

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF  
CHRISTIAN LEADERS' COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE:  
PREPARED TO EQUIP THE LAITY

A Prospectus Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Shamekia Smith-Tucker

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2023

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## ABSTRACT

Research indicates that missional or nondenominational U.S. churches may include more than 60,000 such churches, representing at least 12 million followers (Thumma, 2020). Additionally, some ministry leaders predict denominational affiliation will wane over the next decade (Earls, 2021a), as will the training and other support they offer. The purpose of this phenomenological study will be to assess and understand the experiences of missional ministry leaders after participation in a structured or unstructured competency development program and their ensuing dynamic engagement in ministry. Dynamic engagement will be defined as "fully engaged and intentional" (MacFarland, 2019, para. 1), as evidenced by implementing a plan to cultivate disciples. Missional Christian ministry leaders in attendance with the researcher at workshops and seminars have communicated issues with fundamental deficits in leadership preparedness due to a lack of or insufficient training. Research exploring leadership development programs abounds. Pedagogical models for preparing ministers who serve outside larger religious constructs seem lacking. A two-phase qualitative methodology, including an online demographic survey and a subsequent inductive one-on-one interview, will be employed. Husserl's view of essence will guide this study (Creely, 2018). Within a Husserlian (1970) orientation, this researcher will interpret the essence of the participant's lived experiences as their sense of the phenomenon under review. According to Husserl's (1970) theory, essence is a variable reflecting the qualities of a thing and the particular observer (Ross, 2006; Williams, 2001). Moreover, as those qualities exist in a substance, they thereby make that thing what it is, individually, by the observer (Ross, 2006; Williams, 2001).

*Keywords:* Christian, competence, leadership, missional, nondenominational, parachurch, training

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## Dedication

*“We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Holy Bible, Christian Standard Bible, Colossians 1:28)*

First, to God, who is the head of my life, I dedicate these chapters to You. Next, to my love and my rock, Eugene, your committed love carried me through. All my love. Always.

Also, to my parents—Mom, whose loving encouragement is felt from Heaven’s grandeur in my heart and to Dad, whose tenacious spirit lives on in me, thank you both infinitely. Aunt Lavonne, you are a mom “instead”—celebrating and championing me like she would have. Thank you. To Grandma Fannie, I shared my hopes and dreams with you in the late-night hours after Bible study on that front porch Wednesday nights. I learned to love the Bible by watching you live it and through countless hours laying on your bedroom floor ‘gettin’ my lesson’ for Sunday School. You were my sanctuary during the most uncertain times in my young life. I would not have achieved this milestone if it had not been for the God in you now reigning in me. Rest well. To Grandma Geneva, sitting behind you in the car on the way to your house, I can still hear the sound of your turquoise ring tapping against the steering wheel. There was always so much love in your home. In your presence, I always received love. Love builds confidence. I know it was from that well of love that I drew strength for this work. Thank you —always your Shawnie.

Aunt Regina, in you I have found a safe place and closeness to Dad. I love you, fam.

Sister, thank you for P.U.S.H.ing me and with me. We are peas in a pod—you already know. I knew I loved you from the first day you took over the crib.

To Mother-in-Love, whose bedside wisdom has remained with me and always will. Thank you for covering me as your own. To Uncle (Buster) Burnell, I was seeking direction in my youth. Thank you for answering my call, clearing the path to my future, leading the way, and demonstrating to all of us how to look further and think higher.

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## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	3
Copyright .....	4
Dedication .....	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Tables .....	10
List of Figures .....	13
List of Abbreviations .....	14
CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN .....	15
Introduction.....	15
Background to the Problem .....	16
Statement of the Problem.....	23
Purpose Statement.....	24
Research Questions .....	24
Assumptions and Delimitations .....	24
Research Assumptions .....	25
Delimitations of the Research Design.....	25
Definition of Terms.....	26
Significance of the Study .....	28
Summary of the Design .....	29
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	31
Overview.....	31
Theological Framework for the Study .....	31

Theoretical Framework for the Study .....	41
Related Literature.....	67
Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature .....	76
Profile of the Current Study .....	78
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	80
Research Design Synopsis .....	80
The Problem.....	80
Purpose Statement.....	81
Research Questions.....	81
Research Design and Methodology .....	81
Setting .....	84
Participants.....	85
Role of the Researcher .....	88
Ethical Considerations .....	90
Data Collection Methods and Instruments.....	94
Collection Methods.....	95
Instruments and Protocols.....	96
Procedures.....	101
Data Analysis .....	105
Analysis Methods.....	105
Trustworthiness.....	108
Credibility .....	108
Dependability .....	109



Confirmability .....	110
Transferability .....	111
Chapter Summary .....	111
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS .....	112
Compilation Protocol and Measures .....	112
Demographic and Sample Data .....	122
Data Analysis and Findings .....	127
Evaluation of the Research Design .....	157
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS .....	161
Research Purpose .....	161
Research Questions .....	161
Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications .....	162
Research Limitations .....	177
Further Research .....	178
REFERENCES .....	183
APPENDICES .....	196

### List of Tables

Table 1: Initial Codes.....	118
Table 2: Research Questions, Codes, and Themes .....	120
Table 3: Rate of Response and Participation .....	123
Table 4: Demographics by Gender .....	123
Table 5: Demographics by Age Bracket.....	124
Table 6: Demographics by Ethnicity .....	124
Table 7: Demographics by Location.....	125
Table 8: Demographics by Education.....	125
Table 9: Demographics by Years in Ministry or Leadership in Your Church or Ministry .....	126
Table 10: Demographics by Leadership Development Program or Process (LDP/P).....	126
Table 11: RQ1 - How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency? .....	129
Table 12: RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Performance by Age.....	130
Table 13: RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Performance by Education .....	130
Table 14: RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Performance by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity .....	131
Table 15: RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Professional/Management by Age .....	132
Table 16: RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Professional/Management by Education.....	132
Table 17: RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Professional/Management by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity.....	133
Table 18: RQ2 - What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program or process?...142	

Table 19: RQ2 -What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program or process?

By Code, Education, Age.....143

Table 20: RQ3 - What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context? .....144

Table 21: RQ3 - Yrs in Ministry, Leadership in Your Community.....145

Table 22: Theme 4: Where much is given (Matthew 28:18); much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48.....146

Table 23: Theme 5: Values learning and development .....149

Table 24: RQ4 - What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry? .....151

Table 25: RQ4 - Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment by Age.....152

Table 26: RQ4 - Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment by Education .....153

Table 27: RQ4 - Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity.....153

Table 28: RQ4 - Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical by Age.....155

Table 29: RQ4 - Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical by Education .....155

Table 30: RQ4 - Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity.....	156
Table 31: RQ5 - Theme 8: Parachurches add a specialization not present within the ministry, according to each ministry's unique needs.....	159

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Thematic Map.....	121
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### **List of Abbreviations**

American Bible Society (ABS)

American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)

Faith Communities Today (FACT)

Harvard Business Review (HBR)

Human Resources (HR)

Jerry Falwell Library (JFL)

Knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (K.S.A.O.C.)

Leadership Competency Scorecard (LCS)

Leadership Development Plan (LDP)

Leader(ship) Development Plan/Process (LDP/P)

Liberty University (LU)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.)

National Association of Evangelicals (NACE)

North Texas District [NTD] Council of the Assemblies of God

Organizational Leadership (OL)

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Reno Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Society of Professors of Christian Education (SPCE)

## **CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN**

### **Introduction**

Paterson et al. (2014) wrote that “training programmes have overly focused on the tasks of ministry to the neglect of those who embody those ministries” (p. xvi). This research will advance to explore the notion that ministry leader preparation is essential for cultivating spiritual growth in others and necessary for the furtherance of the Gospel, the enduring work of the church. Further, this research will respond to the need for ministry leader support and regarding the instances when ministry learning and development opportunities are accessible.

To address learning and development issues in context, participants in this study will identify as missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside an organized church hierarchy or denominational system. Further, missional leaders in this study will be united in fellowship with other leaders through their affiliation with parachurch or other organizations. This researcher’s experience shows that the interdependency innate to parachurch fellowship can strengthen missional ministers in ministry, spiritual development, church government, church finances, and more. However, operating independently of a larger religious construct (e.g., a denomination) may result in insufficient support for their leadership development and the subsequent development of others. Structured training enables the practical cultivation of the varying developmental needs of missional Christian leaders (Krispin, 2020). Further, developing structured learning programs designed to undergird the competencies required for practical and missional ministry is essential for creating consistency and efficacy among current church leadership to equip others to lead (Krispin, 2020).

