability has always been an essential ingredient for survival, it is more critical now than at any other point in recorded history. The volatility facing the world from every side, politically, spiritually, and naturally, is increasing at alarming rates. These challenges in the order of the world demand leaders who craft solutions that are adaptive in nature.

Ronald Heifetz, a psychiatrist and professor at Harvard University, is among the world’s foremost authorities on the practice and teaching of leadership. Heifetz, Riley Sinder and Marty Linsky developed the concept of adaptive leadership. Heifetz laid out the framework for adaptive leadership and provided a basis for its practice in *Leadership Without Easy Answers* in 1994. Since its inception, two other books have been written *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leadership* and *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* by Heifetz and Linsky in which adaptive leadership has been further developed and expanded. Adaptive leadership is now a well-respected mainstream theory of leadership alongside some more traditional concepts, such as servant leadership. “Adaptive leadership is an approach to making progress on the most important challenges you face in your piece and part of the world...our concepts, tools, and tactics aim to help you mobilize people toward some collective purpose, a purpose that exists beyond your own individual ambition” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 2).

Heifetz (1994) states: “perhaps the first theory of leadership and the one that continues to be entrenched in American culture emerged from the nineteenth-century notion that history is the story of great men and their impact on society. Women were not even considered candidates for greatness” (p. 17). This trait approach or leadership theory has become known as heroic leadership, which will be discussed further in a subsequent section.

An adaptive leader can circumspectly analyze situations before, during, and after they occur and make prudent decisions to move people and organizations forward. “Leaders are supposed to develop, articulate, share, and enact a vision. Leaders, it is hoped, possess an adequate capacity for reality testing: They know how to scan the environment and how to make rational decisions” (Hambrick, Nadler & Tushman, 1998, p. 40). Northouse (2019) states "adaptive leadership is about how leaders encourage people to adapt and to face and deal with problems, challenges, and changes. Adaptive leadership focuses on the adaptations required of people in response to changing environments. Simply stated, adaptive leaders, prepare and encourage people to deal with change" (p. 257).

Yukl and Mahsud (2010) describe leaders who can accurately diagnose the situation and vary their behavior accordingly using various terms. Examples of these terms include flexible, adaptable, agile, and versatile (Kaiser, Lindberg, & Craig, 2007; Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000). Yukl and Mahsud (2010) describe seven existing leadership theories that illuminate the adaptive theory. They are:

- (1) contingency theories about situational variables that moderate the effects of leadership behavior;
- (2) comparative studies of essential roles and behaviors for different types of leadership positions;
- (3) studies of managers who make successful or unsuccessful transitions to different positions;
- (4) research on the response of managers to immediate disruptions and crises;
- (5) research on emerging threats and opportunities in the external environment that require adaptive strategic leadership;
- (6) research on conditions that make adaptive leadership more difficult, such as competing values and stakeholder conflicts;
- and (7) research on traits and skills that facilitate flexible and

adaptive leadership. After briefly describing each body of literature, we provide some practical guidelines for managers based on the major theories and findings. (p. 84)

Adaptive leaders seek opportunities to increase their self-awareness of traits, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully lead before they are needed, they have an innate ability to foresee what will be required in situations, and they work proactively to ensure success. “Leaders should also recognize their responsibility for helping subordinates develop and use the skills and behaviors required for flexible and adaptive leadership” (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Once leaders are aware of the process and theoretic framework of adaptive leadership, then putting the principles into practice will make the difference between possible success and actual success.

Useem (2010) articulates four experiential principles adaptive leaders should adopt in his article, *Four Lessons in Adaptive Leadership*, to achieve actual success in adaptive leadership. They are: meet the troops, make decisions, focus on mission, and convey strategic input. Heifetz (1998) discusses what he terms the ‘adaptive capacity’ (p. 5) within people. People’s behavior is their adaptive capacity which is their behavior in an effort to adapt to a situation or problem they are facing. Adaptive capacity is people’s ability to make progress on problems and the intrinsic values that those problems define (p. 5). As a psychiatrist, Heifetz has developed the adaptive leadership strategy to help people and leaders successfully adapt to their environments, “give their purposes and values, by facing painful circumstances and developing new attitudes and behaviors. People learn to distinguish reality from fantasy, resolve internal conflicts, and put harsh events into perspective. They learn to live with things that cannot be changed and take responsibility for those things that can” (p. 10). Through leader’s ability to reflect and strengthen their tolerance for frustrations, they greatly improve their general adaptive capacity.

Servant-Leadership Theory

One of the most commonly respected theories within secular and Christian leadership

circles is the servant leadership model (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Servant leadership is collaborative and hands-on by nature. This theoretical model had its genesis in the 1960s and early 1970s and was made famous by Robert Greenleaf (Cooper, 2005). “Greenleaf’s original concept posited that serving was the priority of a leader. A leader must ensure that people’s highest priority needs are met. Only when people are satisfied that a leader is concerned for their plight does the leader earn the right to lead” (Cooper, 2005). Wollschleger (2018) conducted a research study related to pastoral leadership and congregational vitality, and the findings demonstrated that pastoral styles that are collaborative but decisive, as well as inspiring, have a positive impact on congregational vitality; whereas pastoral styles that are more hands-off, seeking to empower lay decision making have a negative impact on congregational vitality (p. 575). Pastoral leadership should lead to a spiritually and naturally vital group of congregants; this is the overarching goal of godly leaders. Song & Ferch (2020) state:

According to Greenleaf (1977/2002), servant-leaders are “healers in the sense of making whole by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would be likely to attain for themselves” (p. 240, emphasis in original). Healing is underappreciated in leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). It is “the most rare and perhaps the most needed characteristic of leaders today” (Ferch, 2012, p. xi). A hallmark of a servant-leader is that “they heal others, and they do so through mature relationship to self, others, and God. (p. 72)

Song & Ferch (2020) strongly link servant-leadership as one of the preeminent leadership models to facilitate male and female leaders coming together as leaders and working together toward meeting the common goals of organizations. Song & Ferch (2020) assert, “servant-leadership, in its ethic of love, care, and service to the least privileged is a potential antidote to patriarchal binds because servant-leadership ‘espouses a nonhierarchical, participative approach to defining organizational objectives and ethics that recognizes and values the subjectivity and situatedness of organizational members’ (Reynolds, 2014, p. 57)” (Song & Ferch, 2020, p. 18).

Servant-leadership then can be a compelling force to foster conversation around gender-based approaches to leadership within diverse organizational structures.

Transactional-Transformative Leadership Theory

While the theoretical model of servant leadership is vital, it is certainly not the only leadership theory that warrants discussion. Another leadership theory worth noting is transactional-transformational. According to Cooper (2005), this leadership theory is the joining of what is generally considered two different leadership styles. Transactional leadership and transformational leadership are joined together. This theory asserts that the best leaders are transactional and transformational (Cooper, 2005). The best leaders know when to utilize what style and are not boxed into one format. (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

Gendered Leadership Theory

Margaret Atwood once said, “we still think of a powerful man as a born leader and powerful women as an anomaly.” The late British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, is an illuminating example of Atwood’s quote. Although a woman, many of the traditional masculine dispositional qualities, such as dominance and assertiveness, that Thatcher exhibited during her tenure stirred polarizing emotions toward her as a person, both professionally and personally. However, if she were born a man and her name perhaps Mark, then little would have been discussed about the powerful leadership qualities exhibited (Beckwith, 2015; Genovese, 2009). Northhouse (2019) likens women’s plight in leadership as a *leadership labyrinth* which could also be seen not only in Thatcher’s ascent to the top executive office in Britain but also in Angela Merkel ascent in Germany (Beckwith, 2015). Initially, the invisible barrier preventing women from ascending into the upper echelons of leadership within organizations was dubbed the glass ceiling, a term introduced into common vernacular by two *Wall Street Journal* reporters

in 1986 (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). However, Eagly and Carli (2007) introduced a different term to describe women's ascent into upper leadership positions: the *leadership labyrinth*. Eagly and Carli "identified limitations with the glass ceiling metaphor, including that it implies that everyone has equal access to lower positions until all women hit this single, invisible, and impassable barrier" (Northouse, 2019, p. 405). The leadership labyrinth conveys the impression "of a journey riddled with challenges all along the way not just near the top and these challenges can and has been successfully navigated by women (Northouse, 2019). The gender gap in leadership is not only an American problem, but it is a global issue characterized by a disproportionate number of women concentrated in lower-level and lower-authority positions than men (Powell & Graves, 2003).

Gendered Leadership Dispositional Differences

There is a well-established body of scholarship related to the differences between male and female leadership in secular and religious domains (Bammert, 2010; Burnett, 2017; Borgerson, 2018, Eagly, 2007). Many scholars agree that men and women lead differently, while the theories behind the differences offer a broad scope of conjecture. One of the leading scholars in the field of gendered leadership styles and role congruity is Alice Eagly. Eagly has published three books and several peer-reviewed articles related to gendered leadership, not only styles of leadership and dispositional characteristics related to how men and women lead but also articles on leadership struggles related to male dominance in religious and secular climates. Eagly (2007) notes:

Why might women and men display somewhat different leadership styles within the limits set by their leader roles? Women are faced with accommodating the sometimes conflicting demands of their roles as women and their roles as leaders. In general, people expect and prefer that women be communal, manifesting traits such as kindness, concern for others, warmth, and gentleness and that men be agentic, manifesting traits such as confidence, aggressiveness, and self-direction (e.g., Newport, 2001; Williams & Best,

1990). Because leaders are thought to have more agentic than communal qualities (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Schein, 2001), stereotypes about leaders generally resemble stereotypes of men more than stereotypes of women. As a result, men can seem usual or natural in most leadership roles, thereby placing women at a disadvantage (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001). (p. 4)

As noted above, Eagly (2001; 2003; 2007) believes the differences between why men and women lead differently are stereotypes related to gender-constructed ideology around masculinity and femininity.

Scholars sometimes view the struggle for women's place in Christendom as a parallel struggle with women's place in society at large. Scholars utilize the same term for both secular and religious struggles: feminism. Biblical feminism can be tracked as a social movement into the 1960s, which was parallel to the secular feminist movement in the United States. The first Evangelical Women's Caucus was formed in 1975, along with the publication of a book heralding women's authority in the Christian church. *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation*, by Nancy Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni, streamlined the Christian feminist's arguments and energized the base of men and women who were fighting for the idea that women should have equal authority with men over church ecclesiastical organizational authority (Bammert, 2010; Burnett, 2017). The traditional leader is seen through the lens of a heroic archetype where the leader:

“is a tough, self-reliant, combative man who works long hours, prioritizes results over family and relationships, controls his emotions and never shows weakness. And because images of leadership and masculinity have been interwoven, normative femininity and therefore women have no place in the dominant heroic discourse” (Binns, 2008, p. 165).

The new leadership archetype is leaving the heroic framework and moving into a relational leadership style. Relational leading recovers the feminized qualities of connectedness, empathy, emotional sensitivity, and vulnerability. “Feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than the male personality does (Gilligan, 1979). In

particular, masculinity is defined through separation, while femininity is defined through attachment” (Chodorow, 1978, p. 187). Relational leading defines leading as a practice of caring for colleagues and enabling others to act with emotional authenticity.

The heroic and relational leadership theories closely parallel constructs of masculinity and femininity. “Worldwide, people expect women to be the more communal sex—warm, supportive, and kind—and men to be the more agentic sex—assertive, dominant, and authoritative (Williams and Best, 1990). To the surprise of some observers, these gender stereotypes have not disappeared in the United States as women’s roles have changed” (Eagly 2020, p.3). Despite this evidence of the cultural masculinity of leadership roles, polls have found attitudinal shifts favorable to women leaders. This is commonly referred to as female advantage (Eagly, 2020). The attitudinal shift toward favorability for women leaders could be correlated with the increased demand for relational leadership and the association of this type of leadership with women. Fletcher (2004):

The recognition of a shift in models of leadership to include attributes socially ascribed to femininity has given rise to a body of literature in the popular press that is commonly called the “female advantage” (Helgeson, 1990; see also Fondas, 1997, Peters, 2003, Rosener, 1995, Sharpe, 2000). That is, the alignment of stereotypical feminine behavior with new leadership practices is assumed to give women an advantage in today's business environment. (p. 7)

Binns (2008) states, “relational leading entails what Townley (1994, p. 167) calls ‘the ability to reflect on the import of one's actions, stipulating the criteria through which one wants to live and judge practices.’”

Reynolds analyzed Spears' (2002) twenty characteristics to examine servant-leadership constructs in terms of gender. Reynolds (2014) argued that six of the ten characteristics distinguish servant leadership from other forms of leadership, whereas the other four are more in line with traditional notions of leadership. Foresight, conceptualization, awareness, and

persuasion can be characterized as leader behaviors, which are often associated with the more traditionally masculine aspect of leadership; whereas stewardship, listening, empathizing, healing, commitment to the growth of people, and building community, on the other hand, are predominantly needs-focused and other-oriented, and thus comprise more feminine attributed aspects of leadership (Reynolds, 2014).

Ethical leadership domains correlate with heroic and relational leadership with particular emphasis on ethics of justice and caring. The discussion of ethical leadership is added to expound upon the relational and heroic leadership theories and how this relates to how males and females lead differently. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2004) state:

The ethic of justice focuses on rights and law and is part of a liberal democratic tradition that, according to Delgado (1995), “is characterized by incrementalism, faith in the legal system, and hope for progress” (p. 1). the ethic of justice may overlap with other paradigms such as the ethics of critique (Purpel, 1989, 2004) and care (Katz, Noddings, & Strike, 1999; Meyers, 1998; Sernak, 1998). Overall, the ethic of justice considers questions such as: Is there a law, right, or policy that relates to a particular case? If there is a law, right, or policy, should it be enforced? And if there is not a law, right, or policy, should there be one? (p. 28)

The ethic of justice forms the basis for legal and administrative frameworks and can be viewed as cold, uncaring, and heroic. Masculinity is more associated with the ethical framework of justice than femininity. “Feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than the male personality does (Gilligan, 1979). In particular, masculinity is defined through separation, while femininity is defined through attachment (Chodorow, 1978)” (William, 1990). The ethic of care is viewed within the construct of traditionally feminine characteristics. Roland Martin (1993) wrote the following:

One of the most important findings of contemporary scholarship is that our culture embraces a hierarchy of value that places the productive processes of society and their associated traits above society’s reproductive processes and the associated traits of care and nurturance. There is nothing new about this. We are the inheritors of a tradition of

Western thought according to which the functions, tasks, and traits associated with females are deemed less valuable than those associated with males. (p. 144)

In her seminal book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan (1982) introduced the ethic of care by discussing a definition of justice different from Kohlberg's. Gilligan discovered that "unlike males in Kohlberg's studies who adopted rights and laws for the resolution of moral issues, women and girls frequently turn to another voice, that of care, concern, and connection, in finding answers to their moral dilemmas" (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2004, p. 16).

Joyce Fletcher keyed the term Post-heroic leadership (Fletcher, 2002, Fletcher & Kaeufer, 2003) as leadership that embodies 21st-century practicality. Post-heroic leadership is characterized by three traits that distinguish it from traditional individualist models (Fletcher 2004): (1) leadership as a practice is shared and distributed, leadership as a social practice is based on interactions, and (3) leadership as a learning process is based on outcomes. Post-heroic leadership is decentralized and thus circular. Instead of leadership from top to bottom, this circularity encompasses all levels of staff. Fletcher (2002) aligns the traits of Post-heroic leadership with feminist characteristics, and she discusses the scholarship supporting this alignment:

Many have noted that the traits associated with traditional, heroic leadership are masculine. Men or women can display them, but the traits themselves—such as individualism, control, assertiveness, and skills of advocacy and domination—are socially ascribed to men in our culture and generally understood as masculine (Acker, 1990, Calás & Smircich, 1993, Collinson & Hearn, 1996). In contrast, the traits associated with new, post-heroic leadership are feminine (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992, Fine & Buzzanell, 2000, Fletcher, 1994, Fondas, 1997). Again, men or women can display them, but the traits themselves—such as empathy, community, vulnerability, and skills of inquiry and collaboration—are socially ascribed to women in our culture and generally understood as feminine. (p. 41)

New models of leadership are rooted in a different, more relational, and interdependent belief system (Fletcher, 2002; Benhabib, 1992) than previous individualist models. These new

models are seen as more intrinsically feminine. However, this is not to say men have no place within these new paradigms of relational leading. It simply means men and women must work more congruently in the 21st century if abiding and authentic organizational success will be reached and maintained.

Masculine and Feminine Leadership Traits

The relationship between leader behaviors and gender has been studied by several scholars (Bem, 1974; Bass, 1990; Eagly and Karau, 1991). A foundational study conducted by Sandra Bem in 1974 laid the foundation for later adaptive and gendered leadership studies for combining traditional masculine and feminine leadership characteristics. Bem (1974) states:

Both in psychology and in society at large, masculinity and femininity have long been conceptualized as bipolar ends of a single continuum; accordingly, a person has had to be either masculine or feminine, but not both. This sex-role dichotomy has served to obscure two very plausible hypothesis: first that many individuals might be ‘androgynous’; that is, they might be both masculine and feminine, both assertive and yielding, both instrumental and expressive---depending on the situational appropriateness of these various behaviors. (p. 1)

Table 1

Masculine and Feminine Dispositional Items

TABLE 1
ITEMS ON THE MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALES OF THE BSRI

Masculine items	Feminine items	Neutral items
49. Acts as a leader	11. Affectionate	51. Adaptable
46. Aggressive	5. Cheerful	36. Conceited
58. Ambitious	50. Childlike	9. Conscientious
22. Analytical	32. Compassionate	60. Conventional
13. Assertive	53. Does not use harsh language	45. Friendly
10. Athletic	35. Eager to soothe hurt feelings	15. Happy
55. Competitive	20. Feminine	3. Helpful
4. Defends own beliefs	14. Flatterable	48. Inefficient
37. Dominant	59. Gentle	24. Jealous
19. Forceful	47. Gullible	39. Likable
25. Has leadership abilities	56. Loves children	6. Moody
7. Independent	17. Loyal	21. Reliable
52. Individualistic	26. Sensitive to the needs of others	30. Secretive
31. Makes decisions easily	8. Shy	33. Sincere
40. Masculine	38. Soft spoken	42. Solemn
1. Self-reliant	23. Sympathetic	57. Tactful
34. Self-sufficient	44. Tender	12. Theatrical
16. Strong personality	29. Understanding	27. Truthful
43. Willing to take a stand	41. Warm	18. Unpredictable
28. Willing to take risks	2. Yielding	54. Unsystematic

Note. The number preceding each item reflects the position of each adjective as it actually appears on the Inventory.