As a Christian leader of more than 13 years and with more than 25 years of Human Resource work in the development of people and organizations, it has been this researcher's experience that introspective assessment and practical development of one's skills can precipitate the desire to foster the same in others. Nevertheless, Barna (2020) reported a need for laity development. Leaders can experience obscured views of their own developmental needs without measures to assess their current competencies.

Paul and Timothy proclaimed to the Church at Colosse that they, and those in ministry with them, were driven by the call and duty to warn and teach everyone. They strongly encouraged the Church to cultivate the spiritual formation of one another "with all the wisdom God has given us" (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, Colossians 1:28). This research endeavors to assess and understand what leadership development programming experiences have helped participants to cultivate their spiritual formation.

Chapter One will provide a brief background to the problem and the statement of the problem. This researcher will include the purpose statement for the research and the related questions in this chapter. In addition, assumptions regarding the study will be presented, and the study's delimitations will be identified. Finally, this researcher will define the terms used throughout this study, and the study's significance will be provided.

### **Background to the Problem**

Serrano (2018) theorizes that competent Christian leadership integrates the fundamentals of organizational behavioral theory with scriptural truths. In other words, those who understand what comprises competent leadership, can combine those elements with Bible truths, and can impart knowledge have a responsibility to equip Christian leaders. Equipping Christian leaders this way empowers them to deploy competencies like decision-making to maximize impact



within their ministry. In Luke 10:2, the author records Jesus' instruction, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So, pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields" (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*). Romans 13:11 demonstrates the urgency of the matter, "... for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed" (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*). This work will study the effects of leader competency readiness to prepare the study participants for ministry.

Bar-On (2019) proposes that preparedness and readiness are demonstrated by one's ability to embody the following:

Cope with immediate situations that arise and/or to execute some form of goal-oriented action based on what they have learned. This includes immediately sizing up what is presently happening in the here-and-now, deciding on the best course of action and rapidly implementing it, which appears to be what is cognitively needed in dealing with emergency situations. (p. 235)

In a discussion regarding public health emergency preparedness, the Scandinavian Journal of Public Health (2014) defines preparedness as an "aggregate of all measures and policies adopted before an event occurs..." (p. 148). The authors propose that preparedness promotes mitigating potential detriment generated "by an event and minimizes the dysfunction that could result..." (p. 148). Preparedness is equated with the processes used to enhance one's readiness to respond competently. Readiness is a component of preparedness and is associated with 'response'—competent action. These meanings will be adopted for this study, as the sense of urgency invoked corresponds to the communal needs of the Church and the impetus for ministry leaders to become ready to respond through intentional preparation.

## Historical Concern

From the beginning, God has desired for humankind to be spiritually complete through the manifestation of the *Imago Dei*—the image of God (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, Genesis 1:26-27). White (2014) said, "...we call the way God reveals His truth to us the divine pedagogy" (p. 14). Through the Hebraic catechism, humankind can see God working divinely to reconnect humanity to Himself person-by-person, family-by-family, and generation-upon-generation after the fall of man (White, 2014).

God intentionally considered Israel's role in helping other nations learn about His character. Observing Israel, other nations would become curious about the God who bestowed blessings upon His obedient people. Their curiosity would inspire questions about "how they, too, could establish a covenantal relationship with Jehovah" (Anthony & Benson, 2018, p. 20). Before the rabbinic oversight and subsequent written format of God's law, Hebrew parents were the principal catechists as leaders in the household, providing early, constant, structured biblical and spiritual instruction. Christianity has been a durative aspect of most educational concepts (Anthony & Benson, 2018; White, 2014).

As a contemporary Christian leadership concern, the responsibility remains with the leadership to establish a spiritual structure where from within the Church's maturity can be developed. Whether pedagogical considerations include education among Native Americans in precolonial America; The Common Man and Common school era in the late 1800s; or the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during the period of modernization in U.S. development; through the Depression and World Wars; to modern systems of education (Urban, 2019), structured instruction has been a foundational precept. When Christian leaders personify biblical tenets and teach those who follow them competently, they provide the requisite structure and

model for spiritual cultivation (see 2 Corinthians 3:2-3). Commenting on Christian pastors who teach the Word of God, Peterson et al. (2020) advance that these leaders desire for their followers a lifestyle “directed by their faith” (p. 320). They also recognize Hebrews’ addition of “these leaders to the list of those his [presumption of male leader] hearers can imitate in running the race of faith” (p. 320).

### **Sociological Concern**

Since 2011 (Barna 2021), the American Bible Society (ABS) compiled and evaluated the State of the Bible data in collaboration with Barna. Through this effort, ABS underscores connections between the Bible and the larger story of faith in the United States (Barna, 2021). This collaboration has yielded “one of the largest data sets on how the population perceives and engages the Bible” (Barna, 2021, para. 1). Prompting and guiding the necessity of this qualitative research regarding missional Christian leader readiness is the need to “recognize, respond, and relate” (Plake, 2022, p. x) to data emerging from the ABS 2022 research on the state of the Bible in America.

First, Barna (2021) estimated that 2014 data demonstrated an unparalleled peak of 53 percent of American adults as Bible Users, and 2019 data indicated the lowest point at 48 percent. In January 2002, ABS began conducting interviews for the annual State of the Bible review. Results of the study presented “an unprecedented drop in the percentage of Bible Users in the United States” (Plake, 2022, p. x), a 2021-2022, year-over-year, decline of 10 percent. More succinctly, “nearly 26 million Americans reduced or stopped their interaction with Scripture” (Plake, 2022, p. x) during that year. While the American Bible Society was careful to include in the findings reasons related to COVID-19, Omicron, and the turmoil in Ukraine as some of the interference with the data, the need to prepare Christian leaders to competently

“recognize, respond, and relate” (Plake, 2022, p. x) seems more evident to this researcher.

Supporting the urgency for ministry leader development is the ABS (2022) report that “one-third of non-Bible users said they were curious about the Bible and/or Jesus” (p. 2).

According to Data USA (n.d.), "the number of people employed as Clergy has been growing at a rate of 2.25%, from 434,231 people in 2019 to 443,993 people in 2020" (*Clergy*, n.d., Industries by Share section). Popular sources for this data comprise organized religious bodies, military, and medical institutions (*Clergy*, n.d.). For this study, participating clergies will be missional Christian ministry leaders who practice activities within Christian biblical and theological tenets outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system. The experiences of missional ministry leaders regarding the adequacy of the competencies developed during ministry preparation will be the focus of this research. Exploration of these lived experiences will be conducted pursuant to this researcher's advancement of a ministerial competency curriculum designed to support nondenominational ministries' sufficiency.

Earls (2021a) reviewed the data collected from 1,007 pastors (Protestant) during a 2020 study conducted by LifeWay Research. Earls (2021a) observed that "Despite most pastors affirming the personal and congregational importance of being connected to a denomination, a majority believe that value will decrease in the next decade" (para. 9). That observation aligns with findings after a comparison of LifeWay's 2010 and 2020 survey of pastors of churches affiliated with a denomination or similar group. In both studies, participants responded, "Our congregation considers it vital for our congregation to be a part of a denomination" (LifeWay Research, 2020, p. 7). In 2010, fifty percent strongly agreed, but a six percent decline was observed in 2020.

Through the coordination of or participation in Christian leadership conferences, this author has observed what seems to align with the LifeWay study—a growing number of missional (no denominational affiliation) Christian ministry leaders. Often, these ministers communicate issues with fundamental deficits in leadership enthusiasm due to insufficient preparation. These experiences suggest an emergent phenomenon of inadequate or non-existent leadership development among Christian leaders of unaffiliated ministries. Research exploring leadership development programs abounds. However, studies investigating pedagogical models for preparing ministers to thrive outside larger religious constructs may be underprovided.

### **Theological Concern**

Wolff (2018) illustrates the theological importance of developing competent leaders—capable of successfully applying their innate set of giftings, knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform critical tasks—through crucial aspects related to Nehemiah and the Jerusalem wall. Wolff (2018) notes Nehemiah’s ability to inspect the wall, devise a plan for reconstruction, cast the vision to mobilize the rebuild, perform civil acts to restore peace and harmony and thwart the enemies’ countermeasures while inspiring the people. Within Nehemiah, Wolff (2018) observes leadership competencies on display.