Note. This table gives a visual representation of qualities (items) from a psychological research (Gough, 1957) commonly accepted as masculine, feminine, and neutral. From “The

Measurement of Psychological Androgyny,” by Sandra L. Bem, 1974, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 42, Article 2 (<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0036215>) CC

Androgynous Leadership

Drawing from Eagly’s research, Daewoo Park became one of the first people to coin the term androgynous leadership. By this term, Park (1997) means biological gender does not necessarily equate to traditional feminine or traditionally masculine leadership styles. Biological men may adopt traditional feminine leadership characteristics, and biological women may adopt traditional masculine leadership characteristics. When male and female leaders merge masculine and feminine leadership characteristics, the emergence is an androgynous style of leadership; however, in order for male and female leaders to accomplish this goal, they must be adaptive leaders with self-awareness guided by a strong value system with integrity (Heifetz, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). Park (1997) states,

It has been frequently observed in the past that organizational goals could not be exclusively achieved by either masculine or feminine characteristics of leaders (Eagly and Karau, 1991). That is, neither masculine/task oriented nor feminine/relations-oriented leadership style could exclusively achieve goals in many organizations. Thus, a different approach becomes necessary for leaders and organizations. An “androgynous” leadership style is the most effective approach for organizational goals such as high performance and effectiveness: a leadership style that blends sex-role identities previously deemed to belong exclusively to men or women. (p. 6)

Women have traditionally been characterized by passiveness, dependence, fragility, non-aggression, non-competitiveness, and emotionality, while men have been characterized by independence, aggressiveness, competitiveness, leadership, assertiveness, courage, rationality, confidence, and emotional control. “These traditional masculine and feminine characteristics have been adopted to explain leadership styles and their outcomes, work motivation, and the acceptance of the leader” (Park, 1997, p. 8). However, many leadership theorists and researchers have mistakenly identified sex-role identification with biological sex which is a mistake. Not all

males are masculine, and not all females are feminine. Likewise, not all male leaders are task-oriented and not all female leaders are relations-oriented (Park, 1997).

As Park (1997) lays out in his article, androgyny combines masculinity and femininity. Previous studies suggested that a combination of traditional masculine and feminine qualities provides maximum leadership benefits rather than exclusive masculinity or exclusive femininity (Blanchard & Sargent, 1984; Chusmiar & Parker, 1991; Kent & Moss, 1993). Park (1997) states, “Kaplan and Sedney (1980) also explained several premises about androgynous identity and leadership style: broad repertoire of responses; flexibility in response to situational demands; and effectiveness.” Kaplan and Sidney’s first premise suggests that androgynous leaders have a wider range of possible reactions to any situation. That is, androgynous leaders should be able to react according to what they feel is most appropriate for the case, in other words, androgynous leaders are adaptive leaders. The second premise suggests that androgynous leaders will have the capacity to assess a situation and to determine the most appropriate response, which again points to an adaptive leadership model. The third premise suggests that androgynous leaders will have greater success in their encounters with the world than other leaders. However, this effectiveness depends on the subordinates’ willingness to accept the androgynous leaders (Kaplan and Sedney, 1980). When male and female leaders have a strong sense of self-awareness and are anchored in value-based leadership, they can incorporate both traditionally feminine and traditionally masculine characteristics into their interactions with those they lead.

This author does not in any way suggest women should replace men as leaders, but the assertion is that leadership teams should exhibit a greater degree of gender diversity so that qualities of masculinity and femininity can be represented in equal portions. In addition, both males and females can utilize perceived traditional masculine and feminine leadership traits. The

framework of these traits does not have to be gender specific. Still, it can be fluid as both male and female leaders become more comfortable and have a greater understanding of the different leadership styles of men and women (Benhabib, 1992; Binns, 2008; Vachhani, 2020).

Related Literature

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to provide the reader with a survey of the various scholarship and theories related to the subject matter pertaining to this research. This section will explore relevant scholarship aspects that have helped frame and inform the research. This part of the literature review is divided into three sections: 1) Pastoral Theology, 2) Leadership, and 3) Spiritual Formation.

Pastoral Theology

Pastoral theology has taken on a wide scope of meanings, shaping understanding around what constitutes a pastor and helps define what pastors do. Pastoral theology is difficult to define succinctly and is widely credited with its beginnings rooted in the work of Anton Boisen, whose struggle with mental illness would contribute to his landmark work in clinical pastoral education. Pastoral theology applies an interdisciplinary approach to ministry, drawing from the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, psychiatry, and ethics, among other disciplines, to promote healing transformation at not only an individual level but a community level (Kelcourse, 2000).

Pastoral Theology Defined

A pastor's vocation is all-encompassing and depending upon the denominational tradition, the levels of pastoral services have a wide-ranging scope of inclusion. Lapsley (1991) defines pastoral theology this way, "pastoral theology is a theological inquiry into the care of persons in an ecclesial context, or by ecclesial representatives" (p. 116). "At the core of pastoral theology are individual and corporate care practices. These have classically been understood as

healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. Since the 1980s, we have added a number of other aspects: liberating, surviving, empowering, envisioning” (Graham, 2016). In recent years, pastoral theology has evolved from simply a ‘theological inquiry’ into an entire empirical field of practical study. “Pastoral theology offers a framework through which resources from theology and the social sciences are brought together to address the problem of suffering” (Jeunnette, 2010, p. 10).

Throughout the long history of pastoral theology, Seward Hiltner provides a definition of pastoral theology that manufactures a common lens through which pastoral theology is viewed in the contemporary Protestant tradition. He traces the concept of pastoral theology to when it first appeared in theological writing in the mid-18th century, although the field did not gain widespread recognition as a theological discipline until the 1830s. (Dudley & Roozen, 2001). Hiltner describes pastoral theology as the “branch or field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all the operations and functions of the church and the minister, and then draws conclusions of a theological order from reflection on these observations” (Hiltner, 1958, p. 20). Hiltner further elaborates on the function of it, “pastoral theology is an operation-focused branch of theology, which begins with theological questions and concludes with theological answers, in the interim examining all acts and operations of pastor and church to the degree that they are involved the perspective of Christian shepherding” (Hiltner, 1958, p. 22-24). In recent decades as more and more light is spread on the diverse areas of suffering in congregants lives “the emphasis on personal care and healing grounded in an understanding of suffering as emanating from the individual’s psyche has been expanded to identify and address the impacts of sexism, racism, violence, and other oppressive realities” (Jeunnette, 2010, p 11). Pastoral theologians are increasingly imploring pastors to

provide opportunities for congregants to experience healing throughout their being. The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Church of Thessalonica, said: “and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Cultural Christianity in the 21st century is inundated with broken people weekly and pastors must be congregational leaders through the power of the Holy Spirit to foster a culture of complete healing toward the wholeness of individuals.

Pastoral Theological Methodology

John Patton one of the formative pastoral theologians, explained the ultimate task of pastoral theology, “the task of pastoral theology is to help us to recover our heritage and to recover from it” (Patton & Childs, 1988, n.p.). Graham (2016), states

pastoral theology, theory, research, and practice may not be separated, but serve one another. As a constructive theological enterprise, pastoral theology welcomes new questions and formulates new answers; it is not a rigid set of established orthodoxies, but a dynamic engagement of traditions, practices, and ethical claims with a critical and constructive eye. Thinking and caring co-exist in pastoral theology. (n.p.)

Pastoral theologians are spiritual and religious caregivers and, as such have a unique responsibility and oversight of the souls entrusted into their care by the great shepherd, Jesus Christ. Graham’s methodology of care is divided into five parts. The first part is comprised of descriptions and acts of pastoral caregiving. The second part examines these acts through the lens of secular theory of human behavior. The third part examines pastoral caregiving acts in light of religious tradition aspects. The final two parts explore ways in which new theological understandings can be constructed, and new strategies to guide care are developed (Jeunnette, 2010).

Feminist Pastoral Theology

In the theoretical framework section of this literature review, this author touched on the concept of biblical feminism and how secular feminism is viewed as a parallel struggle with biblical feminism tracing its roots back to the early 1960s. Pastoral theology can be viewed through a similar lens. Historically, pastoral theology scholarship has been male-centric, authored overwhelmingly by men for men. By men for men, this author means the studies, by and large, have centered around men at the center of the leadership, whether it be theological education or pastoral leadership in general. However, as society is increasingly becoming more balanced in understanding male and female leadership capabilities, pastoral theology is shifting from androcentric to a cooperative understanding of what both sexes can contribute to the leadership narrative (De Jong Van Arkel, 2000). *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology* offers a collection of scholarly essays edited by Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Brita Gill-Austern, which center around how women are increasingly shaping the narrative of pastoral theology in theory and practice. The book outlines the contours of feminist perspectives in pastoral theology. “Feminist and womanist theories have wielded an influence in pastoral care on par with the influence wielded by psychology in previous decades. Moreover, the field of pastoral theology is undergoing significant change, not just as a result of liberation theologies but also as a result of other significant changes such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, globalization, conflicts between theology and religious study, and professionalization and specialization of pastoral counselors” (Miller-McLemore & Gill-Austern, 1999, p. 4).

Leadership

The concept of leadership is embedded throughout the work of this dissertation, and it is the desire of this author to seek a better understanding of how male and female leaders can work together instead of separately or in competition with one the other to build a more prosperous

Christian community. The foundation of successful leadership is spiritual vision. Dynamic and transformative leaders have spiritual vision anchored in a biblical or Christian Worldview.

Theological Foundation

The word vision is used 79 times in the King James Bible, spanning each book of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Abraham was not rooted in steadfast confidence in God's promises until he gave him a vision of the promise he was to attain (Genesis 15). At the beginning of Jacob's journey to find a wife in Mesopotamia, he was given a prophetic vision at Bethel of a ladder with angels ascending and descending (Genesis 28). Solomon said that without a vision the people perish (Proverbs 28), and God instructed Habakkuk to write the vision and make it plain for all to read and run therein (Habakkuk 2:2). The Apostle Paul was transformed into a trailblazing Christian leader after his vision was taken and restored on the Damascus Road (Acts 7 and 8). Leaders must have a vision to be dynamic, transformative leaders. "Psychologists find that man is prevailingly and persistently "eye-minded." That is, in his waking life, he is likely to think, imagine and remember in terms of vision" (Bromiley, 1979).

Spiritual Formation

The purpose of spiritual leadership and pastoral care or the cure of souls is spiritual formation. This research focuses on determining if pastoral care is administered differently and more effectively by pastors of different genders. Pastoral care will be measured using three domains traditionally seen in pastoral care scholarship as forming the framework for such care: guiding, reconciling, and sustaining (McNeil, 1951; Graham, 2016; Patton & Childs, 1988). The ultimate goal of pastoral care, as seen through the governing domains, is to foster the image of Christ in the lives of individual believers, which is the process of spiritual formation. The

Apostle Paul told the Galatian believers that his desire was for Christ to be *formed* in them (Galatians 4:19), and he told the believers at Thessalonica, “may God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NIV). Not only is spiritual formation a clear theme in the Pauline writings, but it is also a clear theme throughout scripture from the Garden narrative through Revelation.

Genesis of Spiritual Formation

Greenman & Kalantzis (2010) trace the origins of the spiritual formation concept of spiritual growth back to Richard Foster’s 1978 landmark book, *The Celebration of Discipline*:

Foster’s work has been followed by other pioneering writings from prolific authors such as Dallas Willard, James Houston, and Eugene Peterson. These four writers together have played a principal role in shifting the focus of mainstream evangelical conversation from traditional (but narrower) category of discipleship to the newer (and broader) category of spiritual formation...each in their own way have attempted to articulate evangelical spirituality afresh by providing a deeper biblical foundation, a stronger theological rationale and a wider historical awareness. (p. 24)

Foster’s concept of spiritual growth and formation was seen as a pathway of discipline which he termed the “door to liberation.” The framework for spiritual formation in Foster’s work was inward disciplines, outward disciplines, and corporate disciplines. Through the functions of each of these three disciplines, believers could reach spiritual maturity in Christ. The academic theological progression of spiritual formation since the time of Foster’s original work has continued to build upon this foundation (Chandler, 2014; Foster, 1998).

Spiritual Formation Defined

Biblically, spiritual formation, also known as spiritual growth, is understood to be a process that parallels physical development (Chandler, 2014). Greenman & Kalantzis (2010) define spiritual formation in the following way, “spiritual formation is our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the

Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world” (p. 24). Infants develop and mature as they grow and are fed by their parents. Through the maturation process, they develop through their teen years and eventually into adulthood through the natural growth process.

Spiritual formation is the same way (Mulholland & Barton, 2016, p. 27). Peter acknowledged this process, “as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:12, KJV), and the writer of Hebrews gave an instance where spiritual maturation was not occurring, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Hebrews 5:12). Spiritual formation is an integral theme in scripture.

Howard (2018) defines spiritual formation as “a Spirit-and human-led process by which individuals and communities mature in relationship with the Christian God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and are changed into ever-greater likeness to the life and gospel of this God” (p.18). Howard asserts that the end goal of spiritual formation will be that “all things [are] made new” (p. 23). One of the keys in both Greenman, Kalantzis, and Howard’s definitions of spiritual formation is that the process is both spirit and human-led. God uses the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the ministry and Christian community to form his image in believers’ lives (1 Corinthians 1:21 & Ephesians 4:5-13). A crucial part of pastoral leadership and pastoral care is this relational work with the Holy Spirit in leading believers in their restorative relationship with God, where all things are made new (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Ecological Model of Spiritual Formation

The biblical and theological framework outlined above for spiritual growth defines the work as a process of renewal in believers through the work of the Holy Spirit, leaders, and the Christian community. The common theme through the scholarship is connection. Spiritual

formation is a work of interconnectedness. A discussion of the different theological models of spiritual formation is beyond the scope of this research, but an understanding of the ecological motif is vital to understanding pastoral care under the three domains, which will help form the framework for this author's research.

Lowe & Lowe (2018) state, "an ecological perspective on how we grow as Christians enlarges our orientation to spiritual formation and engenders relationship and connections beyond our tradition privatized perceptions of how Christians grow" (p. 4). Mattis et al. (2006) write, "it is critical that scholars take an ecological approach to studies of spiritual maturity" (p. 293). Ecology is a network. Campbell and Garner (2016) states,

The network has become an important conceptual tool to describe how people in contemporary society interact and build community. In many respects, seeing the community as a network offers us a more accurate picture of how people form and maintain relationships, including relationships within religious contexts (p. 11).

Ammerman (1997) states "that many churches function as a network of social relations and that the recognition of this can strengthen the role and influence of churches in modern community life." The ecological motif of interconnectedness sometimes challenges traditional Christianity's Western mindset. "Individual spiritual growth is never exclusively individual; it always plays out in some larger spiritual ecology as individual Christians connect to and interact with the Godhead, God's Word, God's Spirit, and other members of the body of Christ" (Lowe & Lowe, 2018, p. 210). There is a solid theological argument that thinking biblically about spiritual formation involves thinking ecologically since the scriptures point in that direction. The Bible is an ecological book that regularly refers to ecological realities in God's original creation and in his new creation in Christ (Lowe & Lowe, 2018).

Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature

Christianity is changing rapidly and 21st century church is looking increasingly diverse with each passing month. To meet the needs of God's people, Christian leaders must continually adapt methodologies to today's diverse landscape. Leadership and methodologies must always be rooted and framed within the context of a biblical and Christian worldview, but this cannot be used as an excuse for inaction. This literature review has reviewed the relevant topics and subtopics related to the research interest of this author.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study is grounded in the understanding that Christian leadership is a complex issue that traditionally has been dominated by men. However, over the past few decades, leadership is changing as more women enter top Christian leadership roles (Purvis, 1995; Fogarty, 2010; Marrow, 2014; Burnett, 2017). As men and women work closely together in complementary roles it is vital for each to understand what the other can offer in a team-based leadership approach. As this literature review has demonstrated, there is a vast amount of scholarship lending to the differences between male and female leadership. Rather than assigning the qualities of male and female leadership traits to the specific genders, more scholars are beginning to term the traits as "masculine" and "feminine" leadership qualities with implications that either gender can utilize the various traits (Fletcher, 2002; Fletcher & Kaeufer, 2003). This is an important differentiation because a man who is an adaptive leader can utilize "feminine" qualities of leadership in warranted situations to better serve his constituents, and a woman who is an adaptive leader can utilize "masculine" qualities of leadership to serve her constituents better. As leadership theory continues to develop, more adaptive leaders will use both masculine and feminine attributes regardless of their specific gender (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

Pastoral care administered by pastors is one of the most vital aspects of the responsibilities of a pastoral leader, and as such, the pastor should be well-grounded all areas and functions of pastoral leadership and care (Oden, 1987; Tidball, 1997). Pastoral care and pastoral leadership go hand in hand (Evans, 2000). This study explored the lived experiences of parishioners who have experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female pastoral leader. The possible implications of this are important because the data will demonstrate whether parishioners identify the traditional “feminine” or traditional “masculine” qualities found in the leadership literature to the care they received under each pastoral leader; it cannot be assumed that a male leader will demonstrate “masculine” care qualities neither can it be assumed that a female pastoral leader will demonstrate “feminine” care qualities.

Gap in the Literature

The emerging themes and trends presented in this literature review demonstrate a vast amount of scholarship surrounding the concepts of gendered pastoral leadership (Benhabib, 1992; Binns, 2008; De Jong Van Arkel, 2000; Dudley & Roozen, 2001; Graham, 2016; Jeunnette, 2010) and pastoral care (Cole, 2010; McClure, 2011; Miller-McLemore & Gill-Austern, 1999; Patton & Childs, 1988; Vachhani, 2020). However, there is an evident gap in research or available scholarship on gendered pastoral care from the perspective of a congregation that has been pastored by both a male and a female (Danberry, 2017; Silo, 2022; Sironen, 2020). Danberry (2017) completed a research study looking into the experiences of female clergy in the United Methodist Church in West Virginia. Danberry used Ealy’s role congruity theory, a variation of Eagly’s social role theory, to guide her research. In this study, Danberry spoke to women’s leadership in churches, but it fell short of speaking to both genders within the same churches and how this gendered leadership could affect the care parishioners

receive or perceive to receive. Additionally, Sironen (2020) researched the links between pastoral leadership within the church and spiritual formation in the congregation. The findings enrich the conversation surrounding leadership and spiritual formation, which is discussed in this literature review, but it does not speak to how gendered leadership plays a role in this formation but speaks to leadership in general.

This research will fill this gap by providing data taken from parishioners from the same church that has had both a male and a female lead pastor. The researcher will seek to explore the data and study to identify emerging trends to see if parishioners view the type of pastoral care they received by a male and female differently. The trends which may or may not emerge from this data can be used as a foundation for further studies in gendered pastoral care.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review, has given a survey of pertinent topics and subtopics surrounding the research topic of this dissertation. The emerging themes show that men and women pastors lead churches differently but how men and women administer pastoral care differently is yet to be determined.

Profile of the Current Study

This review examined the theological and theoretical literature related to gendered pastoral leadership and pastoral care. Additionally, a rationale for this research study, as well as a gap in the literature, were identified. The main focus of this study is to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who have experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor. Gendered leadership in general and gendered pastoral leadership specifically have been explored because the evolution of both is vital to this research study. Pastoral care has a long and rich history in Scripture and throughout Christian history. However, within the past couple of decades, women have gained increasing leadership responsibilities within the church.

Therefore, tracing this evolution is vital as it relates directly to how pastoral care is imaged or reimaged in light of shifting leadership dynamics within the church. The phenomena of churches that are pastored by both a male and a female provide a rich setting to study how pastoral care is experienced by parishioners of both genders and that is where this study seeks to shed light.

Though gendered pastoral leadership and pastoral care both have rich academic histories, studies linking leadership and care as it relates to gender together with specificity to the experiences of the parishioners are lacking. This study seeks to fill that gap.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized an interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological framework to explore the lived experiences of individuals who have received pastoral care under a male and a female lead pastor. This chapter detailed the research methodology and design used for this study, including a description of the setting, the participants, the ethical considerations of the research, and the data collection and data analysis methods. The primary data collection method for this study were primary interviews which also allowed for the possibility of follow-up interviews if the researcher deemed it necessary to clarify questions or emerging themes. This chapter gave a framework for how these interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded to identify trends from the data. In addition, this chapter also discussed the trustworthiness of the research with an additional section related to Liberty University's Institutional Review Board which detailed the steps taken to obtain approval from the IRB before any of the actual research was conducted.

Research Design Synopsis

This section provided a summary of the research design used for this study. This included a review of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, and methodology.

The Problem

Biological and constructed differences between genders have been known to exist theoretically and empirically as far back as the biblical account of the creation narrative in the Garden of Eden (Jewett, 1975). As societal understandings of gender continually progress, studies are becoming more widely available related to gender differences in a range of areas, such as leadership styles, personality, and disposition (Eagly, 2013; Powell & Graves, 2003;

Vachhani, 2020). In recent years, there has been an even greater increase in research dedicated to these differences in gender as it relates to leadership in secular and religious organizations. The general academic consensus agrees that men and women lead differently (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fogarty, 2010). Perhaps nowhere is the paradigm of gender and leadership effectiveness or acceptability more fiercely debated than in Christianity.

For decades mainline pastoral leadership was reserved for males with little exception (Burnett, 2017). While the focus of this study will be curtailed to the religious domain of church settings, it should be noted that females have had limited opportunities for top leadership positions in secular corporations as well (Longman, 2018; Longman & Anderson, 2016; Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). In recent years, as denominations have become more accepting of women in varying leadership roles, women are also becoming more readily accepted as pastoral leaders in many of these denominations worldwide. As women in pastoral leadership roles continue to increase in Christian denominations, scholars are dedicating more research and publishing more scholarship in an attempt to understand and analyze the differences between male and female pastoral leadership (Chapman, 1975; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999; Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Kent, Blair, et al., 2010; Kiser, 2015; Merchant, 2012).

The idea of leadership influence within religious organizations is generally understood to be ultimately centered around fostering spiritual formation in believers' lives (Lanik, 2006). A critical aspect of religious leadership relates to pastoral care, which is a vital part of spiritual formation. This research study will seek to understand the lived experiences of parishioners who have received pastoral care under a male and a female lead pastor. A good amount of scholarship has been published (i.e., books, articles, handbooks, surveys) related to the critical function of pastoral care in churches (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994; Doehring, 1981; Patton, 1993; Redding,

2012). However, there is a gap in research exploring and analyzing the lived experiences of parishioners who have received pastoral care under both a male and female lead pastor in a church setting (Danberry, 2017; Silo, 2022; Sironen, 2020). The focus of this research study will be to explore these lived experiences using an interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

Pastoral care should be a topic of great concern among church leaders as it encompasses an area of great importance in the spiritual formation of believers' lives (Evans, 2000; Holifield, 2007; Lanik, 2006; Petersen, 2007). Given the established research and scholarship-related dispositional and leadership differences between males and females, exploring the lived experiences of parishioners who have received pastoral care under each gender will be a valuable addition to the available scholarship.

Purpose Statement

This interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both male and female lead pastor at three selected churches. For this research, pastoral care was defined as helping acts done by pastoral leaders directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of parishioners (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994). The guiding theory that framed this research study was Eagly's (1987) Social Role Theory, which argues that shared gender stereotypes develop from gender division of labor within society.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to guide this study. There were three overall research questions:

RQ1. What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor?

RQ2. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

RQ3. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative research study employed an interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological framework to explore the lived experiences of targeted parishioners in the phenomena of pastoral care as it was administered by both a male a female lead pastor. Qualitative research approaches aim to explore and understand the meaning individuals ascribe to their experiences as they attempt to make meaning of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2018). Researchers use this approach to explore and investigate to learn more about a social phenomenon and unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations, events, or artifacts. Qualitative research contributes depth of understanding of dimensions of social life. (Leavy, 2017; Creswell, 2018). “Qualitative researchers rarely try to simplify what they observe. Instead, they recognize that the issue they are studying has many dimensions and layers and try to portray it in its multifaceted form” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015, p. 269).

Peoples (2021) describes phenomenology as the essence of something as it is described and how the essence of something is described in terms of how it functions in the lived experience and how it shows itself in consciousness as an object of reflection. Phenomenological research seeks to understand the consciousness of individual experiences from the first-person point of view. It aims to understand experiences as they are lived by individuals and seeks to answer the question, “what is it like to experience a certain phenomenon?” From this question, a researcher can analyze multiple experiences of a situation and make generalizations about that experience (Peoples, 2021). The purpose of phenomenological studies is to understand the process of an experience from the participant’s point of view, with the focus being the

phenomenon as it is typically lived and perceived by the group of people in the research study (Leavy, 2017, p. 276).

This research study specifically employed a hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology lens which is based on the foundational philosophical work of Martin Heidegger and attempts to understand the essential meaning surrounding the lived experiences of persons being affected by the phenomena (Peoples, 2021; Crist & Tanner, 2003). The interpretive (which is also sometimes referred to as constructivist) lens examines “how people engage in the process of constructing and reconstructing meanings through daily interactions” (Leavy, p. 129).

Edmond Husserl (1859/1938) is considered the father of phenomenology and mentored Heidegger in his early years. Heidegger later broke away from the foundational views of Husserlian phenomenological philosophy to form his philosophical lens of inquiry. (Van Manen, 2015; Peoples, 2021). Thus the two main frameworks of phenomenological inquiry (transcendental and hermeneutic) were born from the work of Husserl and his student, Heidegger. Husserl believed phenomenology was transcendental in nature and required the researcher to divorce himself or herself of preconceived knowledge or prejudice for a time while the research was being conducted and analyzed. This is done in the form of bracketing, where the researcher suspends judgments to focus on analyzing the participants’ lived experiences (Leedy & Omrod, 2019; Peoples, 2021). Husserl’s philosophical approach became known as transcendental phenomenology. Heidegger split from Husserl’s transcendental approach: “he believed that there was no way we could bracket our experiences because we are always in the world with others in the circumstances of existence” (Peoples, 2021, p. 32). This philosophical approach became known as hermeneutic phenomenology.

Interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological studies typically employ in-depth interviews as the primary source of data collection (Leedy & Omrod, 2019 & Leavy, 2017). Leedy and Omrod (2019) assert, “phenomenological researchers almost exclusively depend on lengthy (perhaps 1 to 2 hours in length) interviews with a small, carefully selected sample of participants” (p. 273). Since this study attempted to explore the lived experiences of individuals who received pastoral care under male and female lead pastors, interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology offered the best framework to study these experiences. This type of framework allowed the researcher to illuminate rich descriptions and personal meanings of lived experiences surrounding the phenomenon of experiencing pastoral care by both a male and female lead pastor. A phenomenological study was most appropriate to study these experiences as opposed to a different method of qualitative inquiry, such as a case study, because the researcher was looking into the experiences of individuals from other churches and focusing specifically on the experience of the parishioner within the given phenomena.

Setting

The setting for this research study took place in three different church settings. Although the actual interviews did not occur in the churches themselves, the lived experiences of the parishioners took place within these particular church structures. Each of the three churches were charismatic or spirit-filled, experienced leadership under both a male and a female pastor, and were operational since at least the 1970s. Each of the three churches had a form of congregational church government (Toon & Cowan, 2004). However, it is important to note that the authority and office of the pastor was historically respected and revered. This was important to note as it laid out the structure of pastoral care as administered by the lead pastor as opposed to congregational committees within the local church (Babb, 2018; Dillen, 2014). The

geographic locations of the churches were Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee, which spanned from the Midwest to the South in the United States. One of the churches was considered large, with an average congregational size of 1,000, while the other two were smaller, with an average attendance ranging from 100 to 250. The demographics of each church was racially and age diverse, with a good mix of older and younger parishioners and different races represented.

Participants

The goal of this study was to explore the phenomena to better understand the lived experiences of individual parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor. The sample participants that were selected for this study were purposeful “based on the premise that seeking out the best cases for the study produces the best data (Leavy, 2017, p. 148). It was the goal of this researcher “to find ‘information-rich cases’ that best address the research purpose and questions (Morse, 2010; Patton, 2015). The “purposeful sample” (Leavy, 2017) was selected using a “convenience sampling” technique (Leavy, 2017, p. 149) where participants were identified based on general knowledge of and accessibility to the researcher as the primary research instrument. Participants were selected for this study who met the following criteria, which was used as a measure to ensure each participant could give information-rich data which spoke to the phenomena being studied.

All participants met the following set of established criteria.

1. Individuals were at least 18 years of age and experienced pastoral care under both a male and female lead pastor. These parameters were designed to ensure each participant met the adult consent requirements and could provide mature feedback.
2. Individuals experienced at least two years of maturation under each of the gendered lead pastor (i.e., at least two years under the male and two years under the female lead pastor). This equated to a total of at least four years of longevity in the particular church. These parameters ensured that each

participant could accurately give voice to the experiences of pastoral care under an extended period time in a variety of different situations.

3. Individuals were able and willing to make themselves available for at least one interview which lasted between 60 to 90 minutes, with the possibility of a follow-up interview if deemed necessary by the researcher.

Participants were personally contacted by the researcher using the Research Recruitment Form (See Appendix B), which ensured they met the above-established criteria and were willing to participate in the study. Leavy (2017) asserts that phenomenological researchers almost exclusively depend on lengthy interviews as the main instrument for data collection. Interviews typically last between one to two hours, with interview participants consisting of a small sample group of between (5 to 25 individuals) who are all carefully and purposefully selected by the researcher based on their common direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. Phenomenological interviews are typically unstructured and require the researcher and participant to work together to “arrive at the heart of the matter” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46). The researcher must listen closely as participants describe their lived experiences related to the phenomena. As the participant is describing the experience, the research should be alert to subtle cues in participants’ “expressions, pauses, questions, and occasional sidetracks” (Leavy, 2017, p. 274).

The researcher attempted to ensure the participants in the research study were demographically diverse in that a range of ages, races, and actual time under each pastor, were taken into consideration when the participants were selected so that the sample group had rich and diverse experiences under the phenomena and so the group would not be homologous. During Phase Three, general questions of the Interview Protocol Form, the researcher gathered church involvement data from the participants (see Appendix D). The researcher asked the

participants to discuss their level of involvement in their local church. This data spoke toward the participants' potential relationship with the lead pastor.

Role of the Researcher

Following traditional roles of phenomenological studies and interviews, the researcher acted as the primary research instrument as recorder, reporter, analyzer, as well as interactor (Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017). The researcher conducted the interviews and also developed the interviews using research-based protocols as is typically employed in qualitative research (Creswell, 2018, p. 181).

According to Peoples (2021), hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is never really free of what Heidegger referred to as pre-understandings related to the studied phenomena. Heidegger and Husserl asserted that the presuppositions of the researcher would be present in the process of data collection and analysis. For the purpose of this research study, this researcher used the process of reflexivity (Creswell, 2018, p. 182) to explore the pre-understandings the researcher brought into the study. The researcher brought to this study the background and pre-understandings of what it was like to have lived the experience of receiving pastoral care under both a male and female pastor. This researcher experienced the given phenomena being studied. At the time of this writing, the researcher is thirty-five years old and was raised in the charismatic or spirit-filled Christian movement. During the researcher's formative years through age twenty, the researcher received pastoral care in three different churches, all pastored by males. However, at the age of twenty-one, the researcher joined a church pastored by a female and has remained in that church until this writing. Having experienced pastoral care under both a male and female pastor, this author had experience related to the phenomena, which relates to Heidegger's hermeneutic lens in that the author had ideas and relative understanding of the

phenomena and could use that as a point of understanding when working with the sample group and writing about the overall findings.

This researcher's background and identified pre-understandings had the potential to bring bias into the study. This researcher acknowledged that possibility and made every effort to ensure objectivity was used when research data was collected and interpreted. To ensure objectivity this researcher utilized the process of bracketing. Tufford and Newman (2012) describe bracketing as "a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research" (introduction). Bracketing also helped the researcher reach deeper levels of reflection across all stages of the research process (Tufford & Newman). One of the bracketing methods Tufford and Newman (2012) recommend is writing memos throughout the data collection and analysis process. Writing memos allow the researcher time to examine and reflect upon the engagement with the data. This researcher utilized the memos method and purposefully wrote memos throughout the interview process which helped to identify potential biases and emotions that arose during the data collection and analysis process.

Ethical Considerations

Research for this dissertation was conducted in compliance with Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its Graduate School of Divinity's Christian Leadership program. The researcher completed the IRB process and ensured all supporting documents and parts were submitted in compliance with the application process as provided on the IRB of Liberty University's website.

All participants in this research study were at least eighteen years old and signed the most up-to-date Informed Consent Form (See Appendix C) as approved by the IRB of Liberty

University and were able to withdraw from the study at any time during the research process. All participants in the study remained confidential to protect the identity of the participants. This ensured that participants could be open and honest in their responses and discussion without fear of retaliation from churches, pastors, or others. In compliance with the IRB process, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. The pseudonym remained simple. For example, if a participant's name was John Doe, they would be assigned the pseudonym Participant One and so forth. Interviews were recorded using a handheld audio digital recorder. All recordings were stored on the researcher's password-protected secured computer. Participants were notified of the interview format and granted permission before the interviews. The in-person interview format allowed the researcher to use a handheld audio digital recorder to record the interviews. The interviews were then transferred onto the researcher's password-protected secured computer, and the original audio file from the handheld recorder was deleted. Printed transcripts were kept in a secure file within the researcher's office and will be shredded three years after the research and data analysis process is completed. All data were stored on a password-protected secured computer owned by the researcher. Data will be kept in confidence for three years, as indicated by the IRB of Liberty University.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

For this phenomenological study, participant data was gathered through in-person interviews. The participants were selected from three different churches, and the overall participant size was twelve individuals, equating to four individuals from each church. Data triangulation was embedded into the interview questions, which increases the reliability of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017). According to Peoples (2021), "a combination of instruments is ideal rather than one so that the findings are rich, but dissertation

students should also be realistic about choosing various instruments so that they do not overwhelm themselves with unrealistic expectations” (p. 50).

Collection Methods

Phenomenological research studies largely depend upon interviews as the primary instrument for data collection (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The researcher conducted individual interviews using a selected group of twelve individuals. One in-depth interview with the possibility of a follow-up was conducted with twelve participants from three churches. Therefore, the researcher had a total of twelve in-depth interviews from which to gather data. The twelve participants were divided into six males and six females or three groups of four---four participants per church. The researcher sought participants from various ethnicities as well as age ranges. It was the intent of this researcher to have a heterogeneous sample of participants so that the most diverse data could be gathered for the research purpose (Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017).

Instruments and Protocols

The assessment used to determine whether a participant met the criteria to participate in the interviews was guided by the Recruitment Letter (Appendix B). The Recruitment Letter was sent to individuals the researcher selected based on the convenience sampling technique. Once the Recruitment Letter and the Informed Consent Form (See Appendices B and C) were received the participants were considered participants in the study. All participants met the requirements described in the participant section of this Chapter. The researcher was familiar with three separate churches pastored by both a male and a female and thus identified twelve individuals across all three churches to participate in the study using the heterogeneous criteria discussed in the preceding sections to ensure a diverse participant demographic. To assure the reliability and

acceptability of the data collection efforts, all required forms were submitted to the Institutional Review Board of Liberty University for evaluation and subsequent approval. Extra care was taken to ensure that all documents submitted for IRB review contained the appropriate elements for approval.

The Interview Protocol Form (IPF) (See Appendix D) was developed from the Creswell and Creswell (2018) interview protocol sample form provided in the text for qualitative research inquiry and was tailored around the research questions unique to this research study. To make this possible, semi-structured interview formats (discussed more in the sections below) were utilized throughout the interviews.

In-Depth Interviews

The interviews were conducted in person so that relational connections could be appropriately made (Leavy, 2017). The interviews were in-depth and followed a semi-structured format. In semi-structured interviews, “participants are able to use their own language, provide long and detailed responses if they choose, and go in any direction they want in response to the question” (Leavy, 2017, p. 139).

The interview followed the IPF (Appendix D) developed by the researcher using Creswell and Creswell’s (2018) recommendations for qualitative research inquiry. Creswell and Creswell’s (2018) sample interview protocol has six parts (p. 191), and the Interview Protocol Form used for this research followed this format in six phases: (1) Basic Information About the Interview, (2) Introduction, (3) Opening Questions, (4) Content Questions, (5) Using Probes, (6) and Closing Instructions. The interviews were recorded as discussed using a digital recorder, and the researcher also made handwritten memo notes using the established IPF (Appendix D). Phase One of the interview included basic information about the interview, such as the time and date of

the interview, where the interview took place, and the names of both the interviewer and the interviewee. Also, during Phase One of the protocol, the researcher collected the signed Informed Consent Form (See Appendix C) and ensured the participant understood the interview process. Additionally, the researcher took an opportunity to address any questions or concerns the participant may have had.