Diskiēne et al. (2019) describe competency as the ability to solve problems and engage in systems thinking, among others. Systems thinking requires insight into a matter's whole rather than the parts' minutia (Diskiēne et al., 2019). Wolff (2018) observed that Nehemiah was able to see the potential global impact of his decisions on the relationships with the people, the enemies, and God. Nehemiah competently led the reconstruction of the wall in 52 days. Nehemiah’s highly-visible execution was a systematic God-ordained accomplishment that inspired awe for God within everyone involved (Nehemiah 6:15)—theological inspiration.

Beyond developing Christian leader competency as a theological concern, doing so is a Christological, soteriological, pneumatological, and eschatological imperative. As Paul describes the work he was called to, he comes to his points in Colossians 1:26-28 where he proclaims that what was once hidden as a cryptic discovery has been revealed to humankind. He talks about spreading the Gospel message to bring the Saints of God to spiritual maturation (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*). In Colossians 1:28, Paul says that one accomplishes the spiritual growth of all by teaching everyone through all the wisdom that God has given (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*).

Sanchez (2020) further adds a theological idea. When discussing biblical leaders—historical and contemporary—Sanchez (2020) describes a “panorama of biblical descriptions and qualifications of leadership” (p. 35) based on Ephesians 4:11, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-8 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. The author talks about understanding a distinct model of biblical leadership, including “Character + Conviction + Care + Competency = Credibility” (Sanchez, 2020, p. 35). Regarding competency, Sanchez (2020) refers to 1 Timothy 2:2 and argues that faithful people qualified to pass the truths of the Gospel on to others demonstrate the notion of competence.

The Kingdom of God relies on the unbridled skill of the entire body, laity notwithstanding, to express the Gospel to a dying world. Many are still living outside of the grace of God, but "...the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith." (Holy Bible, New American Standard Bible, 1995, Galatians 3:24). Leaders should be equipped to leverage it for the development of lay members. For the Christian leader, this researcher offers from the New King James Version Notes from Thomas Nelson:

No shepherd has ever given birth to his sheep. It is the responsibility of those in leadership to do for the sheep what they cannot do for themselves and to make sure that they are in good spiritual condition so that they can do what comes naturally, that is, beget other sheep. (n.d., as cited in *1 Timothy 3*, n.d., para. 3)

### **Statement of the Problem**

Given the lack of research available on the phenomenon under review, the problem engaged within this study will be the preparation of missional, non-affiliated Christian leaders to engage competently in ministry. A Barna (2020) survey indicated that pastoral confidence was low regarding the ability of the current leadership team to develop laity for the subsequent work of disciple-making. However, according to the Better Together research conducted by Barna (2020), "Among the things (pastors) especially hope any member might embrace are evangelism and outreach (85%), showing others how to live as Christians (79%), helping the poor (77%), teaching others about God (60%) and giving practical help to those in sickness, transition or crisis (59%)" (para. 7). Also revealed through Barna's (2020) research, approximately 68% of pastors indicated that the involvement of laypeople would benefit the future vibrancy of the church (para. 6). However, the need for laity development was echoed throughout the report.

This inquiry was beneficial considering Barna (2013) conducted research uncovering "only 4% of unchurched adults were invited to church by a friend and actually went, 23% were invited but declined, and 73% were never invited at all" (para. 3). This study will endeavor to understand if participation in a structured or unstructured Christian leader competency readiness program helps missional Christian leaders to feel more confident about or eager to enjoin the work of spiritual development of others.

Gallup (2018) disclosed that when people can identify and have the opportunity to use their strengths, they are "three times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life, six times more likely to be engaged at work, 8% more productive, and 15% less likely to quit their jobs" (Flade, 2018, p. 2). Competencies (external) are the combination of knowledge, skills, and other characteristics (e.g., perspective, habits, giftings) required to demonstrate expected

behaviors. Strengths (internal) are an outgrowth of competencies. Once an individual has developed or mastered an area of competency, they become more robust in that regard (Vazquez-Marin et al., 2022). These precepts are integral to leader competency and the process of preparing missional, non-affiliated Christian leaders, which will be foundational to this research.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study will be to assess and understand the leader competency development experience of missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

### **Research Questions**

The following Research Questions will guide this study:

**RQ1.** How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?

**RQ2.** What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?

**RQ3.** What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context?

**RQ4.** What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?

**RQ5.** How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?

### **Assumptions and Delimitations**

Assumptions and delimitations provide context and focus points for the research and the reader. Assumptions offer a starting point, and delimitations provide boundaries. The following presents the assumptions and delimitations of this research.



## **Research Assumptions**

This research assumes the Bible is the only infinite, inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God (*Holy Bible*, 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Theoretical assumptions made in this research are that Husserl's (1973; 1998; 2001) perspective on phenomenology is accurate in that "when we attend intentionally to a phenomenon, when we understand that phenomenon and what it is, we are involved with essences" (Dahlberg, 2006, pp. 11-12) and that Husserl's (1970) argument for the essence of consciousness and intentionality as observed through lived experiences is appropriate for this qualitative study (Drummond & Höffe, 2019). Further, reflexive journaling, or the intentional practice of writing to examine one's judgments, techniques, and belief systems during the data collection process, is presumed to be practical for bracketing to minimize bias within the research (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

Other assumptions stem from Creswell and Creswell (2018). They assert that "the analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of what Moustakas (1994) called an essence description" (p. 197) is adequate for data analysis. Lastly, it is assumed that there will be some similarities among participants' characteristics, given the commonalities within missional Christian leadership.

## **Delimitations of the Research Design**

This study will be delimited to persons who identify as leaders according to the Christian faith, espouse biblical and theological doctrines as demonstrated through incarnate biblical values, and possess a desire to cultivate the same in others. This study will include 10 to 15 participants. Participants will identify as missional ministry leaders as demonstrated by their engagement in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation, house-based) or communal ministerial activities (e.g., open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, marketplace, or

prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system. Each participant will be at least 21 years old and possess a minimum of three years of ministerial service. Participant responses to the semi-structured interview questions and the timeframe allotted for the completion of this research will further delimit the study.

Participants will be located within the Eastern United States. Formal and informal ministry formation training will be considered acceptable for this study. The research will also be delimited to a transcendental phenomenological approach to the essence of the participant's lived experiences (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994). The scope of this work will be further delimited to a review of five theoretical paradigms for leadership—trait, servant, Path-Goal, adaptive, and authentic (House, 1971; Greenleaf et al., 2002; Northouse, 2018; George, 2021; Spears, 2021).

### **Definition of Terms**

- Dynamic Leadership is demonstrated when one is "fully engaged and intentional," as evidenced by implementing a plan to cultivate disciples (McFarland, 2019, para. 1).
- Leadership is "an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members" (Bass, 1990, p.19). Specifically, the leader influences the actions of two or more other people, espousing Christian and biblical tenets.
- Missional Christian leadership is demonstrated by engagement in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation, house-based) or communal ministerial activities (e.g., open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, marketplace, or prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system (Keifert, 2006; Van Gelder, 2007, as cited in Niemandt, 2010); takes the gospel out and embodies the gospel within a specific cultural context (Wright, 2006).

- Parachurches come “alongside” (*para* is Greek) churches to provide ministries those churches cannot fulfill alone (Saunders, 2015). Parachurches do not typically meet for regular worship services, administer the edicts, or display other characteristics of the organized church. Parachurch members frequently belong to sundry churches (Erickson, 2001).
- Preparatory means "to produce or make by combining elements; to synthesize" ("Prepare vs. Train," n.d.)— is distinguished from training.
- Preparedness is equated with the processes used to enhance one's readiness to respond with competence.
- Quantitative survey methodology involves collecting and analyzing numerical data through a questionnaire. It can find patterns and averages, make predictions, causal test relationships, and generalize results to broader populations (Bhandari, 2022b).
- Qualitative survey methodology comprises collecting and analyzing non-numerical data through a questionnaire to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences (Bhandari, 2022a).
- Readiness is a component of preparedness and is associated with 'response'—competent action
- Training means "to teach and form by practice" ("Prepare vs. Train," n.d.).