During Phase Two of the interview, the researcher took time to put the participant at ease through informal introductions (Creswell, 2018). The openings were a time when the researcher made casual conversation about family and asked the participant to do the same. During the introduction phase, the researcher also discussed the interview structure and the semi-structured format and overall goals of the interaction with the participant. It was important for the participants to realize the open-ended nature of the interview questions because they were meant to illicit salient responses or themes that could be identified across each interview (Creswell, 2018, p. 191). Additionally, during the introduction phase, the researcher read a formal statement detailing the purpose of the study and defined the concept of pastoral care for the participant (See Appendix D).

Phase Three of the interview protocol was an important first step in the interview and was meant to set the interviewee at ease. For this phase, the researcher asked opening questions meant to get the participant to talk about themselves in a non-alienating way. In addition, during this phase, the researcher gathered general data regarding the participant's level of church involvement (See Appendix D). After this phase, the interviewer moved into the fourth and most important phase of the interview protocol: the content questions.

During the fourth interview phase, the researcher asked content questions tied directly to the research questions guiding this study. The following questions were asked during the

interview. The interview questions were listed below each research question they attempted to answer. The questions were also included in the IPF (Appendix D).

RQ1. What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor?

IQ1. Please describe the pastoral care you have received under your first pastor, whether male or female. What specific helping acts have you personally experienced from this pastor? i.e., Has this pastor performed marriage or funeral ceremonies for you or your immediate family; Describe the type of counseling you received under their care and hospital or home visits during troubled times. How often did the pastor personally contact you via letter or phone for encouragement? How would you describe the pastors' level of pastoral care during your experience under their leadership?

IQ2. Please describe the pastoral care you received under your second pastor, whether male or female. What specific helping acts have you personally experienced? i.e., Has this pastor performed marriage or funeral ceremonies for you or your immediate family? Describe the type of counseling you received under their care and hospital or home visits during troubled times. How often did the pastor personally contact you via letter or phone for encouragement? How would you describe the pastors' level of pastoral care during your experience under their leadership?

IQ3. Please describe the natural and spiritual transition you experienced during the transition between the male to female lead pastor or vice versa.

IQ4. Please describe the dispositional qualities exhibited during the pastoral care you received from the male lead pastor.

IQ5. Please describe the dispositional qualities exhibited during the pastoral care you received from the female lead pastor.

RQ2. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

IQ1. Please describe the pastoral care strengths you believe your female lead pastor exhibited.

IQ2. Please describe the pastoral care weaknesses you believe your male lead pastor exhibited.

RQ3. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

IQ1. Please describe the pastoral care weaknesses you believe your male lead pastor exhibited.

IQ2. Please describe the pastoral care weaknesses you believe your female lead pastor exhibited.

These open-ended questions were meant to elicit responses that could become conversational between the researcher and the participant. The researcher intended that from the initial content questions, the participant would describe the narrative of their lived experiences under each pastor. During this process, the fifth portion of the interview protocol, or the use of probes, was a natural part of the process. As the participant described their experiences, the researcher used probing questions, when needed, such as “tell me more,” “could you give more detail,” or “could you explain your response more.”

After the content and probing questions were asked, the researcher began with the closing instructions section of the interview protocol. During this time, the researcher thanked the participant for his or her time and assured them of the confidential nature of their responses. The interview process lasted 60 to 90 minutes (Leavy, 2017; Creswell, 2018).

Follow-Up Interview

After the initial interview data was organized and analyzed, the researcher had the option to conduct follow-up interviews via Zoom on a case-by-case basis if questions required clarification. The potential follow-up interview also followed a less formal and semi-structured format where the researcher asked a series of follow-up questions to clarify any information that may not have been clear from the initial interview. If needed, the researcher took the opportunity in the follow-up interview to ensure the research questions were adequately answered and any

sub-topic streams of information were also adequately explored to ensure emerging trends in data were identified.

Procedures

This section discussed the procedures used to construct the research study. The initial procedural step was to complete the IRB of Liberty University application process to ensure all parts of the research study were approved. In order to accomplish this task, the researcher completed the IRB checklist and application found on Liberty University's Institutional Review Board's website (2021).

After the study was approved, initial contact was made with the twelve participants either through online social media platforms (i.e., Facebook messenger), e-mail or via telephone to ensure the prospective participant was willing to participate. The initial contact was made using the Research Recruitment Form (See Appendix B) developed for this study. After the participant group was finalized, the interviews were set up using the telephone and online calendar of the researcher.

Once the scheduling was finalized, the participants were sent an e-mail confirming the appointment times. The Informed Consent Form was collected at the time of each interview and was approved by the Liberty University IRB. During scheduling communications between the researcher and the participant, the participants were given the opportunity to address any concerns they had related to the study, and the researcher addressed these concerns or questions. The overarching goal was to provide a stress-free and open environment where participants could communicate their lived experiences surrounding the phenomena. The researcher sought to purposefully utilize every opportunity to build rapport with the participants so they would lower

their proverbial walls and be more open to discussing their experiences with authenticity (Leavy, 2017).

Individual Interviews

Interviews were set up in person. The researcher scheduled a time and date that was convenient for each participant. Interviews were conducted, and the researcher utilized a handheld digital audio recorder to record each session. The recording was transferred from the digital recorder and stored on the researcher's password-protected secured computer. Participants were notified that the interviews were being recorded and permission was granted through the Signed Consent Form (Appendix C) and verbally at the beginning of each interview, as noted in the IPF (Appendix D).

Data Analysis

“According to Leavy (2017), “the process of data analysis and interpretation helps us to answer the question ‘what does it all mean?’ This process allows us to create an ‘intelligible account; of our data (p. 150). Allen Trent and Jeasik Cho (2014) define analysis as “summarizing and organizing data” and interpretation as “finding or making meaning” (p. 652). This research study utilized five steps in the data analysis process as outlined in both the texts by Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Leavy (2017). The five steps of data analysis outlined in the texts were as follows: (1) data preparation and organization, (2) initial immersion, (3) coding, (4) categorizing and theming, and (5) interpretation.

Analysis Methods

The five-step process summarized above was utilized as the framework for data analysis in this research study.

Data Preparation and Organization

During this phase, all the data from the interviews were prepared for analysis by being transcribed using Otter.ai transcription service and then stored on the researcher's password-protected computer. Once the data was transcribed and stored the researcher started to organize the data. To organize the data, the researcher sorted the data by chunking the data into files based on each participant.

Initial Immersion

After the data was prepared and organized, the researcher began to gain a more profound sense of the data by reading, looking at, and thinking over the data. The researcher took time to mentally stew on it and let ideas naturally develop due to the initial immersion process (Leavy, 2017). "First, immersion helps you to feel the pulse of the data (Saldana, 2014). It is easy to lose sight of the big picture through the daily grind of data collection and then data preparation" (Leavy, 2017, p. 150). Through the immersion process, the researcher began noting and outlining the development of ideas and also began the data reduction process by identifying which data took precedence or priority toward the research purpose and to answer the research questions.

Coding

According to Leavy (2017), "the coding process allows you to reduce and classify the data generated. Coding is the process of assigning a word or phrase to segments of data. The code selected should summarize or capture the essence of that segment of data" (p. 151). The researcher completed the coding process by hand and did not utilize online software. Saldana's (2021) exploratory coding methods were utilized in the coding process. After the coding process, the researcher began categorizing and theming.

Categorizing and Theming

Once the data coding was complete the researcher began to look for patterns and relationships between codes. As the researcher worked through the categories and themes that emerged from the coding process, the researcher utilized memo writing to capture the thinking embedded in the process (Leavy, 2017 & Creswell, 2018). “Memos are a link between your coding and interpretation, and they document your impressions, ideas, and emerging understandings. Each memo further articulates your understanding of that particular topic/concept/data and thus allows you greater insight into the data” (Leavy, 2017, p. 152). Memos consisted of detailed descriptions or summaries, key quotes from the data, analytic memos about different codes, and interpretive ideas (Leavy, 2017). During the categorizing portion data was organized according to the RQs. For example, the themes that arose from the questions that addressed RQ1 were organized under that specific RQ, and so forth.

Interpretation

Interpretation was a vital piece of data analysis as it answered the question of what was gained from the research study and answered the questions of meaning. To develop meaning from the coded data, the researcher utilized the memo notes and looked for patterns across the data paying attention to links between different categories, concepts, and themes (Leavy, 2017). The researcher utilized the following, as suggested by Patricia Leavy (2017, p. 153), in the interpretation process by returning to the research purpose and questions with the following questions in mind:

1. What were the relationships between categories, themes, and concepts?
2. What patterns emerged?

3. What seemed most salient in the data? What was the essence of what the data said?
4. What was learned by placing the data in existing literature?
5. What was learned by considering the data through more than one theoretical lens?
6. Using what was learned, how was each research question answered?

By utilizing this five-step analysis process, the researcher could unpack the data and derive a thematic understanding from the participant's lived experiences surrounding the pastoral care they each received under both a male and a female lead pastor.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research relies on data obtained by the researcher through non-numerical means such as interviews or observations. As such qualitative researches concepts of reliability and validity are not generally used. However, there is still a standard used in determining the trustworthiness of collected data (Leedy & Omrod, 2019). "Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 199).

Credibility

According to Leavy (2017), "credibility and trustworthiness are sometimes employed as interchangeable terms among researchers and speak to the quality of the project, the rigor of the methodology, and whether readers of the research findings feel the researcher has established trustworthiness" (p. 154). To establish added credibility, this research project utilized two potential data collection instruments, initial interviews and a potential follow-up interview. The research project also attempted to diversify the participants to employ an equal number of males and females (12 total) in varying geographic locations (Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee) in three different churches to establish data credibility further.

Additionally, the researcher utilized member checking, a rich, thick description to convey findings to increase credibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), dependability is, “the stability of findings over time. Dependability involves participants’ evaluation of the findings, interpretation, and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study” (p. 121). Dependability depends upon the researcher’s transparency in describing the steps taken from the start of the research project to the development and reporting of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure the dependability of the proposed research project, the researcher ensured that all steps and procedures were clearly outlined in the research proposal. All actions taken in the participant selection process, data collection, data analysis, and deriving conclusions were clearly outlined.

Confirmability

While it is impossible to include all the data in the findings chapter, the researcher provided an audit trail where confirmability will be practical (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Anyone desiring to do so will be able to track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data from this study.

Transferability

Korstjens and Moser (2018) define transferability as, “the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents. The researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through thick description” (p.121). The transferability of this phenomenological study considering the lived experiences of participants who have experienced pastoral care under

both a male and a female pastor, has several transferable qualities. The results of this study could be placed into the larger discussion of gendered leadership within Christian organizations. Gendered leadership is a term gaining popularity in secular and academic circles but has not gained much traction within the Christian community. However, as pastors and Christian leaders, in general, begin to study gendered leadership, it will provide both male and female leaders an understanding of the unique qualities both genders bring into the leadership spectrum for the express purpose of soul care for those entrusted under their leadership. Both male and female lead pastors could employ the data from this study within their circles by considering the lived experiences of those who have experienced care under both genders. What do male lead pastors offer that female leaders do not and vice versa? This is valuable information because it illuminates dark spots for both genders; therefore, each can purposefully employ dispositional qualities needed to help those under their care.

In addition to the transferability mentioned above, there are some settings where this study cannot be adequately transferred. In church settings where a husband and wife team may serve as co-pastors would not be a setting that would be transferable because the husband and wife team share equal authority in the oversight or governance of the church. Also, in church settings, pastoral care is more aligned with a congregational care model would not be a transferable setting. Pastoral care that the lead pastor does not administer would be a setting where different committees oversee different aspects of the care a congregation may receive.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research methodology used in this phenomenological research study. Included in this chapter was a synopsis of the research design, including the purpose statement and research questions used to frame this study. A detailed description of the proposed setting, participants, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection methods, and analysis procedures were also outlined. The chapter concluded with a discussion of how the researcher ensured the trustworthiness of the findings. The lived experiences of people who have received pastoral care under both a male and a female leader are sure to add to the growing research on how men and women lead differently and give value to both genders as they seek to serve God's Kingdom in more effective ways.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

This interpretive phenomenological study aimed to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively at three selected churches. The guiding theory that framed this study was Eagly's (1987) social role theory which argues that shared gender stereotypes develop from gendered division of labor within societal structures. Twelve participants from three churches were invited to sit for a semi-structured interview. The interviews followed the Interview Protocol Form (See Appendix D), which consisted of six phases. This chapter covers data compilation protocols and measures utilized in this study, demographic information, and sample data taken from the participants. In addition, the data analysis and findings section outlines the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data collected, which was organized around the research questions that framed this study. Finally, this chapter concludes with an evaluation of the research design.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

Given the numerous academic studies related to the differences between male and female leadership in both secular and religious spheres (Bammert, 2010; Burnett, 2017; Borgerson, 2018, Eagly 2007), this study measured the experiences of parishioners who were pastored by both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively. Eagly's (1987) social role theory asserts that accepted dispositional differences between men and women result from a division of labor within society. According to Eagly (1987), gendered divisions of labor that characterize society lead to the development of gender dispositional stereotypes that may not be present in areas that do not have divisions of labor (Ferguson, 2017; Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Given the historical

trend that church pastoral leadership is generally male-dominated (Sandstrom, 2016), this study measured whether Eagly's theory would remain true when that particular division of labor was shared by both men and women as measured through the lived experiences of parishioners.

Using Eagly's (1987) social role theory as a theoretical framework to guide the research, twelve participants from three churches were interviewed for this study. Each individual was interviewed following the Interview Protocol Form (See Appendix D). The interview questions were based on the research questions guiding this study. Each interview was planned to last between sixty to ninety minutes. The average length of the twelve interviews were fifty-two minutes, with the longest being eighty minutes and the shortest being thirty-seven minutes. Each interview was transcribed using Otter.ai transcription software. Each transcript was checked for accuracy with the initial reading of the transcripts done while listening to the audio recording of each interview. Under steps one through three (data preparation and organization, initial immersion, and coding) of the five-step data analysis plan outlined in Chapter Three of this study, each transcript was read multiple times, and the researcher made notes of ideas and key themes/trends which emerged from the data immersion. After reviewing the research notes and notated transcripts, participant responses were manually coded using Saldana's (2021) exploratory coding methods with thematic analysis. Once codes were assigned, the emergent themes were categorically grouped. The emergent themes were then aligned with the research questions guiding this study for the interpretation of the data to begin.

Demographic and Sample Data

Twelve participants from three selected churches were invited to participate in this study. The churches were located in Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The researcher interviewed four participants at each of the three churches to bring added validity to the findings. Each

church had two male and two female participants, and across the twelve participants, ages ranged from the twenties to eighties. Additionally, in an attempt to gain diverse perspectives, the participant group included: eight Caucasian participants, two Latino participants, one Black participant, and one Filipino participant. The participant group is representative of the racial and ethnical diversity across the three selected churches.

The first group of four participants were from Church One, a large Spirit-filled Non-Denominational church with an average attendance of approximately 1,000 people in Indiana. The church was founded in the late 1960s and has had one female and one male pastor to date in the church's history.

The second group of four participants were from Church Two, a mid-sized Pentecostal church with an average attendance of approximately 250 people in Kentucky. The church was founded in the early 1960s and to date, has only had one male and one female pastor in the church's history.

The third group of four participants were from Church Three, a smaller Pentecostal church with an average attendance of 100 people in Tennessee. The church was founded in the late 1970s and to date, has only had one male and one female pastor in the church's history.

A summarized review of the three churches' data which includes geographic location, approximate membership size, and the established date range, is provided in Table Two below.

Table Two*Church Information Summary*

Church	Geographic Location	Approximate Membership Size	Established Date Range
One	Indiana	1,000	1960s
Two	Kentucky	250	1960s
Three	Tennessee	100	1970s

The participants were asked to sign an informed consent document at the time of the interview. Each participant interview followed the established Interview Protocol Form (Appendix D), which had six phases. The central part of the interview was Phase Four which asked the participants the content questions built around the research questions guiding this study. Each participant was asked nine guiding questions from Phase Four, and probing questions were asked as needed to clarify responses or gain additional information. Each church and participant was given an identifying number to ensure confidentiality. The participants are listed below.

Church One, Participant One

Participant One is a single Caucasian male in his 20s who has attended the church since middle school and has experienced pastoral care under both the male and the female pastor. This participant experienced care under the female pastor approximately two years longer than under the male pastor. He has a high school diploma and works in sales. His responses to the interview questions flowed smoothly and conversationally with each section interlacing without any awkward pauses or probes. In response to his level of involvement in the local church, he states, “I would say that I’m pretty involved at this point and throughout much of my time being a

member I've maintained what I would describe as an active level of involvement...I'm a musician for various services and activities. I have volunteered in children's ministries and for different outings, and also as a youth leader. I'm also training for ministry with different classes that I've been attending for that as well."

Church One, Participant Two

Participant Two is a Caucasian woman in her forties who has attended the church for eleven years. She experienced pastoral care under both the male and the female pastor for approximately the same amount of time. She has a master's degree and works in education. Her responses to the interview questions flowed conversationally with probes being utilized in a few places to elicit a more profound response to some of the content questions. The participant reports that her level of church involvement is average. She attends regularly scheduled church services on Sunday and Wednesdays. She is not able to assist in Sunday school or other church ministries due to commitments with her family and career.

Church One, Participant Three

Participant Three is a married Caucasian man in his 50s who has attended the church for around 30 years. He experienced pastoral care under the female pastor for approximately four times as long as the male pastor. He has an Associate's degree and works in the healthcare industry. His interview was one of the shortest, lasting 37 minutes. Although his answers were good, and they did provide needed data from which thematic trends emerged, his answers did not flow in a conversational way; they were more direct. Probes were utilized when needed to elicit deeper answers to content questions. He reports that he is a faithful church member and attends services on both Sunday mornings and evenings. He is not able to attend Wednesday evening

services due to work commitments. He is also a prayer leader and has been involved in the church's jail ministry in the past.