### Significance of the Study

Several factors underwrite the significance of this inquiry into the effect of Christian ministers' participation in a structured or unstructured leadership competency development program and their following dynamic engagement in ministry. Potential impacts of the study include, but are not limited to:

- Ministry response to the need for laity development is imperative to affect the future vibrancy of the church (Barna, 2020).
- Further narrowing of the perceived considerable literature gap for this research problem will occur.
- Informing those engaging in the pedagogical implications of Christian leader competency development and readiness training, primarily related to missional ministry leaders, will result.
- Providing an objective evaluation of missional ministry leaders' readiness to cultivate the spiritual formation of others can be realized.
- Developmental gaps in the leadership formation of these leaders can be identified.
- Incumbent ministry leaders will be better equipped to develop others for leadership, specifically, laity within the local church.

For missional Christian ministry leaders, the need for self-development exists. Through competency development, ministry leaders can exercise their knowledge, skills, and abilities within their ministries and develop the laity (Vazquez-Martin et al., 2022). This research will help bring awareness to the effect that formal or informal leader development programs will have on the future of the Church. This study will also support the readers' evaluation and comprehension of the participants' experiences during the process of leader preparation. The participants' experiences within their leadership development program(s) will enable future readers and researchers to understand better what an effective leader competency development program for nontraditional nondenominational ministry leaders should entail.

### **Summary of the Design**

This study will be designed to consider and understand the experience of missional Christian ministry leaders who apply Christian biblical and theological principles through religious activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry. This researcher will select a qualitative phenomenological approach to the study, employing purposive sampling.

A phenomenological study evaluates the lived experiences of individuals as related to a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). This qualitative method will be selected because it will enable a practical assessment of the participants' lived experiences and the meaning(s) they have assigned to the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). Another critical strength and factor contributing to this researcher's choice of a qualitative research design will be the opportunity to discover the participants' contextual views of the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018).

Understanding the phenomenon's meaning will be accomplished through an iterative “constant comparative method “ (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 252). The iterative process will involve collecting preliminary data through a survey, participant interviews, and relative data analysis. The established research questions will be integral to the study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described research questions as “signposts” (p. 133) that guide the reader through the plan for the study. Therefore, this researcher will design the study in alignment with the commissioned research questions.

Moustakas' (1994) presentation of the transcendental phenomenological approach will also be fundamental to this research. McNally (1980) notes that phenomenon is drawn from

phainomenon, “a derivative of the verb phainesthai...meaning to show itself” (pp. 40-41).

Further meaning is translated as to bring a thing (e.g., an event or experience) to light, “to bring into daylight, to place in brightness. Phenomenon is that which shows itself as itself in the light of day” (McNally, 1980, pp. 40-41). Epoché in praxis (or the practice of bracketing), as suggested by Moustakas (1994), helps guide researchers away from preconceived notions that might overshadow the experiences expressed by the participants. Epoché in sociological research involves “find[ing] ways of creating opportunities for the indicators of the presence of...phenomena to appear to us” (Blanchard, n.d.). A virtual image is painted by Blanchard (n.d.) of one working to clear their mind. He describes the process of removing from one’s mind the shroud of prior knowledge, experience, or any other familiarity with a phenomenon that can prevent one from perceiving the essence of a thing—“removing the darkness from looking through a glass darkly” (Blanchard, n.d.).

A two-phase qualitative methodology will be employed. This methodology will include exploratory mechanism development (a survey and interview guide), with further data collection through the administration and evaluation of the instrument to a sample population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phase two will include inductive, one-on-one virtual interviews to explore the subjects’ lived experiences.

In this chapter, the researcher provided context for the problem and the statement of the problem. The researcher included the study's purpose statement and the related questions in this chapter. Furthermore, she explained assumptions regarding the research and clarified the study’s delimitations. Lastly, this researcher defined the terms and explained the study’s significance.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

This chapter will provide the theological foundation and scaffolding for this study. Furthermore, a theoretical framework for the research will be presented. An exploration of literature relevant to the research problem will ensue within this chapter. Finally, this researcher will use this chapter to demonstrate the significance of the problem being considered by identifying a gap in the literature.

### **Theological Framework for the Study**

“Theology literally means thinking about God” (Badham, 1996, p. 101). Contemplating matters concerning God include notions about His character, what moves the heart and mind of God, or what He has to say (in prayer/meditation, scripture, through others, e.g.), and the purpose and ultimate plan for humankind as it relates to the image of God and thereby the revelation of God (Badham, 1996). These are all qualities of theology. “Theology literally means thinking about God” (Badham, 1996, p. 101).

### **Thinking About God**

Curious contemplation about the things of God leads to transformation. Rabbi Tuling (2020) introduces his work with these questions,

Why should we care about theology? What difference, really, does it make if we think of God as a bearded gentleman or as an invisible force? Why should it matter whether someone thinks this or that event is the will of God? (p. xvii).

Tuling (2020) summarizes the story of Joseph and his brothers after they encounter him as a vizier in Egypt. The author observes the transformation that has occurred within Joseph. Pointing out that Joseph has found the wherewithal to forgive his brothers, despite his position of authority and ability to exact an act of more deadly revenge on them. Tuling (2020) further notes Joseph’s

“nuanced theology” (p. xviii) in Genesis 50:20. There, Joseph does not surmise that God ordained the action of his brothers nor does he minimize the effect on his life. “Rather, Joseph has created a theology that allows him to heal and forgive by assuming that God has transformed all the negatives into something positive” (Tuling, 2020, p. xviii).

Tuling (2020) presents this analysis as a means for readers to examine how they think about God as related to spiritual transformation. For example, circumstances like those experienced by Joseph would inspire thoughts about God; His nature, His allowance and role of suffering for humanity; theodicy, and others (Tuling, 2020). In short, one’s theology shapes their interaction with the world, with others, and ultimately with the potential to maximize their representation of God in earth.

### **Theological Effect on the Study**

Christian leaders bear the responsibility of educators and guides. Through leadership competency training and development, they can be positioned to be effective and affective. The catalyst for this researcher's study is identifying the elements for building a strong competency framework upon a sound theological foundation. As Christian leaders, or those they serve, encounter theological- and biblical-shaping life issues, the scaffolding erected through programmatic development will provide practical support (e.g., the theological study of the Scripture vs. Bible study). The deepening of Christian leaders’ thoughts about the existence of God; the nature of God; His allowance and role of suffering for humankind; theodicy, and others will contribute to their growth, primarily through spiritually demanding circumstances.

### **God’s Character**

The Word of God serves as a mirror. It will be necessary to see Christ abiding within leaders involved in developing leadership competencies and committed to ministerial work.



God's character is displayed through Jesus and line upon line, precept upon precept in Scripture. This researcher posits that every leader will serve, engage, relate, and lead with greater efficacy when God's character is clarified. This study will be engaged pursuant to this central premise and discovery.

In Oliphint's (2011) work, he includes considerations about the revelation of God through the observation of what God discloses of Himself throughout Scripture, the implications of the names of God, and the essential aspects of His characteristics. The author argues that critical theological consideration of the nature of God must submit to the notion "that the characteristics of God come from what he has said, and specifically what he has said with regard to his own names" (Oliphint, 2011, p. 40). He further posits that "any discussion of the names of God must be able to prioritize his names in a way that is consistent with Scripture" (Oliphint, 2011, p. 40).

Because Scripture emphasizes names and their associations with the nature or characteristics of individuals or their circumstances (e.g., Genesis 35:18, 1 Samuel 1:20, and John 1:42), it is fitting for the character of God to be revealed through His names (e.g., Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 9:6, and Revelation 1:8), according to Oliphint (2011). He does not include a rehearsal of the many names of God. Instead, a threefold classification is offered—"nomina propria (proper names), nomina essentialia (essential names, or attributes), and nomina personalia (personal names, e.g., Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)" (2011, p. 44). Oliphint (2011) notes that the culmination of God's personal names comprises the development of the proper names of God. Plainly, the OT names God ascribed to Himself "reach their redemptive-historical climax in the triune name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (p. 44), thereby revealing the characteristics or nature of God.

Oliphint (2011) advances that the discovery of God's nature occurs through a cataphatic study of the names of God. Owens (2004) thinks that "the language of nature is appropriate regarding God" (p. 614) and employs an apophatic method to seek the revelation of God in scripture, namely Exodus chapter 3. Owens (2004) continues to say, however, that "God's nature cannot be known" and that "the language of 'nature' is entirely appropriate insofar as it designates the very unknowability of God" (p. 614). He continues by explaining that the notion of God as "the one unalterably persisting in being" (Owens, 2004, p. 616) has come under philosophical attack because suppositions follow that perceive of God's subsistence an impassability and immutability that renders indifference. Nevertheless, Owens (2004) believes that an ontological debate about God muddles the revelation of God. Like Oliphint (2011), Owens (2004) submits that one can come to know God through the revelation of His character and identity. "God's character tells us what God is like, while God's identity tells us which God we are talking about" (Owens, 2004, p. 614). His essay attempts to demonstrate this ability to discover God's character through the discourse between God and Moses in Exodus.

God revealed Himself in Exodus 3:14 as a "subsistent being in itself" (Owens, 2004, p. 615). His "radically present and utterly free" (Owens, 2004, p. 627) character is revealed through His presence remaining with Moses (and the children of Israel) in Exodus 32:14, despite His anger. God does not change His mind concerning His promise to Moses to be with him and the people. The children of Israel endeavored in futility to summon God and harness His power within their created golden calf. That incensed God to the point that He considered destroying them. However, we see in Scripture the ability of Moses to appeal to God and to later assuage God's anger. God's change of heart is recorded in His original position of going with them.

Referring to the exchange between God and Moses in Exodus 32:12-14, Owens (2004) says, “this is the climactic crisis in the identity and character of God as it is being revealed” (2p. 626). Paradoxically, Owens (2004) adds that “in the act of changing his mind, God’s immutability is established” (p. 626). Owens (2004) suggests that the name provided by God to Moses in Exodus 3:14—I AM WHO I AM—is “a metaphysical statement akin to the Neoplatonic affirmation of God as pure being” (p. 615). With Moses, God refuses to abandon His identity as the God who ‘goes with.’ Owens (2004) theorizes that this exchange in Exodus demonstrates the characteristics or nature of God as “free, present, and faithful, a God who is no god at all” (p. 618). As the subsistent being, He is” radically present and utterly free” (Owens, 2004, p. 627).

### **The Heart (Mind) of God**

McGinn (2015) takes a dualistic view as he contemplates a way to “meaningfully investigate God’s mind” (p. 158) or the psychology of God. McGinn (2015) considers God’s involvement in the world. Moreover, He advances an ideology about a means to knowing God and the relationship between God and His intervention in the world (McGinn, 2015). The writer takes a dualistic view as he contemplates a way to “meaningfully investigate God’s mind” (McGinn, 2015, p. 158) or the psychology of God.

### ***Dualism Defined***

A definition to clarify the notion of dualism is presented here. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,

The term ‘dualism’ has a variety of uses in the history of thought. In general, the idea is that, for some particular domain, there are two fundamental kinds or categories of things or principles. In theology, for example, a ‘dualist’ is someone who believes that Good and Evil—or God and the Devil—are independent and more or less equal forces in the world. (Kooy, 2015, pp. 14-16)

Conceding to a “radically dualistic view of the relationship between God and the universe,” McGinn (2015) anticipates that some may object to this inquiry into the mind of God (and Divine intervention). The writer anticipates contentions such as, “because we can’t do experiments on God or observe His behaviour...we, therefore, cannot have a proper empirical science of God’s mind” (McGinn, 2015, p. 158). McGinn (2015) continues with a retort suggesting that an empirical investigation into Shakespeare’s mind is also impossible, or any other deceased person. However, the corpus of Shakespearian works serves as evidence of the deliberations of his mind and from which one can make inferences. From this vantage point, McGinn (2015) theorizes that “God must have a psychology because He has a mind. And there must also be a philosophy of mind appropriate to the divine mind. God has various mental faculties, which must have a nature and a *modus operandi*. There must be a way that God’s mind is” (p. 157). McGinn (2015) further proposes that his theories about Shakespeare are also true about God—that there is enough information about Him from which to infer about His mind reasonably.

Here, this researcher should pause to note that although there is much to glean and to debate with McGinn (2015), this research considers his dualistic view insomuch as it provides insight into the mind of God. Consequently, for the scope of this researcher’s investigation, this review of McGinn (2015) will not include an extensive analysis of his dualistic conclusions or historical philosophies (e.g., Platonism or Aristotelianism). Further, this researcher rejects any notion that might intimate God as possessing anything other than supreme authority (Matthew 28:18).

### **Mind-Body**

In the same way that Owens (2004) described God as entirely free and unable to be

harnessed, Kooy (2015) observes a “mind-body problem” inherent to the historical evaluation of dualism, asking, “what is the relationship between mind and body? Or alternatively: what is the relationship between mental properties and physical properties?”(para. 1). Kooy (2015) makes other salient points and continues a provocative line of questions focused on ontology, causation, consciousness, and more. This researcher is interested in Kooy’s (2015) observation of the distinctions between the brain and the mind as discernible and indiscernible, respectively.

An online word search for “mind” through the *Strong’s Concordance of the Bible* returns very little. The returned terms include the word “heart,” which is rendered as either לבב (levav, Strong’s #3824) or לב (lev, Strong’s #3820), which is derived from לבב (levav). In ancient Hebrew culture, the word heart was not considered the seat of human emotion. Instead, the word “heart” represented “mind” or “thought,” Collins (1995) asserts.

Collins (1995) observed that, physiologically, people understand the brain to be situated within the head. However, Collins (1995) contends that the Bible indicates only two perceptions of the term “head.” In one sense, the Bible recognizes the physiological body part as the “head” (Collins, 1995). On the other hand, in the Bible, the “head” is acknowledged as a place of government or leadership. For example, consider a household, church, or organization. Absent from the description of the “head” is an indication that it is “the site where all thinking and emotional feelings originate” (Collins, 1995, para. 5). Collins (1995) offers a similar view when considering the word “mind” According to Collins (1995), it is not scripturally clear that the context for the mind would locate it in the brain or head. However, the author observes that “in a few places ‘mind’ is simultaneously used in the same sentence with the word ‘heart’” (Collins, 1995, para. 6).

The theological inference for Collins' (2015) research seems to be that the same applies to the heart and mind of God. The vastness and mysterious complexities of God render Him boundless. One cannot counsel God (see Romans 11:34)—the depth of His mind confounds all matters of knowing or conception. One cannot exhaust the breadth of His heart—the length and width, height and depth of God's "heart" is undiscernible (Ephesians 3:18). One can know God evidentially through Scripture, line upon line and precept upon precept and remain with the mystery of His existence (Job 11:7). For, "Who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?" But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ (Holy Bible, New Living Translation, 1 Corinthians 2:16)

The Heart (Mind) of God theory fosters a pedagogical framework that develops first critical thinking about the heart of God and His character. However, Christian ministry leaders must maintain a theological paradigm and remain vigilantly prayerful to avoid mysticism or strange worldviews. These are vital to cultivating spiritual formation. Leaders need foundational understanding for their spiritual maturation, and emerging leaders' spiritual formation will grow out of the depths of this knowledge. Estep (2015) stated that,

Christian education draws from the integration of the study of God's special revelation (theology) and the study of his general revelation through nature (science). However, the matter of integrating theology and the social science into a distinctively Christian education is difficult to define, and the manner in which they are to be integrated is even more problematic to explain. (p. 27)

Ministers involved in the improvement and development of others are, by default, leaders, but the literature is mainly quiet on necessary competency requirements. By definition, leader educators must be Christian—born-again believers—to affect the optimal integration of social science and spirituality. However, Christian education, or the development of others, can be sustainable to the extent it emanates from someone who is resolute in their faith and

conviction about Jesus. This resolution and confidence would require one to be grounded in His life, works, and the holy scriptures. From this place, one can develop others' competencies such as critical thinking, leading an organization and the people within it, self-direction, self-motivation, and establishing sound theological requirements.

Northouse (2018) states that “In order for leaders to be effective they must engage in behaviors that complement subordinates' environments and abilities in a manner that compensates for deficiencies and is instrumental in supporting net satisfaction and individual and work unit performance” (p. 117). Mattone (2020) calls this the “unsexy secret of becoming a truly great leader” (p. 27). Leaders “design their lives according to an obligation to others. They're aware that people around them depend on them and model their lives after them. Accordingly, these leaders strive to become better people” (Mattone, 2020, p. 27). With a firm foothold in the precepts of God and who He is, and the pedagogical underpinnings that align with key leadership competencies, Christian leaders can effectively and affectively draw from Genesis 1:26-27 the message of the *Imago Dei* and minister with the passion the Apostle Paul exhibited in Colossians 1:28.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The impetus for this study will be the researcher's compulsion to empower existing leaders to engage in a prolific heritage of Christian leadership. After a passion for God—for His mind, character, and heart—is ignited, practical Christian leadership education is necessary for developing sustainable proficiencies. Pedagogically, Christian education can be formalized to occur in a set place, at a set time, within a pre-set structure. Education can also be as informal as an impromptu or intact group Bible study where lay people fervently divide biblical resources as

decided upon by the group. Furthermore, the process of educating can be as unconventional as the catechumen determines.