Church One, Participant Four

Participant Four is a Filipino woman in her forties who has attended the church since the mid 1990s although she cannot remember the exact year she started attending. She experienced pastoral care approximately four times as long under the female pastor as opposed to the male pastor. She has a Bachelor's degree and works in the medical insurance industry. Her interview was an average interview that flowed well and in a conversational manner. Probes were utilized when necessary. In response to her level of involvement with the church, she states, "I attend all scheduled services but am not a volunteer in the church due to family and work obligations." When asked if she had ever been involved in a deeper way through the years, she responded, "Oh yes, over the years I've been involved in children's and youth ministry which included helping in youth camps in the kitchen and also I've volunteered in housekeeping off and on to help and clean the church."

Church Two, Participant Five

Participant five is a Caucasian married man in his fifties who has attended the church since the early 2000s which gives him around seventeen years of experience total in the church. He has experienced pastoral care twice as long under the male pastor as opposed to the female pastor. He is a cosmetologist and has adult children. This participant is a back-up singer and attends church on Sunday morning and Wednesday nights.

Church Two, Participant Six

Participant six is a Latina single woman in her twenties who was born into the church. She experienced pastoral care under the female pastor since she was a child through the time of

her retirement in 2011. She experienced pastoral care approximately four times longer under the female pastor. She works in the healthcare field and does not hold a degree in higher education. In response to her level of involvement in the church, she states, “Since I was a teenager I have worked in the church nursery because I love children...I also attend services regularly but I don’t have any official leadership roles in the church outside of the work I do with nursery.”

Church Two, Participant Seven

Participant seven is a Caucasian woman in her eighties who has attended the church since the mid-1970. This participant has approximately five times as much experienced under the female pastor as opposed to the male pastor. She has been a homemaker and therefore has never worked outside the home. In response to her level of involvement in the church, she states, “over the years I’ve done it all from being the church secretary and treasurer to Sunday school teacher to cleaning lady. I guess there isn’t anything I’ve not done in the church. Church is my life and always has been...I’m in every service unless I am so sick I cannot make it and even at eighty that is rare for me.”

Church Two, Participant Eight

Participant eight is a single Caucasian man in his sixties who has a Bachelor’s degree and works in finance. This participant joined the church in 1998 and has experienced approximately double the pastoral care under the female pastor as opposed to the male pastor. The participant faithfully supports the church in his giving and attends each service that he is able. Due to his job demands he is not able to participant in volunteer activities such as teaching Sunday school.

Church Three, Participant Nine

Participant nine is a single black lady in her fifties who works in the medical industry. She has attended the church since the early 1990s and experienced pastoral care under the female

pastor for four years until her retirement in 2000 and has since experienced pastoral care under the male pastor for 22 years. This participant reports that she is regularly involved in volunteer opportunities within the local church. She states, “I have a heart for the community. You know, going out on Saturdays and handing out tracts and witnessing to people. I do it the old-fashioned way, door-to-door. A lot of people think I’m crazy but if I can win one soul for Christ then I count it all as success...I teach the young people’s class in Sunday school as well.”

Church Three, Participant Ten

Participant ten is a married Caucasian man in his seventies who works in landscaping. He has attended the church since the 1980s and experienced pastoral care under the female pastor from the time he arrived at the church until her retirement. He has since experienced pastoral care under the male pastor for twenty-two years. He is a deacon in the church and is faithful in giving and church attendance.

Church Three, Participant Eleven

Participant three is a married Latino man in his thirties who has been in the church since he was born. Although this participant was in his early teens when the female pastor retired, his perspective differs from that of a young person and how both the male and female pastor interacted with youth. This participant works in retail and, as stated has been in the church since he was born. He experienced pastoral care under the female pastor until her retirement when he was in his early teens and has since experienced care under the male pastor. When asked about his level of involvement in the church, he writes, “I consider myself an active member although I do not have any what would be considered leadership type roles in the church. My family is active in the church. We attended the services and we are all faithful in our giving. We really

love this church and it's been a lighthouse in our community for many years...we do not have any teaching roles in the church.”

Church Three, Participant Twelve

Participant twelve is a single Caucasian woman in her forties who has been in the church since she was a child. Her family is one of the founding families when the church was started in the late 1970s. She works in the housecleaning industry and has experienced pastoral care under the female pastor until her retirement and then for approximately twenty years under the male pastor. When asked about her level of involvement in the local church, she states, “I clean the church every week. If I’m not able to personally do the cleaning because of a different commitment then I make sure it is cleaned by someone but I’m usually the one who does the cleaning. I’ve always been meticulous in details when it comes to making sure the Lord’s House is kept clean. My parents also taught me to always make sure I pay tithes which I have done ever since I’ve had a job. I’m faithful Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights but I do not always make it back on Sunday nights.”

A summarized review of the participants’ data which includes age, marital status, gender/ethnicity, and educational background, is provided in Table Three below.

Table Three*Participant Demographic Summary*

Participant	Age Range	Marital Status	Gender/Ethnicity	Education/Industry	Church Association
1	20s	Single	Male/Caucasian	High School Diploma	Church One
2	40s	Married	Female/Caucasian	Master's Degree	Church One
3	50s	Married	Male/Caucasian	Associate's Degree	Church One
4	40s	Married	Female/Filipino	Bachelor's Degree	Church One
5	50s	Married	Male/Caucasian	Cosmetology	Church Two
6	20s	Single	Female/Latina	Medical Field	Church Two
7	80s	Married	Female/Caucasian	Homemaker	Church Two
8	60s	Single	Male/Caucasian	Bachelor's Degree	Church Two
9	50s	Single	Female/Black	Medical Field	Church Three
10	70s	Married	Male/Caucasian	Landscaping	Church Three
11	40s	Married	Male/Latino	Retail	Church Three
12	40s	Single	Female/Caucasian	Housecleaning	Church Three

Data Analysis and Findings

The data for this research study came from semi-structured in-person interviews. There were no follow-up interviews deemed necessary by this researcher due to the in-depth nature of the initial interviews and the use of probing questions that ensured each participant's responses gave adequate sets of data needed to analyze each research question.

Saldana's (2021) exploratory coding procedures with thematic analysis were utilized in this study. The researcher conducted a line-by-line analysis of the transcripts assigning codes to the data. After this initial coding cycle, the researcher used thematic analysis by grouping the

codes into thematic categories based on the research questions. As a result, six dominant themes were identified: 1. Individualism, 2. Family, 3. Control, 4. Empathy, 5. Collaboration, 6.

Openness. There were also sub-themes noted under the main theme categories.

A summarized review of how the researcher extrapolated the data from the codes to the established themes is provided in Table Four below.

Table Four

Code to Theme Data Summary

Theme One	Theme Two	Theme Three	Theme Four	Theme Five	Theme Six
Individualism	Family	Control	Empathy	Collaboration	Openness
Related Codes	Related Codes	Related Codes	Related Codes	Related Codes	Related Codes
“accepts different ideas” circumstances logic decisions exist identify experience name personality self unique myself process “me, my, I, own”	support fellowship teams guidance relationship(s) “they, our” corporate together unit mother father pastor family	dominated approval details micromanage authority headship authority line leader restrictions standards oversight ran guide persuade	compassion insight pity care rapport sympathy warmth comprehend responsive “being on same wavelength” “being there” love motherly feelings	outside resources association joint effort “in the community” outreach “fixer” meetings brotherhood teams home groups together partners join	accountable struggles “hidden issues” confession insight perception “being open” transparency “seen” valued “deeply personal struggles”

Research Question 1

What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor?

This research question was open-ended in nature as it was the researcher’s intention for the question to be conversational to allow the participants to respond in a fluid way so as not to

seem like the participants were being trapped or led into certain responses. This research question had five corresponding interview questions to understand better the phenomenon of receiving pastoral care under a male and a female pastor.

Individualism

The research participants frequently spoke of the sense of individualism they felt under the male pastors as opposed to the female pastors. Participant Two stated how she always felt that the male pastor “allowed her to make her own decisions,” and Participant Eleven said, “I felt I was encouraged to come to my own conclusions.” He goes on to say that while his male pastor would offer advice rooted in personal experience and scripture, he felt that, ultimately the decisions in his life were his own. Participant Five told a story related to his wedding, illustrating how individualism was not a dominant theme under the female pastor’s leadership. He stated that when he and his fiancé went into a planning meeting regarding their wedding with their female pastor, she dominated the wedding planning details, from the color selections to the program outline. The body language of this participant demonstrated a sense of shock when sharing this story. He shared the pastor’s comment about the color selection: “now I know your favorite color is purple so I’ve already started to collect all of my purple material and accessories for you all to use for your wedding and believe me it is going to be breathtaking. Don’t worry, I will be there with you to decorate the sanctuary and the hall.” The participant noted that purple was the pastor’s favorite color and not theirs and since that was the color she wanted she acted as if that was their favorite color. The participant’s tone of voice and body language during the wedding story demonstrated a sore spot for the participant and the researcher inferred the couple would have much preferred to have been able to exhibit individualism in their wedding decisions. In

addition to this story being aligned under the theme of individualism, it can also be categorized under the control theme with the sub-category of micro-managing.

Participants Six and Nine discussed how under the male pastoral leadership, they felt more disconnected and alone during times of crisis. Participant Six gave a similar account as Participant Five (both Participants Five and Six were from Church Two) although she characterized her story in a positive way. This Participant described an earlier experience as a younger person when a member of their family passed away. She stated that the funeral service, which was held in the church, was planned by the female pastor with little input from the family. The musical selections and who spoke were all determined by the pastor. She stated, “I remember how beautiful our funerals were under (the female pastor) even the funeral homes would comment on the services.” Under the male pastor, she stated that each family has more input as to the order of the funeral service and, in her view, this has led to a decline in the quality of the funerals held in the church. Participant Nine experienced a car accident, and she stated, “I received flowers at my home but never a personal visit from my pastor. Under (the female pastor), this would have never happened. She was always warm and would have even personally cooked me a few meals to help me until I was recovered.” While “disconnected and alone” were codes derived from the data these codes point to a negative aspect of the theme of individualism displayed through the lived experiences of two of the participants. While individualism can be seen as positive, it can also be negative depending upon the situation and each participant’s level of comfort.

Participant Ten described how the female pastor discouraged formal education such as college and encouraged church members to “stay close to the church.” In his earlier years, he desired to pursue a degree in higher education but was discouraged from doing so because the

female pastor told him “the Lord was coming soon” and his desire “was fleshly and would take away from his spirituality.” When asked if the same type of ideology was continued under the current (male) pastor he stated that the male pastor encouraged younger people to pursue the academic goals they felt God had called them to. If this meant moving, then the male pastor encouraged younger people to ensure they found a church with similar doctrinal beliefs and continue to place God at the forefront. Participant One also shared a story related to academic goals. This participant was encouraged to pursue higher education by the female pastor with the caveat that he attend school in the vicinity of the church. He stated this was commonly taught among young people; if they were to pursue higher education they needed to select a school around the church and were discouraged from moving away. Both Participant’s Ten and One story were themed under individualism because the stories characterize the individualistic thread interwoven in each.

Family

The theme of family was frequently stated throughout the interviews, and this theme was more dominant under female pastoral care than under male pastoral care. Individualism seemed to be a contrasting theme when viewed with the theme of family. One of the reoccurring stories was related to fellowship dinners and how the preparations surrounding these dinners were organized. Participants Four, Six, Seven, and Twelve which represent all three churches told stories about how church fellowship dinners led to their feeling of family and helped them heal from past wounds and insecurities because of the sense of connectedness and bonding. Additionally, church fellowship dinners were noted in the researcher’s memo notes as helping to sustain members feeling of spiritual growth attained in the church services. Under the female

pastors' church dinners were as common as twice a month and were a time when the church felt a sense of togetherness.

Participant Four described how the sense of togetherness was achieved at Church One. People were organized into different teams and each team had a portion of responsibility assigned to them as it related to the fellowship dinner. One group would be assigned clean-up, one team decorating/table set-ups, and one team would be given to organize the pot-luck portion of the food, with the church providing a portion of food as well. Surprisingly, food emerged as a sub-theme under the sense of community and family, and this sense was strongest under the female pastor. Participant seven described how his female pastor was famous for making chicken noodle soup and taking it to shut-ins and those who may have had surgery or sickness in their family. She stated the female pastor would personally deliver the food generally with a couple of people with her and then have a time of spiritual and natural fellowship.

A common sub-theme that emerged under the family theme was that of *mother*. In the interviews, Participants Three, Five, Eight, Nine, and Twelve, which also represent all three churches, all described their female pastor as a mother figure. However, of those same participants, only Participant Twelve described the male pastor as a father figure. When probed by the researcher to go deeper in explaining precisely what the participants mean by mother figure, Participant Three stated,

she would make you feel like you were one of her own children. She was concerned with your personal development not only on a spiritual level but also on a natural level. I remember one time she paid for me to have a vocal coach because she said that would help me in my business pursuits as well as make me a better singer for the Lord. This affected me in a profound way. It connected me to the church and to the Lord in ways that I am only now realizing.

Participant Nine stated, "mother loved everybody no matter their station in life. When I was struggling with my bills it seemed the Lord would always speak to mother and she would help

me out. This was out of her own personal finances as she did not want to burden the church. That's just the type of pastor she was.”

One significant takeaway from this data set is of the nine Participants across all three Churches who described the female pastor as a mother figure only one Participant (12) at Church Three described the male pastor as a father figure. This will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Five but this finding adds validity the research surrounding male and female leadership which commonly find female leaders as more communal and male leaders as more agentic.

Control

Control was a dominant theme that emerged from coded data that aligned with the pastoral care received from the female pastor as opposed to the male pastor. *Micro-management* was a sub-theme under control that emerged from the data related to female pastors. This theme related to how female pastors managed not only departments within the church itself but also individual family units.

For example, Participant Three told a story about his involvement with the jail ministry and how that related to his personal reconciliation. Participant Three was a disturbed youth due to a “hard upbringing” and got into trouble as a result. The Participant’s childhood prompted him to become involved in jail ministry as a way for him to reach out and connect with people who may not have been as fortunate as himself in finding Christ in his early twenties. This Participant stated that the female pastor was personally involved in the details of jail ministry and even visited the jail services “on a number of occasions.” She asked the Participant to turn in prayer requests to her and that she would pray over these requests and ask how “so-and-so” was from time to time. This made him feel like she was personally invested in the ministry.

Additionally, this Participant also counseled with the female pastor about his youth, and she was able to help him reconcile his “hard upbringing” with scripture, he noted how the pastor explained Romans 8:28 which states, “and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” This was a key turning point in this Participant’s life as the pastor helped guide him to understand that the Lord works all things together for his children’s good. “Even our family upbringing is part of the Lord’s design,” the Participant noted. The pastor helped him understand that through his upbringing, he can minister experientially to others with a common background and share the fruit of his own growth in ways that others who have never experienced such things would not be able to do.

Participant Seven discussed how the female pastor she was under requested “family forms” to be filled out and returned once per quarter as a pastoral care matter. The forms contained detailed questions related to the inner functions of the family unit from the husband/wife relationship to the children’s performance in school and obedience-related issues. Health questions were asked, and there was also an area to fill out if there were specific areas of concern not addressed in the letter. The pastor was known to reach out to families throughout the year for personal counsel due to the information contained in the family forms. When the male pastor assumed leadership of the church, these forms were discontinued. When asked how this made her feel and whether, from her perspective, this was positive or negative, she stated, “this was a part of our church’s culture so it took some getting used to, but I think it’s for the better. It forces people to be more self-sufficient and depend more upon the Lord in a personal way. You know, you don’t have that same level of oversight...families seem fine but have had to have a time of adjustment for sure.” While this Participant’s story is characterized here under the theme of Control it also can align with Individualism as the family forms were discontinued under the

male pastor's leadership with the Participant specifically stating discontinuing the forms forced parishioners to be more "self-sufficient." Additionally, as noted earlier Participants Five and Six gave descriptions related to wedding color selection and funeral program planning that are characterized under the theme of Individualism which also coincides with the theme of Control.

Empathy

Empathy was a theme that emerged from the data related to the pastoral care received by participants from both male and female pastors. Participants One, Two, Four, Six, Eight, and Ten, which represent all three churches, noted that both the male and female pastors were empathetic toward them in times of trouble and celebration. While each gender expressed empathy differently, they both exhibited this dispositional quality. A touching story was a recent miscarriage Participant Six experienced. She described miscarrying her baby in the first trimester of her pregnancy, and she described this as one of the darkest times of her life. She is still in counseling over her miscarriage. The male pastor was able to connect to her in a way that "surprised her since he is not a woman." However, she states, "he made sure she had the support that was needed in a completely professional way. He referred her to an outside counseling service and the church helped to supplement the costs of the counseling." When asked to elaborate upon what she meant by the male pastor was empathetic she could not put words around the experience, but she described it as a peace she felt as he helped walk her through the entire process of losing her baby.

Participant Two also gave a tearful description of a family member's child who was diagnosed with a terminal illness and the male pastor supported the family through the trial. He supported the family through personal hospital visits, financial assistance, and organized church prayer meetings dedicated to prayer for the child. Participant Four described her experience

under the female pastor when she went through a divorce as empathetic. “Although she had never experienced a divorce she approached the situation in a non-judgmental way and she helped me to believe that I could pick up the broken pieces of my life and live again...she was personally connected to me throughout my divorce.” Participant Eleven described a time under the female pastor when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer as a time when the female pastor exhibited empathy toward him and his family. “Her sense of connection to us during this time was the strength we needed to know everything was going to be okay. She not only lifted us up in prayer but she also supported us with scripture and build our faith upon the Word of God...her own daughter had been through breast cancer and so I feel she was able to connect to us on a more personal level because of that...you know if someone goes through a similar experience they have that shared bond.” Some of the shared stories which are categorized under this theme can also be categorized under Collaboration. Participant Six shared how the male pastor referred her to an outside counseling agency for therapy after her miscarriage.

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as a dominant theme from the coded data around pastoral care received under the male pastor. Pastoral care under the male pastors incorporated more human and non-human resources than that of the female counterpart. Referrals to outside counseling agencies were more frequently described under male pastors as opposed to female pastors. From the descriptions given in the data, it appears the female pastors were more likely to handle situations arising from family trauma themselves rather than refer the Participants to an outside counseling agency.