Estep (2015) suggests that “...Education is based primarily on a worldview, a philosophical or theological system of understanding reality, truth, and values...and is ultimately a practical expression of one’s philosophical convictions” (p.18). Regarding the distinction of Christian education, a leader-teacher’s assumptions or predisposition about theology impacts their learning objectives and effects on educating others. For this reason, this researcher contends that formal matriculations in learning institutions founded on extrabiblical precepts—where the fundamental and core academic programming is noncanonical or from a secular worldview (“What does it mean that something is extrabiblical,” n.d.)—are by themselves insufficient to equip Christian leaders with the competency to lead in ministry.

Bible accounts are replete with attention to the development of various leaders. Looking to the Old Testament, one can observe representations of the development of “Moses in service to an Egyptian pharaoh (Acts 2:8-15), Joshua, serving at the side of Moses (Exod. 17:8-11; 24:12-13), Joseph through his experience in Potiphar’s house (Gen. 39:1-5), and Elisha while serving as a protégé of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:19-21)” (Krispin, 2020, p. 19). In the New Testament, the gospels continue thematically as Jesus builds up his twelve disciples’ faith, integrity, and leadership (Mt. 10:1-40). Finally, in Acts and the Pauline missives, the potential within leadership development is exemplified through Barnabas’ support, advocacy, and mentorship of Paul. Adding to this is the saga and subsequent restoration of Mark to service by invitation to join Paul for mission (Acts 9:27; 11:22-26). We discover in this example, an aspect of Paul’s growth as a leader in his own right through his acknowledgement and invitation for Mark (also



apparently, now, well developed for leadership) to rejoin him (Acts 9:27; 11:22-26, 12:25, 15:36-41; 1 Corinthians 9:6; 2 Timothy 4:11).

### **A Social Learning Theory**

Estep (2015) suggests that “theology and social science cooperatively validate one another’s insights and influence on education” (p. 32). However, this researcher asserts that humankind is prone to the limitations of the flesh; therefore, discovering God requires coordinating knowledge and imagination. Education should include a synchronization of theology and social science. Social learning theory maintains, in part, that people learn through observation (Estep, 2015). Leaders are influential and should be empowered by competence. Training or educational platforms that surpass the obligation to convey learning or increase knowledge and strive instead for the goal of Colossians 1:28 through its leadership development pedagogy can be called Christian.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

When studying the competencies pertinent to leadership development, it is helpful to detail ideologies that have provided a scaffolding for leadership praxis. Thoughts about the concept and characteristics of leadership follow in this section. Additionally, several leadership theories will be presented here. Ideas regarding competency, learning, and leadership modalities are discussed in this section also.

### **What is Leadership?**

After contemplating the establishment of a definition for leadership, Northouse (2018) concedes that there are many definitions and that they all fail to capture the core of its meaning entirely. Instead of a definition, he references many definitions compiled from 1900 to 1990. Proceeding descriptions of various leadership approaches are derived from that compilation.

Leadership is not easily defined. Leadership is not always instinctive (Northouse, 2018).

Leadership is not always a coveted status or responsibility. Burns et al. (2014) frame leadership as a calling but also yield to its ever-obscure precept. Similar to what is observed through her facilitation and training functions in curriculum and program design about her learning communities' ability to respond to their supervisory and leadership duties, answering the ministry call can be accomplished with competence when participants engage in the necessary proficiencies embedded in a leadership development model.

Benzel (2021) echoes the “calling” element of leadership, recounting the story told to him by a neurosurgery resident at Stanford University about a group of medical students who wanted to revise the student mission statement. The group wanted to swap language comprising sentiments of selflessness with something less sacrificial. The resident replied, “this is how 99 percent of people select their jobs: pay, work environment, hours. But that’s the point. Putting lifestyle first is how you find a job—not a calling” (p. xvii). He further offers that “leadership is the art of causing others to deliberately create a result that otherwise would not have happened,” suggesting that one should “start with a definition that we can embrace with ease“ (Benzel, 2021, p. xvii).

Benzel’s (2021) sentiment is that anyone who has chosen, accepted, or assumed the responsibility to lead is a member of leadership. For this research, leadership will be characterized as dynamic, “fully engaged and intentional” (McFarland, 2019, para. 1). The implementation of a plan to cultivate the spiritual formation, expressly the Christian leadership potential, of others. (MacFarland, 2019, para. 1) is evidenced by the foundational tenets of said worldview.

## **Characteristics of a Leader**

Leadership literature is not lacking resources or voices dedicated to the epistemological pursuit of ‘leadership’ and the refinement of thought about what denotes the character traits of a leader. Resources abound, including scholarly and popular texts, microlearning modules, charts, infographics, multimedia, etc. Existing or emerging leaders can access volumes on the favorable qualities of successful leaders. However, overarching themes seem common to most theories on the matter.

It seems broadly accepted that leaders must be in tune with their people's needs and values to influence followers. As leaders understand the needs and aspirations of those who follow, they must adapt leadership styles and behaviors accordingly to inspire or influence those who are following them. There are many theories positing the most effective approach to accomplish this. Benzel (2021) suggests these as characteristics of a leader: passionate about their work, egalitarian, socially- and self-aware, strategically assessing and responding to the environment and how others are receiving them; hard workers, visionaries, and competent. Missional leaders without access to a structured approach to leadership will benefit from the insights gained from the various leadership thought streams.

Northouse (2018) has devoted much time and attention to the study of leadership. His research has included various approaches, including behavioral, situational, transactional vs. transformational, leader-member exchange, psychodynamic, and others. Although notable and worthy of review, those theories will not be included in this study.

### ***Trait Leadership Theory***

According to Northouse (2018), the trait approach is centralized on the leader rather than the followers or situations. Northouse (2018) explains this theory as one espousing leaders as

people possessing special or unique traits that equip them to operate extraordinarily. According to Northouse (2018), “It is built on the premise that leaders are different, and their difference resides in the special traits they possess” (p. 30). This researcher has acquired many years of firsthand full-cycle employment recruitment experience. During those recruitment duties, the mantra “we need the right people in the right positions” thrived, arising from this theory.

Some advantages gained through the trait leadership approach include (Northouse, 2018):

- It “has given us some benchmarks for what we need to look for if we want to be leaders” (p. 30).
- Trait assessment procedures can be used to offer invaluable information to supervisors and managers about their strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve their overall leadership effectiveness” (p. 30).

Some implications for Christian leaders may include the benefit of assessment procedures such as spiritual inventory assessments or gift evaluation tools to discover areas of opportunity for those they are supporting in ministry or developing as emerging leaders (Krispin, 2020).

### ***Path-Goal Leadership Theory***

House (1971) is credited as being among the pioneering theorists of the Path-Goal Theory and the originator of its later refinement. Path-Goal theory is grounded in Vroom’s (1964) expectancy theory of motivation. It examines how followers decide to behave, one way or another—to follow or not to follow the leader’s direction or ideas (Riggio, 2017). Expectancy Theory proposes that if followers perceive their input or effort will result in something that fulfills a desire or need or that they deem otherwise valuable or rewarding, then they will be motivated to invest the effort (Riggio, 2017). Vroom “argued that we perform a mental calculation: Motivation (M) = E x I x V. If one or more of these values is too low, our motivation will be low” (Clayton, 2008, para.9) Here, EIV is summarized:

- Expectancy (E) represents the perceived relationship between the individual’s effort and their valuation of the outcome.

- Instrumentality (I) demonstrates the perceived relationship between the performance of a particular behavior and the likelihood of receiving a specific outcome.
- Valence (V) expresses the appeal of an outcome to an individual (Riggio, 2017, p. 315).