Participant Ten speaks to this theme in depth when describing the differences in counseling he received under the male and the female pastor. “I was under both pastors through

thick and thin and I can tell you (the female pastor) was more likely to get her hands dirty sort of speak in the details of each situation. (The male pastor) is effective as well but in a different sort of way. He uses a Christian counseling agency in town to help us when we need that type of thing. An outside counseling agency was unheard of under (the female pastor).” When pressed for details he explained that when he lost a child due to a car accident involving a drunk driver the female pastor counseled with him and his wife and helped them walk through that tragedy in the best way she could. However, several years later, they were in a counseling session with the male pastor and brought up the situation, and he felt they still had some unresolved issues related to the loss of their son he referred them to couples counseling. The Participant reported that the counseling seemed to help them resolve some of their anger toward God for what they thought was God allowing this to happen. However, it should be noted that the Participant did not describe the outside agency as more effective than the counsel they received under the female pastor. He described it more in terms of a journey toward healing and reconciling what happened to them to the larger plan of God for both his son, him, and his wife.

Additionally, Participants One and Three which only represents one out of the three churches reported that their male pastors was more open to fellowship with other churches than their female pastor. Participant Ten also stated that the male pastor pushed the children and youth to participate annually in youth camps hosted by a non-denominational church group. The collaborative feeling was also noted in the decision-making processes within the churches. Participants Four, Seven, and Nine who represent all three Churches describe the care they received under the female pastor as “hands-on,” while the care they received under the male pastor was more of a “hands-off” approach. The researcher probed the participants to describe what they meant by hands-off and hands-on. Participant Four stated that the female pastor was

“detail-oriented” while the male pastor seemed like he was more concerned with the “big picture.” Participant Seven spoke to family forms described under the Control theme as evidence of the “hands-on” approach of the female pastor. The common theme that emerged from the data corresponded with the Collaboration theme in that the male pastors leaned more toward a sense of congregational and/or community care as opposed to dominating the care personally.

Openness

The openness that vulnerability affords is an important aspect of pastoral care (Patton, 1993), and the researcher found this theme emergent from the coded data most frequent in responses garnered from responses of parishioners’ experiences of pastoral care received from the female pastors. Participant responses in the area of openness were characterized by a slower tone of voice and a more closed body language. For example, when Participant Ten described the loss of his son, the researcher perceived a higher level of vulnerability in the participant’s body language and tone of voice when describing the care he received under the female pastor. Additionally, Participants One, Three, Five, Eight, Ten, and Eleven were all men who represent all three Churches. On the memo notes, the researcher noted a higher level of openness was communicated when counseling with the female pastor. Participant Eleven stated, “I felt like (female pastor) was a mother figure, and you know...you can talk to your mother about anything...at least I could.” Participant Three described the times he counseled with his female pastor as “all the walls came down” and I could be “open about my struggles...even areas of sexual temptation and flaws, I felt I could discuss with (female pastor), and she would be able to help to lead me in the right path.” The female participants also noted a more open line of communication with the female pastor, although not as open as the male participants. Participant

Six reported an ability “to communicate deeply personal struggles” with the female pastor as opposed to the male pastor.

Summary of Research Question One

The participants interviewed for this study described rich pastoral care experiences they each received under the female and the male lead pastors at their respective churches. The participants were open in describing the pastoral care they each received. Six dominant themes emerged from the coded data that gave a collective voice to the lived experiences of the twelve participants: 1. Individualism, 2. Community/Family, 3. Control, 4. Empathy, 5. Collaboration, 6. Openness. Pastoral care received under male pastors was most frequently described under the themes of Individualism and Collaboration, while pastoral care received under a female pastor was most often represented under the themes of Family, Control, and Openness. Empathy was a neutral theme where participants described experiences that surrounded this theme as interwoven in the pastoral care they received under the female and the male pastoral leader.

Data collected from participant stories are reflected through the six emergent themes which developed across the three churches. These themes are present across participant responses and are reflected in the three churches in a balanced way. Two participants in Church One described how their male pastor was more open to fellowship with other churches; this was not addressed by the other two churches. Participants in all three churches described “church fellowship dinners” as examples of how their female pastors created a culture of family within the church. Individualism, Family, Control, Empathy, Collaboration, and Openness were all identified in each of the three churches by at least two out of the four participants. Distinctive male and female leadership traits as it relates to this study will be discussed more in-depth with data conclusions in Chapter Five. However, the data indicate a general agreeance with other

academic studies surrounding gendered leadership (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007, Ferguson, 2017). Therefore, it is the conclusion of this researcher that data conclusions represent gendered distinctions as opposed to special cases secluded to church or pastor personality.

A summarized review of how each participant connected to the themes is provided in Table Eleven below.

Table Five

Participant to Theme Correlation Review

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Themes												
Individualism	+	+			+	+	+		+	+		
Family			+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+
Control	+		+		+	+	+				+	+
Empathy	+	+				+		+		+		
Collaboration	+		+	+		+	+		+	+		
Openness	+	+	+		+	+		+		+	+	

Research Question 2

How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

This research question focuses on the perceived strengths from the participant's viewpoint of the pastoral care they received as a result of the gender of their pastor. There were two corresponding interview questions under this research question (See Appendix D). This research question builds upon the themes identified under Research Question One. It connects from the participant's viewpoint whether any perceived strengths in the pastoral care they received resulted from gender. An analysis of the data related to this research question indicates that generally, the participants described the strengths identified in the six themes were

associated with gender. There was a blend between male and female respondents, which noted the dominant themes associated with male and female lead pastors.

Individualism and Collaboration

Across participant responses, two of the six dominant themes emerged as strengths associated with male pastoral care administration: Individualism and Collaboration. Both men and women discussed the pastoral care strength associated with male leadership during the interviews.

The themes of Individualism and Collaboration were strengths participants associated with male pastoral care. These two themes were interwoven into the interviews as Participants shared stories associated with the care they received under each gender. When needed, the researcher used probes to connect back to stories told under Research Question One. Participant Two (female) noted, “men and women are just naturally different, and this is going to play out in the way in which they lead and, in this case, pastor people. The differences are evident. This is not necessarily bad because each gender has qualities the other does not, and this is how God intended it to be.” Participant Six (female) brought in the experience she shared regarding her miscarriage and noted this as a strength of the care she received under the male pastor. She stated that the male pastor could connect to her empathetically in a way that surprised her, given that he was a man. Additionally, when he referred her to an outside counselling agency, she felt this helped her process and heal. Although the male pastor had never experienced a miscarriage, he utilized empathy and collaboration as pastoral care tools as he ministered to this Participant. When the researcher probed the Participant as to whether she felt her pastor’s gender strengthened the care response, she stated, “I think so, I believe the Holy Spirit allowed him to work harder to connect to us through this trial maybe because he could not experience anything

like losing a baby in the same way a mother could. So yes, I believe him being a man was actually helpful in the care I received. It also helped me to appreciate him as a male pastor and gain more respect for him as well through the process.”

Participant Five (male) states, “I noticed an increase in what I would describe as spiritual maturity under (the male pastor). I believe this is a result of his allowing me room for trial and error. He didn’t hold our hand as much as (the female pastor) and I believe this is one of his strengths. It allowed me to really depend more on my personal relationship with Christ as opposed to always running to a person for answers.” When probed as to whether the participant felt this was different under the male pastor than the female pastor the participant stated, “I know this may be not be correct for modern times but I believe it’s a result of men being stronger and more disciplinarian. It makes you have to step out and take responsibility for your own relationship and decisions. I believe it was Paul who talks about being weaned from the breasts and I can connect to that under (the male pastor).” Participants One and Three (both male) brought up the utilization of outside Christian resources as a strength of the care they received under the male pastor, which has been themed under collaboration in this study. Participant One stated, “(the male pastor) invited a speaker to come and talk to the young adults about purity and the importance of sexual health. This was a huge success for young adults.” Again through probing questions, the participant explained that he felt men are more inclined to “develop and fix situations...outside seminars were something that we did not have under (the female pastor).”

Additionally, Participant Three discussed the addition of the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University offered in the church under the male pastor. This participant linked this inclusion to the pastor’s “business-mindedness.” As detailed in the descriptions above,

Participants One, Two, Three, Five, and Six gave meaningful examples of care strengths related to their male pastor.

Family, Control, and Openness

Across Participant responses, three of the six dominant themes emerged as strengths associated with female pastoral care administration: family, control, and openness. Both men and women discussed the pastoral care strength related to female leadership.

The themes of Family, Control, and Openness were strengths participants associated with female pastoral care. These three themes were interwoven into the interviews as participants shared stories related to the care they received under each gender. When needed, the researcher used probes to connect back to stories told under Research Question One. Participant Nine (female) noted, “I believe women are more communal and family oriented than men. They are ‘feelers,’ and in my view this makes them better at making people feel connected and apart...this is a quality we had in mother and I believe this was because she was a woman.” Participant Seven (female) brought in a valuable story between the care she received under the female and the male pastor that was similar in nature. Participant Seven discussed how the female pastor helped her walk through a time when her son was addicted to alcohol and drugs. She spoke of how the female pastor “walked with her” through the situation and even allowed her son to live in her home for a time to offer him more spiritual advice and guidance. She also had a grandson who got involved with alcohol and drugs under the male pastor’s leadership. As the participant described the differences in the care, she received, it was evident she was inclined to associate a stronger care response to the female leader than to the male. She stated, “(the male pastor) helped support us with our grandson but not in the same way as (the female pastor) did with our son. Women are mothers and have that mother’s intuition and (the female pastor) walked with us as a

mother.” The researcher noted the terms “supported us” under the male pastor and “walked with us” under the female pastor as key concepts used by Participant Seven related to the story of her son and grandson. Participant Three (male) discussed his divorce as a time when the female pastor helped guide him through that time in his life. He said that her perspective as a woman helped to not only offer him guidance from a woman’s point of view but when it became evident that the marriage was not able to be reconciled, he felt more at peace with the divorce because the female pastor supported the decision to divorce. “This gave me a greater level of peace than I would have had under a male pastor because, you know, a woman is basically telling me that I’ve done everything I can do and it’s time to let go.” The researcher organized this story not only under the control theme but also under the empathetic and openness theme. It was evident that the female pastor played a significant role in the events leading up to the divorce and including the actual divorce of this participant. Participant Four (female) noted, “I feel blessed to have been pastored by both a female and a male pastor. Many have not experienced this, but I think it gives those of us in our church a unique opportunity to grow and develop and relate to one another in ways others may not get to.”

Participants One, Four, and Eight, which represent Churches One and Two, all discussed how they felt women were more “attentive to details” than men, and this showed in the care and leadership the female pastors exhibited. Participant One noted that the female pastor had work days on the church grounds, and this was when the female pastor would lead work groups to maintain the church property. He noted, “every detail mattered to (the female pastor).” He compared this under the male pastor to more work being contracted out to a landscaping and maintenance company. When probed as to whether the participant believed this was more of a leadership style or related to pastoral care, the participant was quick to respond, “I believe this is

leadership yes but I believe it relates to pastoral care because you felt more connected to the church and to each other through the work days. Personally, I felt I had more of a vested interest and more personal pride I guess you could say.” He also noted, “I understand it’s probably less of a hassle to contract the work out but I believe you miss the brotherhood feeling that was more evident under (the female pastor).”

Summary of Research Question Two

The perceived strengths described by the parishioners related to the pastoral care they received were indicated through the division of the themes based on gender. The dominant themes associated with male pastors were: individualism and collaboration. The dominant themes associated with female pastors were: community/family, control, and openness/vulnerability. Generally, participants felt each gender exhibited strengths associated with their gender.

Table Six

Strengths-Based Upon Gender

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Male Strength Themes												
Individualism		+			+	+		+		+	+	
Collaboration	+	+	+			+						
Female Strength Themes												
Family			+	+		+	+		+			
Control	+			+				+				+
Openness			+	+			+					

Research Question 3

How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

This research question focuses on the perceived weaknesses from the participant's viewpoint of the pastoral care they received as a result of the pastor's gender. There were two corresponding interview questions under this research question. This research question builds upon the themes identified under Research Question One. It connects from the participant's viewpoint whether any perceived weaknesses that were identified in the themes were a result of gender. An analysis of the data related to this research question indicates that generally, the participants described the weaknesses identified in the six themes were associated with gender. The participant's responses as they related to weakness were generally not overt. It was the feeling of the researcher that the majority of the participants may have felt they were criticizing either the male or the female if they described weaknesses'. However, some participants noted differences between the pastoral care they received under the female and the male without stating they were weaknesses outright. Additionally, three participants were more vocal about the weaknesses associated with the care they received under the gendered-based care.

Individualism

The dominant theme of Individualism was associated with male pastoral care and was attributed as a signal of weakness. The theme of individualism contrasted to the theme of family/community in that as participants described a greater sense of individuality and having more room to make decisions, there was also less of a sense of community/family descriptors. The researcher does not believe that participants necessarily picked up on this correlation, but it was more evident through an interlacing of the transcriptions. For example, Participant Five

noted that he felt a greater level of spiritual maturity and growth under the male pastor but also described the female pastor as a mother figure, and the researcher noted a greater level of openness when discussing his counseling with the female pastor.

Participant One, also noted the story about the work days at church associated with the female pastor as a weakness associated with the male pastoral leader. This participant saw the work days as a time when general upkeep around the church grounds was performed, and this was a time of bonding and relationship building for the church members, not only with each other but also with the pastor. Church workdays were not continued under the male pastor's leadership but were contracted out. The participant felt this was an example of weakness and a general leading toward "more disconnected church members." He noted, "(under the female pastor) I felt like I was more part of a large family whereas now I feel like I attend a community-style church... it's more of a compartment in my life as opposed to the feeling like church was my life under (the female pastor)." As noted under RQ1, Participants Four, Six, Seven, and Twelve, which represent all three churches, discussed the importance of church dinners as they related to their feeling connected to the church and God. They seemed to correlate their activities in the church as having a greater sense of connectedness to God. Under this research question, Participants Six and Seven naturally brought up the dinners again as a point of weakness. Participant Seven noted, "there was a greater focus upon the needs of people under (the female pastor)...it seems (the male pastor) is more focused on programs and numbers, which is also good, but there is a lack of making you feel like you are personally connected."

Control

The dominant theme of control was associated with female pastoral care and was attributed as a signal of weakness by the participants. For example, when Participant Ten

described how the male pastor referred them to outside counseling services, he also stated how that would have been “unheard of under the female pastor.” His use of *unheard-of* combined with the tone of voice indicated that he was not entirely onboard with this decision. The theme of control was covertly described as a negative aspect of the female leadership quality. Participants Three and Seven described what is sub-themed as a style of micro-managing both church departments and family units.

Additionally, the wedding story described by Participant Five, categorized under the themes of individualism and control, was a more evident description of weakness associated with the pastor’s gender. Participant Three stated, “with (the female pastor), you were never really in charge of a department or anything. She put you over something, but everyone knew she was in charge of it all.” The participant described working under those conditions as a “sword walk.” When probed as to what he meant by “sword walk,” the participant noted, “well a sword will cut you if you get to where the edges are. That’s how leading a department under (the female pastor) was...if you took too much authority you were going to get cut down.” Participant Seven also described micro-management as characteristic of the female pastor but to be fair, she did not state this was negative, but she indicated it as a sign of weakness if she were to say something. When asked what she meant by micromanaging she used an example from being on the church board. She stated, “(the female pastor) always told us that a church board is not Biblical but we have one to satisfy the ‘Roman world’ but that God ran the church...and by God she really meant God through her...there wasn’t the same level of oversight under (the female pastor) as we have now...(the male pastor) has two people walk the money back to the office and count the money for proper record keeping under (the female pastor) the deacons collected the offering and took the offering to (the female pastor), and she would handle all of the business affairs.” With

the concept of pastoral care in mind, the researcher asked the participant if she felt like this placed a shadow upon her giving of tithes and offerings and she stated that it did not. She's always given no matter what and she trusted the female pastor as well as she does the male pastor. However, the administrative styles were different.

Summary of Research Question Three

The majority of the participants did not overtly ascribe weaknesses of disposition to either the female or the male pastor. Each participant displayed respect to each of their pastors, and it was felt by the researcher that they may have felt like if they highlighted weaknesses, it would be seen as criticizing the leadership or the care that they received. However, for the male pastors, the theme of individualism was seen as a general weakness when compared to the sense of family felt under the female pastor. Additionally, the theme of control was seen as a general weakness of the female pastors compared to a more laissez-faire or open approach of the male pastors.

Table Seven

Weaknesses Based Upon Gender

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Male Weaknesses Theme												
Individualism	+				+	+	+				+	
Female Weaknesses Theme												
Control			+		+		+			+		

Evaluation of the Research Design

This research study sought to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who consecutively received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor. The in-depth semi-structured interviews yielded a considerable amount of response-rich data from which

codes were derived and then themes developed and were analyzed. Theming the data phenomenologically is “applicable to interviews and participant-generated documents” (Saldana, 2021, p. 268). This form of theming is appropriate for “phenomenological studies and those exploring a participant’s psychological world of beliefs, constructs, identity development, and emotional experiences” (Saldana, 2021, p. 268). Van Manen (1990) states, “a theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand” (p. 87). Van Manen recommends narrowing themes down to that which is essential to understanding what the given phenomenon is (p. 107). The narrowing process left six emergent themes to describe participants’ lived experiences.

Participants shared their lived experiences related to the pastoral care they each received under the female and the male lead pastor. The length of the interviews ranged from thirty-five to eighty minutes. The use of probing questions helped the researcher yield deeper responses to questions, with added focus on the content questions outlined in Phase Four of the Interview Protocol Form (See Appendix D). There were six phases to the Interview Protocol forms, Phases One through Three were preliminary phases with questions meant to conduct basic introductions, set the participant’s minds at ease, and gather demographic information. The primary data for this research study was garnered from Phase Four, which consisted of the content questions specifically connecting back to the research questions, and Phase Five, which used probes meant to elicit deeper responses. Probing questions such as, “tell me more,” “could you explain your response more,” or “what does ‘not much’ mean?” were embedded within Phase Four.

Each research question was carefully designed to align with the research study’s purpose and the theoretical framework guiding this study. Research Question One had five open-ended interview questions that were all open-ended in nature to foster open dialog between the

researcher and the participant. This research question yielded the most data-rich results, and Research Questions One and Two each had two interview questions, respectively. Although interview questions related to Research Questions Two and Three were asked separately from interview questions related to Research Question One, the researcher found the answers to these questions were sometimes interlaced in conversational prose. The research study's purpose was accomplished within the given research questions. Additional research questions may have confused the purpose or bogged down the semi-structured interviews.