Path-Goal theory is leader-centric in that leaders adapt their behavior to motivate workers. With the Path-Goal leadership theory, the leader is responsible for aiding, guiding, or supporting the followers (House, 1996; House, 1971; Northouse, 2019). The leader must maintain a view toward desired outcomes for the organization while adapting their leadership style to motivate followers to attain those outcomes (House, 1996; House, 1971; Northouse, 2019). In observation of leadership approaches to affect follower motivation, House (1971) theorized that leaders should first consider follower characteristics, work design, workers' knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOCs), relationships, responsibilities, locus of control, and formal authority. Four different leadership styles apply to House's (1996) Path-Goal theory of leadership:

- Directive leaders communicate with workers clear standards for work performance, provide direction or guidance, and assign work according to the work expectations; follow the "initiating structure," which concerns behaviors.
- Supportive leadership is friendly and approachable, genuinely concerned about worker well-being, and aligns with "consideration" behavior, including respect.
- Participative leadership seeks worker input and includes workers in decision-making; achievement-oriented leadership encourages workers to stretch beyond their known KSAOCs, challenging workers to perform at high levels.
- Finally, leaders adapt their behaviors, aligning with worker characteristics to be effective at goal achievement. Researchers have focused on these four: followers' needs for affiliation, preferences for structure, desires for control, and self-perceived level of task ability (Northouse, 2018, p. 121).

House's (1971) theory was pioneering, originating a leadership paradigm comprising four distinct approaches. However, "large scale empirical research studies have offered it partial support at best" (Castro, Schriesheim & Kerr, 1977; Indvik, 1986; Wofford & Lisa, 1993; Zhou & DeChurch, 2006, as cited in Ayub et al., 2013, p. 836). Leadership development that includes

a Path-Goal pedagogy can provide a basis for Christian leaders to develop their understanding of how different leadership behaviors can affect outcomes and follower motivation and satisfaction, despite the noted limitations of the theory.

Also, the Path-Goal leadership theory is relational like other leadership models. Leaders who want to develop others will draw from their interactive learning competency to teach others how to be interactive participants in their development (Delbecq et al., 2013; Northouse, 2019). Leaders will need this proficiency and the ability to clear the path to interactive learning for others. Including this focus will help those participating in leadership competency development to retain more programmatically to improve their capacity to lead (Hellman, 2014). Additionally, leaders would encounter a component designed to navigate one of this theory's pitfalls, leader over-extension, and burnout.

### ***Adaptive Leadership Theory***

In his seminal work premiering adaptive leadership theory, Heifetz (1994) suggests that a leader mobilizes people to take on tough challenges. One can think of, for example, contemporary and evolving issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion that require church and ministry leaders to “engage in activities that mobilize, motivate, organize, orient, and focus the attention of others” (Heifetz, 1994, as cited in Northouse, 2018, p. 258) to serve from a biblical worldview within an often extrabiblical context—a tough and challenging situation. Adaptive leadership theory, unlike the Path-Goal approach and others:

Moves away from the idea of leaders as visionaries and saviors to stressing leadership as an activity as opposed to a position of authority or a set of personal characteristics. Heifetz defines leadership as the activities that aim to mobilize people to face and adapt to tough realities by helping them clarify what matters most to them, with what trade-offs. (Hooijberg, 1996, p. 170)

Adaptive leadership theory presents the opportunity to build critical thinking competency for leaders participating in such a training program. This adaptive theory would also benefit leaders honing practical leadership knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics to serve as a viable source of spiritual and practical support. For example, an existing leader mentoring an emerging leader might direct the new leader to locate a currently headlining sociocultural event from any reputable news source, observe or read it, and then analyze it for adaptive leadership implications and applications.

### ***Servant-Leadership Theory***

Because its title is a reminiscence of benevolence or altruism, the Servant-Leadership theory is often initially misunderstood. Servant-Leadership is demonstrated when the leader embodies an attitude of service to others as the chief priority. Greenleaf et al. (2002) argue that “The Servant-Leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 29). A Servant-Leader is preoccupied with the desire (passionate about) to accomplish ways they can help foster the spiritual growth of individuals. Moreover, leaders operating as servants first think systematically about ways to facilitate the spiritual formation of the Church as a communal ecology of faith. Servant-Leaders understand the relationship between an environment where people feel supported and empowered and the realization of high-performing groups (Asana, n.d.).

Greenleaf et al. (2002), credited as founding the Servant-Leadership theory, expand Servant-Leadership beyond an idea that observes the leader's goal as delimited to service. He posits that in response to heartfelt service to others, those that follow endow the leader with power “in proportion to the clearly evident servant stature of the leader” (Greenleaf et al., 2002, p. 28). Blanchard (2018) also ventures to guess that the confusion about Servant-Leadership is

because “folks don’t understand leadership— much less Servant-Leadership. They think you can’t lead and serve at the same time” (p. 18). He points out two elements of the theory that are important to understand its premise and should not be confused with a management role (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018):

- A visionary, direction-oriented, or strategic function is a leadership aspect of Servant-Leadership.
- An implementation or operational role is a servant aspect of Servant-Leadership.

Leadership starts with a sense of direction for where the organization is going (what desired goals to accomplish). That direction is clarified by vision (who they are and the ability to see how to get there) and a commitment to how they will strive (what values will guide the way) (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018). The servant aspect of the Servant-Leadership theory addresses the implementation question, “How do we live according to the vision and accomplish the established goals?” once clearly defined goals and vision are in place, the familiar top-down hierarchal pyramid adequately portrays the leadership component of Servant-Leadership, according to Blanchard and Broadwell (2018).

Servant-Leaders answer this question “by philosophically turning the traditional hierarchical pyramid upside down when it comes to implementation... This one change, although it seems minor, makes a major difference. The difference is between responsible and responsive” (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018, pp. 20-21). Inverting the pyramid places the frontline people at the top, positioning them as responsible (able to respond) and positions the leader at the bottom, responsive (of service) to their needs. Integrating this concept as part of the training curriculum for leadership development will equip existing leaders with a method of implementation. Through this leadership approach, leaders can learn that “if you work for your people as Servant-Leaders do...[you] help your people become eagles rather than ducks and soar above the



crowd— accomplishing goals, solving problems, and living according to the vision?” (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018, pp. 21).

### *Authentic Leadership Theory*

The Harvard Business Review (HBR) states that Authentic Leadership theory comprises characteristics of a “new kind of leader” (George, 2021). In 2015, HBR challenged long-standing leadership paradigms, including the “great man theory” and others grounded in measures of competency, hailing authenticity as the “gold standard for leadership” (George, 2021). This theory has emerged due to the evident decline in leadership aptitude in the public and private sectors (Northouse, 2018). Due to the new development of the theory, Northouse (2018) offers a tentative definition of authentic leadership, encompassing three elements:

- The intrapersonal perspective focuses on the leader and the leader’s knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept.
- The interpersonal process claims that authentic leadership is a collective process created by leaders and followers.
- The developmental perspective emphasizes that significant life events trigger major components of authentic leadership that develop over a lifetime.

Bredfeldt (2006) suggests the leadership competency of encouraging. He proposes that leaders should encourage their teams and give courage to [one] another “(p. 133). This is of even greater importance, given the perception and mistrust of leaders today. Therefore, this researcher maintains that cultivating this skillset through a preparatory leadership model is essential. According to Bredfeldt (2006), “learning to encourage others is a skill that can be developed. It can be practiced” (p. 133). Authentic Leadership ideology provides leaders in need of structured competency development:

- an answer to people who are searching for good and sound leadership in an uncertain world;
- broad guidelines about how leaders can learn to become authentic;
- an explicit moral dimension that asserts that prompts leaders to do what is ‘right;’
- a process that leaders cultivate over time rather than as a fixed attribute, and

- it can be measured with a theory-based instrument (Northouse, 2018).

Key elements of leadership theories as espoused by scholars such as Bredfeldt (2006), House (1971;1996), Northouse (2018), Verlinden (2018), and other researchers will undergird this research. These researchers all share theories related in some manner to leader competencies. Arguments in support of authentic leadership provide Christian leaders with a measured approach to leader competency development (Bredfeldt, 2006) to the execution of systems-focused leadership through articulating a path-to-a-goal (House, 1971, 1996; Northouse, 2018) are among the theoretical paradigms guiding this work.

### **What is Competency?**

Based upon recurring ideas within the literature, this researcher observes an agreement among other studies that chiefly leadership competency speaks to skill, ability, aptitude, agility, and temperance, to name a few. More formally, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines competency as “a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully” (n.d., para. 1). OPM further states that competencies specify "how" job tasks are performed, or what the person needs to perform the job successfully. Competencies can help to:

- assess and select candidates for a job;
- assess and manage employee performance;
- do workforce planning; and
- employee training and development (n.d., para. 2).