Eagly's (1987) social role theory was the main theoretical framework that guided this study. The theory asserted that dispositional qualities or gender stereotypes that characterize society result from gender divisions of labor that also characterize society. This study sought to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female pastor. Through those experiences, the study analyzed the responses through the lens of Eagly's theory. As the literature illustrated in Chapter Three, pastoral roles in society have traditionally been dominated by men (Bammert, 2010; Burnett, 2017; Borgerson, 2018, Eagly, 2007). This study sought to explore whether participant responses would illustrate if male pastors exhibited stereotypical masculine or feminine qualities of leadership and care and whether women exhibited stereotypical masculine or feminine qualities of leadership and care or whether there was a blend of both qualities in the different genders when both men and women held these pastoral roles.

Strength of the Design

The strength of the design is seen in the congruency of the research study's purpose statement, Research Questions, and guiding theoretical framework. This connection is demonstrated through the data collected from the interviews, which were then measured against

the Research Questions. Semi-structured interviews were the primary means of collecting data, with the possibility of follow-up interviews if deemed necessary by the researcher (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The researcher gave a particular interest to ensure the interviews were styled around open dialogue, which ensured the participants were not trapped or led into giving the researcher certain responses. Six dominant themes emerged from the coded data taken from the transcribed participant interviews. The dominant themes fit within masculine and feminine leadership qualities and care found in scholarship surrounding this topic. This is further evidence of the appropriateness between the research purpose statement, research questions, interview questions, and the guiding theoretical framework selected for this study.

Another strength of this design is seen through not only the churches that were selected but also the demographics and gender of the selected participants. Three churches were selected that fit the criteria, and the churches were geographically diverse from one another. Additionally, each church varied in average size, so smaller, middle, and larger churches were included in this study. The participant pool was diverse in age, gender, and ethnicity, which adds credibility to the findings. Across the three selected churches, an equal number of males and females were selected totaling two males and two females from each church. In addition, ages ranged from the twenties through the eighties which offers diverse perspectives of care at each level of age maturation. Participant diversity was reflective of the congregations with Caucasians, Latinos, Black, and Filipino participating in the study. This diversity adds depth to the care narratives because it does not limit the stories through the lens of one race or ethnicity.

Weakness of the Design

The interviews conducted for this research study were all conducted in person and yielded data-rich responses sufficient for the research purpose. However, the study could have

been strengthened through the use of focus groups. Focus groups could allow for rich collaboration of lived experiences between parishioners of the same church and other churches that have also experienced the same phenomenon. These groups may deepen the discussions and provide deeper data to garner results (Peoples, 2021). Additionally, a nice addition could be site visits. The researcher could attend each of the churches or fellowship functions and observe interactions between the parishioners and the pastor, and with appropriate authorizations, the researcher could also ask to watch pastoral care in action (Creswell, 2018). Another way to strengthen the study is to include the perspective of male and female lead pastors. While this study focused specifically upon the perspective of the parishioners, a more comprehensive study could consist of the perspective of male and female pastoral leaders and gather data from their perspective as to how each of them perceives the way in which they conduct pastoral care and how that administration may have differed from their predecessor whether it was a male pastor or vice-versa. The researcher could probe the male and female lead pastors regarding the differences in administration and whether the lead pastors would attribute the differences to gender.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This study sought to explore the experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively. This chapter drew final conclusions from the data and discussed how these conclusions fit into the larger scope of the available academic scholarship surrounding these topics. The research purpose and research questions that framed this study were reviewed. Additionally, the chapter provided conclusions, research implications, and applications drawn from the study. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion of the research limitations with recommendations for further study in this field.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this interpretive hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor consecutively at three selected churches. For the purpose of this research, pastoral care was defined as helping acts done by pastoral leaders directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of parishioners (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994). The guiding theory that framed this research study was Eagly's (1987) social role theory which argues that shared gender stereotypes develop from gender division of labor within society.

Research Questions

This phenomenological study was designed to explore the meaning of the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under a male and a female lead pastor. The data gathered from these experiences will facilitate learning around gendered pastoral care and leadership and better equip pastoral leaders to serve those in their congregations with diverse needs. Each research question was designed to provide an open and unbiased platform through

which participants could communicate their thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs surrounding the care they each experienced.

RQ1. What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor?

RQ2. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

RQ3. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

This section provided conclusions for each research question. Additionally, theological and theoretical inferences, research limitations, suggestions for additional research, and a summary of the research findings was discussed.

Research Conclusions

This research study found that parishioners who experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female pastoral leader identified six emergent themes through the in-depth interviews that defined the care they received: 1. Individualism, 2. Family, 3. Control, 4. Empathy, 5. Collaboration, and 6. Openness. Clebsch's and Jaekle's (1994) work pertaining to pastoral care defined pastoral care for this study. They identified four specific domains that characterized pastoral care: healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. These domains are seen naturally in the care narratives throughout the participant interviews detailed in Chapter Four. Additionally, the six emergent themes also coincide with Clebsch's and Jaekle's (1994) domains. Healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling coincide with individualism, family, control, empathy, collaboration, and openness in that these emergent themes organically arose from pastoral care administration that contained these elements. When participant experiences were analyzed, the

data showed participants associated certain themes or standards of care more strongly with the male lead pastor, the female lead pastor, or in some instances, with both genders.

The guiding theoretical lens for this study was Eagly's (1987) social role theory. Since Eagly postulated the initial social role hypothesis in 1987 there have been many studies surrounding this theory which adds current validity and credibility to the initial idea (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ferguson, 2017; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Ferguson (2017) studied female leadership and role congruity (closely aligned with social role theory) within churches. Ferguson (2017) states, "the congregation proves to be an interesting context for female leadership because there are two opposing forces at work. The clergy is a historically male-dominated profession so that the cultural image of the pastor is a male image" (p. 409). In social role scholarship, gender roles for males and females are organized into two categories: communal and agentic (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007, Ferguson, 2017). Ferguson (2017) states:

Women are perceived to be higher on the communal dimension, which means they are thought to be more caring, nurturing, and focused on others. Men, on the other hand, are perceived to be higher on the agentic dimension, which focuses on self-assertion, independence, and control (Conway, et al, 1996; Conway and Vartanian, 2000). (p. 411)

This study found that Eagly's social role theory held true for the lived experiences of these parishioners. The study found that when both male and female lead pastors held the same role consecutively, participants identified some traditionally masculine traits in female lead pastors while also maintaining the embodiment of traditionally feminine traits. However, the study did not find an overwhelming instance where the parishioners attributed male pastors as taking on traditionally feminine qualities even after succeeding them in the pastoral office. For example, a sense of family was a common theme parishioners associated with the female pastors in this study. Participants Three, Five, Eight, Nine, and Twelve all spoke of their female lead pastor as a mother figure, which is traditionally associated with communal or feminine aspects of leadership

(Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, of those five participants, only Participant Twelve identified the male pastor as a father figure, which is also associated with communal or feminine aspects of leadership because whether father or mother the sense of family is still felt (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Additionally, participants associated church fellowship dinners across all three churches as a tool that was used under female pastors to bring a sense of togetherness to the church. However, only Participant Six who attends Church Two reports this as being carried on with regularity the under the male pastors.

Therefore, this study found that when females held an office that males traditionally dominated they adopted some masculine qualities such as control and independence while also holding onto some traditional feminine qualities as family and openness but when males held this same office which is traditionally considered a masculine office, the reverse was not true. The following section provides detailed conclusions from each of the three research questions.

Conclusions for Research Questions

This research question served as the foundation upon which the other two research questions and the study itself were built.

Conclusions to Research Question One

What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor?

This first question sought to explore the themes associated with the care experiences each of the selected parishioners experienced under both a male and female lead pastor consecutively. Six themes emerged from the in-depth interviews that defined the care each of the twelve participants experienced: 1. Individualism, 2. Family, 3. Control, 4. Empathy, 5. Collaboration, and 6. Openness. Gendered leadership and care within the broader scope of academic scholarship

are discussed within Chapter Two. This chapter discusses the masculine and feminine leadership dispositions traditionally associated with males and females. Eagly and Karau (2002) state, “in general, people expect and prefer that women be communal, manifesting traits such as kindness, concern for others, warmth, gentleness, and that men be agentic, manifesting traits such as confidence, aggressiveness, and self-direction.” They cite several studies (e.g., Newport, 2001; Powell, Butterfield & Parent, 2002; William & Best, 1990) to affirm their claims.

This research study found that the emergent themes identified throughout the interviews related to the care individuals received were affirmed within the academic leadership pertaining to traditional masculine and feminine qualities. However, female leaders also exhibited the theme of control across all three selected churches (See Table Five), which is traditionally associated with male leadership as opposed to female leadership (Helgesen, 1995; Ferguson, 2017). This finding adds relevance to Eagly’s (1987) social role theory as the female lead pastors are leading in a role traditionally viewed within society as being reserved for males (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Sandstrom, 2016). Rosette and Tost (2010) wrote, *Agentic Women and Communal Leadership: How Role Prescriptions Confer Advantage to Top Women Leaders*, found that when women leaders held a top leadership role they exhibited agentic qualities which are traditionally seen as masculine. However, the study also found that while the top women leaders were viewed as agentic their leadership styles were viewed as communal which has become known in leadership scholarship as the female advantage (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Vecchio, 2003). Additionally, Ramsey (2017) found that agentic traits are associated with success more than communal traits. Beckwith (2015) found that Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel both exhibited aggressive power tendencies when in office which she associated with gendered party leadership.

Individualism. The theme of individualism was derived from the codes identified in the in-depth interviews with the twelve participants. A sample of the codes is provided in Table Four. Some codes identified were: “accepts different ideas,” logic, decisions, experience, personality, unique, and process. The concept of individualism was most closely aligned with the care administered by the male lead pastors as participants felt they were more able to self-direct and take responsibility for the situations that may arise in their lives. The emergent theme of individualism coincides within the framework of previous research, which finds male leaders to exhibit agentic qualities (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ferguson, 2017). Participants Two and Eleven both described the feeling of individualism as being able to come to their own conclusions about matters of decision or life choice.

Individualism contrasts with the feeling of family or communal patterns most closely associated with the female lead pastors. Gender research associates females as more communal, which is closely associated with attachment, while they associate males with self-reliance which aligns with separatist traits (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ferguson, 2017; Williams, 1990). However, this research is not inferring that all participants associated the theme of individualism as a negative aspect of the care they received under a male pastor. Participants Two, Five, and Ten (See Table Six) described care interlaced with this theme as positive. Participant Five, in particular felt he had grown more spiritually under the male pastor and attributed this growth to the sense of individualism he felt under the male pastor. Additionally, this theme was coupled with the theme of collaboration as participants described the male pastoral leaders as more likely to seek outside resources or assistance in administering the necessary care, which could be more aligned to congregational care and care from outside agencies. These findings are loosely connected to previous research studies (Kerfoot & Korczynski, 2005; Steward-Thomas, 2010)

exploring the connection between gendered pastoral leadership and community service projects and outreach.

Steward-Thomas (2010) conducted a study into gendered congregations and gendered service. The research study explored the relationship between clergy gender and social service participation. Steward-Thomas (2010) research found congregations that women led were more likely to participate in outdoor service projects within their respective communities than those led by men. “In our culture, as in most of the world, caring work is gendered work in that it is considered the responsibility of women (Kerfoot & Korczynski, 2005). In religious organizations, there are gendered expectations that women, whether leaders or laity, will be the responsibility of the caring work done in congregations” (Steward-Thomas, 2010, p. 5).

Although Steward-Thomas’s research concluded that women-led congregations were more likely to foster community-based relationships the data from this research project did not support this finding. The data demonstrated that male pastors were likelier to seek an outside agency to assist in care matters. Although this project did not support the conclusions of Steward-Thomas (2010) at a congregational level, an argument could be made in the research findings that one reason the male pastors may have outsourced some of the care ministries is the traits did not fit within the agentic role to which they were most comfortable.

Kerfoot and Korczynski (2005) is a research study outside of the religious sphere that looks at connections between gender and service. The study looked into the idea that service industries are typically dominated by female workers because of their perceived feminine, soft, or communal traits. “Gender stereotypes about women’s ‘proper’ place in relation to paid work and their presumed attachment to so-called ‘softer’ skills in service work act to reinforce and reproduce gender division” (p. 388). This research incorporates Acker’s (1990) theory of

gendered organizations which will be discussed in more depth in the next section. Overall, the study found that service-based organizations were dominated by female workers because of their perceived communal traits which lend themselves to service skills.

Family. The theme of family was derived from the codes identified in the in-depth interviews across the twelve participants. Some of the codes identified were: support, fellowship, guidance, mother, and together. This theme was the strongest emergent theme identified by seven participants and was strongly associated with the female lead pastor. The theme of family/communal/circular is strongly associated with female leadership across academic studies (Bem, 1974; Eagly, 2007 & 2013; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fletcher, 2004; Helgesen, 1995). Therefore, it should be noted that this theme was most frequently discussed as participants described the care they received under female leadership. The research supporting females embodying *communal* traits identified as connectedness has already been established previously in this chapter's findings as well as in Chapter Two (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fletcher, 2017). The data from this study strongly affirms the existing research in this area.

Helgesen (1995) is a contemporary of Eagly who continued research surrounding social role theory and role congruity. Helgesen (1995) describes the sense of family or community women bring into leadership as the web of inclusion. This work builds upon Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations, which also found female leaders to demonstrate communal and inclusive traits. Additional studies that continue to build upon the work of Helgesen and Eagly are: Chaves and Anderson, 2008; Conway & Vartanian, 2000; Davis & Greenstein, 2009.

Father and Mother. The metaphor of mother is also a theme that should be discussed across the female lead pastors as participants described the experiences of the care they received under their female pastors. A common sub-theme that emerged under the family theme was that

of *mother*. Participants Three, Five, Eight, Nine, and Twelve, which represent all three churches, described their female pastor as a mother figure. However, of those same participants, only Participant Twelve described the male pastor as a father figure. Perhaps one of the most powerful care quotes in the interviews was given about the mother archetype, which was described in Chapter Four but is worth repeating here: Participant Nine stated, “mother loved everybody no matter their station in life...” It should be noted that the theme of mother is not necessarily confined to females, although it is a feminine aspect of care. The Apostle Paul stated, “...just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well” (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, NIV). The metaphor of mother is demonstrated in the pastoral care ministry of the Apostle Paul (McNeel, 2014). In her article, *‘Obey me like your mother’: Deborah’s Leadership in Light of Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum 33* Hanna Tervanotko discusses Deborah’s title as *Mother in Israel* as a title of authority and leadership. Tervanotko (2015) also discusses at length the titles *‘mother’* and *‘father’* as it denotes leadership and authority in the Bible. She argues that traditionally in the Bible, the term *father* can denote more than a familial lineage, whereas more so than not, the term *mother* is seen as directly associated with a familial lineage as opposed to leadership. However, this is not the case with Deborah, who is seen as both prophet and judge in Israel. Therefore, there is precedent in Scripture and literature for familial terms such as father and mother to be viewed through the lens of authority and leadership (Tervanotko, 2015).

Another emergent theme associated with the care experiences of the participants is the theme of control which was also most frequently associated with female leadership. Although in

the precedent literature, this theme is most commonly associated with male leadership (Bem, 1974; Fletcher, 2004)

Control. The theme of control with the sub-theme of micro-managing was emergent across in-depth interviews and was most closely associated with the female lead pastors. Some of the codes identified were: dominated, approval, details, micromanage, authority, headship, and authority line. As previously noted, the concept of control is most closely associated with a masculine trait or under the agentic/agency dimension in the literature (Bem, 1974; Ferguson, 2017; Fletcher, 2004). Ferguson (2017) notes, “men...are perceived to be higher on the agentic dimension, which focuses on self-assertion, independence, and control (Conway et al. 1996; Conway and Vartanian 2000)” (p. 410).

This data aligns with Eagly’s and Karau’s (2002) and Ferguson’s (2017) research which found women were likely to adopt this agentic dimension or traditionally masculine trait if they were placed in roles traditionally dominated by men, as was the case in this study. Helgesen (1995) describes this concept of control as the *web of inclusion* with a circular nature instead of top down. “I became aware that the women when describing their roles in their organizations, usually referred to themselves as being in the middle of things. Not at the top, but in the center; not reaching down but reaching out” (p. 52). This describes the care narratives of participants in this study. Participant Seven described the family forms where the female pastor requested forms to be filled out detailing how families in the church were functioning, and depending upon what was noted in the forms the female pastor would reach out to the families for guidance or council. Additionally, Participants One, Three, Seven, Eleven, and Twelve all described experiences of control under the female lead pastor that was not present under the male lead pastor. The themes

of the family (communal dimension) and control (agentic dimension) are interlaced within the data narratives of this study.

Empathy. The theme of empathy was derived from the codes identified in the in-depth interviews across the participants. Some of the codes identified were: compassion, insight, pity, care, rapport, and sympathy. Empathy was a neutral theme that participants attributed to the care they received under both their male and female pastors. Empathy is a critical ingredient of pastoral care for parishioners to feel a connection and thus to effectively communicate with and be helped by the caring person (McCarthy, 1992; Underwood, 2002). Empathy was highlighted by Participants One, Two, Eight, and Ten. Participant Six shared a story that showed how her male pastor, although a man, demonstrated empathy toward her through her miscarriage. She notes that although he was a man, she felt “he understood what she was going through.”

Collaboration. The theme of collaboration was derived from the codes identified in the in-depth interviews across the participants. Some codes identified were: outside resources, association, joint effort, “in the community,” outreach, “fixer,” and meetings. This theme was closely associated with the care participants received under the male pastoral leader. The participants’ lived experiences surrounding the concepts of collaboration were characterized by the pastor utilizing outside resources as supports in helping acts. Most frequently, participants shared experiences of being referred to outside counseling during troubled times. Participant Ten stated, “(the male pastor)is also effective but in a different sort of way. He uses a Christian counseling agency in town to help us when we need that type thing. An outside counseling agency was unheard of under (the female pastor).”

Responses characterized female pastors as being very involved and “walking with” participants through troubled times, but there were no instances where they shared experiences of

being referred to services outside of the church for help. Participants Four, Seven, and Nine describe the care they received under the female pastor as “hands-on.” Pembroke (2006) and Patton (1993) discuss the necessity of pastoral leaders utilizing a variety of community resources in their pastoral care methodology, but there is not a gender association found in the literature between pastoral care and the use of outside resources. Collaborative work between pastoral leaders and outside resources such as family/couple therapy, hospital chaplain visiting, and other mental health psychologists/psychiatrists is a form of collaborative pastoral care that is growing frequently within modern pastoral care models (Bledsoe et al., 2013; Edwards et al., 1999; Weaver et al., 1997). While the outside agencies and clergy have historically been seen as combative between secular and spiritual methods, attitudes toward collaboration are growing in nature (Edwards et al., 1999).

Openness. The theme of openness was derived from the codes identified in the in-depth interviews. Some of the codes associated with this theme were: accountability, struggles, “hidden issues,” confession, insight, perception, “being open,” and transparency. This theme was most closely associated with female pastoral care administration. Participants One, Three, Five, Eight, Ten, and Eleven were all men, and the researcher noted a higher level of openness when the participants were communicating about care received from the female pastor. The participants felt they could connect with the female pastor, perhaps because they were talking with their mother. Participant Eleven specifically noted that he felt he was seeking advice from his mother when he received care from the female pastor. Female participants also reported they felt there was a more direct and open line of communication with the female pastor than with the male pastor. Openness is akin to the communal nature often associated with female leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ferguson, 2017). Data indicate both male and female participants felt a closer

openness with the female pastor than the male pastor. Participants One, Three, Five, Six, Eight and Ten all noted an ability to communicate more openly with their female pastors. This theme is closely associated with empathy, although the theme of empathy was neutral. Participants felt that both the male and the female pastors could empathize with them as they administered pastoral care.

Conclusions to Research Question Two

How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

This research question builds upon the themes identified in participant responses in Research Question One. Individualism and collaboration were two themes participants identified as strengths associated with male pastoral care. These themes were interwoven in the lived experiences participants shared due to the care administered by male pastoral leaders. Bem (1974) conducted a foundational study into the characteristics associated with masculine and feminine leadership. Other studies: Eagly and Karau (2002), Merchant (2012), and Ferguson (2017), have continued to build upon Bem's initial work. These studies noted traits such as independence, self-reliance, and control as agentic qualities associated with masculinity. "People believe that each sex has typical and divergent traits and behaviors (e.g., Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson & Rosenkratz, 1972; Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Newport, 2001; J.E. Williams & Best, 1990)" (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 574). One of the key assertions of the social role theory is that the majority of the beliefs about these traits are associated with gender and are organized into two categories: communal and agentic attributes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Eagly and Karau state:

Communal characteristics, which are ascribed more strongly to women, describe primarily a concern with the welfare of other people—for example, affectionate, helpful,

kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, and gentle. In contrast, agentic characteristics, which are ascribed more strongly to men, describe primarily an assertive, controlling, and confident tendency—for example, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident, and prone to act as a leader (p. 574).

This study affirmed this research in the area of gendered pastoral care as participants identified these traditionally masculine dispositional traits of care as strengths in their male pastors, with the exception of control. To use Eagly and Karau's (2002) term, control would be one of the *divergent* traits generally ascribed to male leaders but in this study was associated with female leaders across all three churches.

The themes of family, control, and openness were associated with female pastoral care and were identified as strengths by participants. The pastoral care administered by female pastors was associated with these themes. Helgesen (1990) first coined the term *female advantage* in the arena of leadership models. Since that time, other studies (Eagly, 2020; Fletcher, 2004) have continued to capitalize on this concept. Rosette and Tost (2010) note:

a lively debate has emerged over the potential existence of a female leadership advantage (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003a, 2003b; Vecchio, 2002, 2003). Specifically, proponents of the existence of a female leadership advantage have argued that women may be more inclined to lead in ways that are particularly effective in contemporary organizations (p. 221).

Helgesen's (1995) study on *The Web of Inclusion* links these three themes together. She identifies female leadership as a web of inclusion, much like a family circle. Fletcher (2004) associates female leadership as relational models of leadership or what is also known in gender leadership circles as communal traits that are most often associated with female leaders (Ferguson, 2017). The lived experiences of participants who have experienced pastoral care under both men and women share these common themes through their stories of care.

Conclusions to Research Questions Three

How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

This research question focuses on perceived weaknesses associated with care administered by both the male and the female pastor from the participant's viewpoint. While some participants noted individualism as an area of masculine strength, it was also pointed out by other participants, as indicated in Chapter Four, as an area of weakness. The individualistic theme associated with the heroic leadership archetype (Binns, 2008) is most closely related to the theme of individualism as described by participants in this study. This theme is associated with the traditional masculine leader, which is beginning to be replaced by relational leading. Eagly (2020) notes attitudinal shifts toward relational leadership models instead of traditional heroic ones.

While control was seen as a feminine advantage, it was also noted as a feminine weakness in areas of care. Participants Three, Five, Seven, and Ten noted aspects of control or micro-management associated with the care they received under female pastors as negative aspects of their lived experiences. While control is an agentic trait most closely associated with traditional masculine forms of leadership (Bimms, 2008; Ramsey, 2017), this trait was strongly related to female pastoral care and leadership in the care narratives given in this study. This also seems to add continued validity to Eagly's (1987) social role theory. In these cases, when females enter areas of leadership traditionally reserved as masculine leadership arenas, they also take on this masculine trait. While some view this as positive and others see this as negative.

Research Limitations

This study was limited to three charismatic churches in three geographic locations. Expanding the study to more churches outside the charismatic tradition may have yielded more

diverse responses. Additional churches could yield increased data from which to draw research conclusions. Churches outside of the charismatic tradition could also yield more data rich findings that could rule out potential bias related to one denominational group of a specific tradition within Christianity. Additionally, all the churches were associated with top-down or ecclesiastical forms of church governance as opposed to more congregational forms of government. The pastor is seen as the dominant authority in these churches as opposed to boards or congregational committees. This limitation has some precedent in research, Zikmund (1998) states, “clergywomen in Spirit-centered denominations (linked to the holiness and Pentecostal movements) are less inclined than the majority of other clergy to view their leadership style as democratic...” (para. 17).

Each of the three churches only had two pastors in the church’s history, potentially offering participants with limited experiences. For example, if the church had several male and female pastors, then the standards of pastoral care could be more strongly associated with gender. This study was also limited to the experiences of parishioners and did not take into account the male and female pastors who administered the care.

Further Research

This study focused on the lived experiences of parishioners who experience pastoral care, both male and female lead pastors. As demonstrated in this research study, there is a good deal of scholarship on how men and women lead similarly and differently in both religious and secular domains (Bammert, 2010; Burnett, 2017; Borgerson, 2018; Eagly, 2007). Additionally, there is an abundance of scholarship related to pastoral care and leadership (Baab, 2018; Burnett, 2017; Cole, 2010; Patton, 1993). As more women enter into religious leadership realms traditionally

held by men, more studies need to be conducted on how these leadership differences affect the spiritual growth and development of parishioners under their care.

Shepson (2012) lays a biblical foundation for a model of leadership that is relational leading toward spiritual formation. Shepson (2012) explores and develops biblical and theological foundations for spiritual formation/growth that is most widely accomplished through a relational leadership model. Shepson (2012) accomplishes this goal through analyzing the term “helper” in both the Old and New Testaments. The research demonstrates that throughout scripture the term “helper” is rooted in spiritual growth through a relational model. Shepson (2012) states, “the term ‘helper’ has its beginning in the marriage relationship described in Genesis but ultimately describes God as a helper to his people. Both Old and New Testament examples identify a relational model of ‘helper’ that brings about Christian formation” (p. 2). Shepson’s (2012) study could be enhanced with further research into how pastoral gendered leadership adds to this relational model of pastoral care and growth. Additionally, Chandler (2015) asserts a model of whole-person spiritual formation/growth thorough an integrative approach that involves not only pastoral/congregational care but also the community in which parishioners live. Chander (2015) describes an integrative formation approach that involves seven dimensions, spirit, emotions, relationships, intellect, vocation, physical health, and resource stewardship. Both Shepson’s (2012) and Chandler’s (2015) studies into relational and integrative leadership models toward spiritual formation and growth could be enriched with additional research into how male and female pastoral leaders contribute respective traits associate with masculinity and/or femininity to achieve the desired results.

This study was an opening into this field, but more research needs to be conducted into the implications of gendered pastoral care. Implications of gendered pastoral care have the

possibility of expanding understanding in the area of pastoral gendered leadership and care. These implications can continue to offer strategies of how men and women can lead complementary toward one another and better serve the needs of those under their care. Research can be expanded into denominational-wide studies as opposed to only church-based studies. Grusendorf (2016) conducted a correlational study into the communication styles and use of power among lead pastors within the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination. Grudendorf (2016) looked at lead pastors from small, middle, and large churches and how these pastors' communication styles correlated to their use of power. The study is an important contribution to pastoral leadership research but does not explore how gender may or may not affect this correlation. Do male and female pastors communicate differently and if so how does that affect their use of power. Denominations that ordain both men and women pastors could begin to conduct research into pastoral care administered by each gender across multiple churches. These types of studies could expand the diversity of the responses in both ethnic and geographical areas.

This study was qualitative. However, quantitative controlled studies could be conducted utilizing pastoral care questionnaires to offer more controlled responses. Creswell and Creswell (2018) discuss how quantitative research often test hypotheses that stem from theories. A quantitative approach could be utilized within the vein of this research to test Eagly's (1987) social role theory in churches pastored by both males and females. These research items could be based upon previous research into traditional masculine and feminine leadership dispositions and see if these dispositions hold true when surveyed using a wide array of Christians. A quantitative study could determine whether or not this theory remained consistent in Christian churches that experience gendered leadership.

Additionally, a multi-case study could be conducted on gendered pastoral leadership and care. While this study focused specifically upon the lived experiences of parishioners who experienced care under both a male and female lead pastor, a multi-case study could expand the research into site visits, listening to sermons, auditing counseling sessions and meetings, as well as seek interviews with the pastoral leaders in order to gain their perspectives.

Summary

This research demonstrated that parishioners who experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor generally identified traits/standards of care traditional to the gender of each pastor. This was not the case with the theme of control which showed most strongly with female lead pastors as opposed to male lead pastors. The analysis of findings demonstrated six emergent themes that characterized the care each participant received: 1. Individualism, 2. Family, 3. Control, 4. Empathy, 5. Collaboration, 6. Openness. Individualism and collaboration were most closely associated with masculine pastoral care, while control, family, and openness were most closely associated with feminine pastoral care. Empathy was a neutral theme identified in both masculine and feminine care experiences. Family was strongly associated with female care, while individualism was strongly associated with masculine care experiences.

As leadership models in the church continue to develop and evolve and issues of gender continue to dominate 21st Century conversations both academically and spiritually, church leaders must continually adapt their leadership models. This study demonstrates that pastoral leadership should be purposeful and adaptive in nature. Both men and women have distinct God-given and innate dispositional qualities that are natural to each gender. The two genders are not in leadership competition but are complementary (Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 11; Acts

18:26). Adaptive leaders whether male or female can adopt traditional masculine or traditional feminine characteristics with purpose regardless of gender. Through the purposeful adoption of adaptive leadership, self-aware pastoral leaders can better serve the needs of parishioners under their care.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 2, 2022

Joshua Phelan
Joseph Butler

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-889 GENDERED PASTORAL CARE: A HERMENEUTIC
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PARISHIONERS

Dear Joshua Phelan, Joseph Butler,

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 46:104(d):

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

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

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH RECRUITMENT FORM

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The title of my research project is: Gendered Pastoral Care: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Parishioners. The purpose of my research is to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who have experienced pastoral care under both male and female lead pastors, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and meet the following criteria:

- Individuals have experienced pastoral care under both a male and female lead pastor.
- Individuals have experienced at least two years of pastoral care under each lead pastor (i.e., at least two years under the male and two years under the female lead pastor).
- Individuals must be able and willing to make themselves available for at least one in-person or Zoom based interview lasting between one to two hours in length. A possible follow-up interview may be needed if questions or clarifications are needed from the initial interview.

In order to participate, please contact me at XXXXX@liberty.edu or via my cell phone, XXX-XXX-XXXX.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you meet the study criteria and choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at my email address listed above prior to the interview.

Sincerely in Christ,

Joshua D. Phelan
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Gendered Pastoral Care: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Parishioners

Principal Investigator: Joshua D. Phelan, Doctoral Candidate (Ed.D. in Christian Leadership), Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to be in a research study. In order to participate, you must meet the following criteria:

- be 18 years of age or older
- have experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor.
- have experienced at least two years of pastoral care under each of the lead pastors (i.e., at least two years under the male and two years under the female lead pastors) at a single church.

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

What is this study and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to study to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who have experienced pastoral care under both a male and a female lead pastor. This study seeks to help pastoral leaders better serve parishioners by understanding how male and female pastors may conduct pastoral care in different ways.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Participate in an audio- and video-recorded interview either in-person or via Zoom. The initial interview will last between 60-90 minutes.
2. If needed, participate in an audio- and video-recorded follow-up interview via Zoom. This follow-up interview would build upon or clarify themes found in the initial interview. The follow-up interview would last between 30-45 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society may include greater insight into how gendered pastoral care may contribute to the positive care parishioners may experience in the future.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in

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future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- After the interviews are conducted, data will be stored on a password-locked computer. Hard copy data will be stored in a lockbox. After three years, all electronic records will be erased, and any hard copy data will be shredded.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings and transcriptions will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings and transcriptions.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Joshua D. Phelan. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Joseph Butler at [REDACTED].

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

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX D: INITIAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM

<p style="text-align: center;">Phase One: Basic Information about the Interview</p> <p><i>Remind participant the interview is being recorded and gain additional verbal okay in addition to the signed consent form already collected.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time and Date of the Interview: 2. Interview Location: 3. Name of Participant: 4. File Name Interview Saved as:
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase Two: Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic Introductions between researcher and participant. 2. Ensure the signed consent form has been collected from the participant. 3. Purpose of the Study discussed: Read to participant: The purpose of my research is to explore the lived experiences of parishioners who have experienced pastoral care under both male and female lead pastors. For the purpose of this study, when we discuss pastoral care we are defining pastoral care using Clebsch and Jaekle (1975) defining of the term which states, “the ministry of pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons” (p. 4). Clebsch and Jaekle (1975) further expound upon the concept of a helping act as “Christian pastoring performed by persons who represent the resources, wisdom, and authority of Christianity in one or another of its versions” (p. 10). 4. Discuss general structure of the interview and state the expected length of the initial interview to be between 60-90 minutes. 5. Ask the participant if they have any questions.
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase Three: Opening Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This portion sets the participant at ease. Ask them about their day---are they enjoying the weather, etc. 2. Ask the participant how many years total they have been a member of the church. 3. Ask the participant the total number of years they were pastored under each lead pastor. Male: Female: 4. Ask the participant to discuss their level of involvement in their church. What activities are you involved in? choir, prayer ministry, care ministry, small groups. Other lay leadership roles within the local church?
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase Four: Content Questions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The interview questions are listed below each research question they attempt to address.</p> <p>RQ1. What are the lived experiences of parishioners who received pastoral care under both male and female lead pastors?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IQ1. Please describe the pastoral care you have received under the first pastor whether male or female. What specific helping acts have you personally experienced? i.e. Has this pastor performed marriage or funeral ceremonies for you or your immediate family; Describe the type of counselling you received under their care. Hospital or home visits during troubled times. How often did the pastor personally contact you either via letter or phone call for encouragement? How would you describe the pastors’ personal level of pastoral care during your experience under their leadership?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IQ2. Please describe the pastoral care you received under your second pastor whether male or female. What specific helping acts have you personally experienced? i.e. Has this pastored performed marriage or funeral ceremonies for you or your immediate family; Describe the type of counselling you received under their care. Hospital or home visits during troubled times. How often did the pastor personally contact you either via letter or phone call for encouragement? How would you describe the pastors’ personal level of pastoral care during your experience under their leadership?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IQ3. Please describe the natural and spiritual transition you personally experienced during the transition between the male to female lead pastor or vice versa.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IQ4. Please describe the dispositional qualities exhibited during the pastoral care you received of the male lead pastor.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IQ5. Please describe the dispositional qualities exhibited during the pastoral care you received of the female lead pastor.</p> <p>RQ2. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived strengths in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IQ1. Please describe the pastoral care strengths you believe your female lead pastor exhibited.</p>

IQ2. Please describe the pastoral care weaknesses you believe your male lead pastor exhibited.
RQ3. How, if at all, would parishioners describe the perceived weaknesses in the pastoral care received as a result of gender?

IQ1. Please describe the pastoral care weaknesses you believe your male lead pastor exhibited.

IQ2. Please describe the pastoral care weaknesses you believe your female lead pastor exhibited.

Phase Five: Using Probes

When needed use probes within the content questions.

1. "Tell me more" (asking for more information).
2. "I need more detail" (asking for more information).
3. "Could you explain your response more?" (asking for an explanation).
4. "What does 'not much' mean? (asking for an explanation).

Before interview end be sure to ask: **Is there any further information that you would like to share that we have not covered?**

Phase Six: Closing Instructions

1. Thank you participant for their time and respond to any final questions. Assure the participant of the confidentiality of the interview.

Ask permission to contact with a follow up interview if needed. Please allow two-weeks before follow-up interview is scheduled.

APPENDIX E: TABLE ONE – PERMISSION TO PUBLISH FORM

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION LICENSE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Oct 31, 2022

This Agreement between Liberty University -- Joshua Phelan ("You") and American Psychological Association ("American Psychological Association") consists of your license details and the terms and conditions provided by American Psychological Association and Copyright Clearance Center.

License Number	5419691455276
License date	Oct 31, 2022
Licensed Content Publisher	American Psychological Association
Licensed Content Publication	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
Licensed Content Title	The measurement of psychological androgyny.
Licensed copyright line	Copyright © 1974, American Psychological Association
Licensed Content Author	Bem, Sandra L.
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Licensed Content Issue	2
Type of Use	Thesis/Dissertation
Requestor type	Academic institution

Format	Electronic
Portion	chart/graph/table/figure
Number of charts/graphs/tables/figures	1
Rights for	Main product
Duration of use	life of current edition
Creation of copies for the disabled	no
With minor editing privileges	no
In the following language(s)	Original language of publication
With incidental promotional use	no
The lifetime unit quantity of new product	0 to 499
Title	GENDERED PASTORAL CARE: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PARISHIONERS
Institution name	Liberty University
Expected presentation date	Nov 2022
Portions	Table 1, Page 156, the items ON THE MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALES OF THE BSRI
Requestor Location	Joshua D Phelan