Similarly, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) states that “leadership competencies are leadership skills and behaviors that contribute to superior performance. By using a competency-based approach to leadership, organizations can better identify and develop their next generation of leaders” (2008, para. 1). Among the essential leadership competencies identified by SHRM are three overarching themes: leading the organization (solving problems,

taking risks, setting strategies), leading the self (ethical, integrity, self-aware, adaptable/agile), leading others (effective communication, developing others, building relationships, valuing diversity) (2008, [Figure 1]).

Krispin (2020) evaluated Malphurs' and Mancini's (2004) blueprint for leadership development. Kristin observed that Malphurs and Mancini (2004) advocate for four leadership competencies as central to Christian leader development. First, they consider being which is Christological in nature. With this, the Malphurs and Mancini (2004) draw from scripture principles for developing Christ-like character as it relates to leadership, based on biblical requirements for leaders.

Next, Malphurs and Mancini (2004) assert that knowing is necessary for leaders. Knowing is epistemological. It includes some facets of knowledge essential for a leader based on their capacity or role. Within their being theory is the requirement for a teachable spirit. This aspect of the theory considers that a leader needs a knowing about key areas such as theology, themselves, others, bible precepts, the ways of God, how to pray, the fundamental tenets and direction of the organization, and role-specific tasks. For the doing feature, Krispin (2020) notes that the authors focus on the progress of leadership skills such as "strategic planning, teaching, preaching, coaching, mentoring, resolving conflicts, and building trust" (p. 21). Krispin, on Malphurs' and Mancini's (2004) feeling dimension of the blueprint, observes an inclusion for self-awareness and others' emotions, as well as the aptitude for managing them (2020, p. 21).

To further illustrate Malphurs' and Mancini's (2004) four core leadership competencies, McCloud (2015) has created this synopsis:

- |                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| 1. Character (Being) →   | Soul Work  |
| 2. Knowledge (Knowing) → | Head Work  |
| 3. Skills (Doing) →      | Hand Work  |
| 4. Emotions (Feeling) →  | Heart Work |

A careful comparison of the Malphurs and Mancini (2004) four competencies and the SHRM (2008), OPM (n.d.), and NACE (2014) information reveals interconnectivity. For example, Malphurs' and Mancini's (2004) being (character) is not unlike NACE's professionalism/work ethic designation. Likewise, SHRM's leading others is not far removed from Malphurs' and Mancini's (2004) feeling of competency. For Christian leaders, Malphurs and Mancini (2004) present their ideologies within a biblical and theological framework.

Signifying that the local church's responsibility is to become the "leadership locus," Geiger and Peck (2016) further emphasize the broad-reaching necessity of Christian leader competency. They assert:

Because a local church exists to serve her community, to bless the world, and to be a light to the nations, then the leaders developed in each local church are developed for much more than each local church. In the church, we are recruiting leaders to a mission bigger than the small ones the world offers. Whether we lead our homes, companies, or churches, our mission is always bigger than the organization we lead. (pp. 7-8)

Mohler (2012), in the section titled "Enter the Leader," says that "when you enter the room, trust, and confidence better enter with you. If not, leadership is not happening" (p. 50). This researcher argues that the same can be said about the church. To become the "leadership locus" (Geiger & Peck, 2016), church (or ministry) leaders must 'enter the room' not only as good people known for upright character but as a "leader [who] stands out when character is matched by competence and the central virtue of knowing what the leader can do" (Mohler, 2012, p.51, [emphasis added]). However, "despite the importance of Christian leadership development, programs and plans for developing leaders sometimes seem unclear, unfocused, or random" (Krispin, 2020, p. 19).

Verlinden (2021) advanced the essential skills and competencies of every leader. Naming 15 of them, she identified three categories:

- Competencies for leading an organization include conflict management, decision-making, the ability to share a compelling vision, change management, social intelligence, understanding different social situations, and the ability to operate effectively in these various social situations.
- Competencies for leading others comprise interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence (e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation), good coaching and trustworthiness, inclusion, and people management (training, motivation, etc.).
- Competencies for leading oneself require agility (quick learner), industry knowledge, managing yourself (e.g., workload, time), courage, organizational altruism/courtesy/civility, etc.

Bredfeldt (2006) identified eight competencies fundamental to the work of Christian leader-teachers. Related to teachers, he assigned these necessary competencies: clear message, methods that provide learning, modeling the message, and ministering to people. From the leader competency perspective, Bredfeldt (2006) suggests these: establish, empower, equip, and encourage the team.

### **Learning Theory**

It is this researcher's contention that any serious undertaking to identify effective pedagogies for Christian leader competency development will require fundamental insight into learning theory. Referring to instructional design, Ertmer and Newby (2013) posit that "just as a doctor cannot prescribe an effective remedy without a proper diagnosis, the instructional designer cannot properly recommend an effective prescriptive solution without an accurate analysis of the instructional problem" (p. 44). Acknowledging that "learning has been defined in numerous ways by many different theorists, researchers, and educational practitioners...employ[ing] common elements" (p. 45, [emphasis added]), Ertmer and Newby (2013) offer, and this study will presume, a foundational definition of learning by Shuell (as interpreted by Schunk, 1991): "Learning is an enduring change in behavior, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience (p. 2)" (p. 45).

According to Illeris (2003), learning theory aims to elucidate the way in which learners acquire, process, and retain knowledge, in the course of learning. Cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences and prior experience all impact how understanding, or a worldview, is developed or changed and knowledge and skills retained (Illeris, 2003). In this segment, this researcher considered literature that explores various learning ideologies and methodologies to identify effective pedagogies for Christian leader competency development. Learning theories presented in this section provide a cursory view of each. A significant evaluation of each theory may benefit researchers who want to understand any specific idea herein.

### ***Foremost Educational Learning Theories***

Four widely accepted learning theories are presented first in this section—behaviorist, cognitivist, constructivist, and transformative learning theory (TLT). Additional learning theories are also offered to support the central role of theory in this qualitative study. Theorists presented herein and those of similar qualification suggest these theories as useful for establishing effective pedagogies.

**Behaviorist Learning Theory.** Pioneered by Pavlov and Skinner (1938), behavioral learning “discoveries inspired the ground-breaking textbook *Principles of Psychology* (Keller & Schoenfeld, 1950) and led to the founding of the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (JEAB)*, the flagship outlet for basic operant research” (Murphy & Lupfer, 2014, p. 167). Psychologists have continued to develop the idea of behaviorism since. Behaviorists view the quality of operant conditioning as inherent to learning. “There are four types of consequences in operant conditioning. These consequences can be placed into two distinct categories: reinforcement and punishment” (Murphy & Lupfer, 2014, p. 171).

Regarding learning or education, behaviorists will argue for a system of rewards and targets. A presumption among behaviorism learning literature is that a learner's behavior is demonstrative of how they interface with their surroundings. In other words, external dynamics are believed to have greater influence for learning than internal dynamics. In the behaviorist view, positive reinforcement (reward) (e.g., ministerial ordination for years of demonstrated ability) and negative reinforcement (fear/avoidance, unlike punishment) are believed to be associated with external stimuli (Murphy & Lupfer, 2014, pp. 171-172). With both positive and negative reinforcement, the rate of desired behavior is increased. For example, citizens obey traffic signals (negative reinforcement) for fear of receiving a traffic violation (conditional stimulus). Also, consider this example of negative reinforcement, learners study extensively (negative reinforcement) for fear of receiving an unfavorable grade on an upcoming exam (conditional stimulus).

Alternatively, punishment aims at the reduction or stopping of undesirable conduct. This is accomplished by either adding an unfavorable stimulus (positive punishment) or removing a favorable stimulus (negative punishment). Punishment results in unwanted consequences for undesirable behavior (Murphy & Lupfer, 2014). For instance, an employee may be suspended from work contingent on the improvement of habitually poor behavior. Or a pastor may need to admonish a church leader for repeated untoward conduct or discord.

Adding to its appeal, behavioral learning theory provides an observable and measurable basis for learning. Based on this review, this researcher believes that Christian Leader-Teachers can develop a competency for effective utilization of positive or negative reinforcement, as well as positive or negative punishment, to aid learners-followers in the development of leader competencies of their own.

**Cognitive Learning Theory.** Departing from the idea of learning as occurring through change, cognitive learning logicians, following Piaget’s (1964) cognitive development theories, observe the learner rather than their environment—particularly the intricacies of human cognition, as the name implies (Tyman, 2014). Plainly, “cognitive learning theory focuses on the thought process behind the behavior” (Tyman, 2014, p. 540). Focusing on conceptualization, cognitive learning theory suggests that internal thoughts and how they encounter and engage external dynamics are essential for cognitive learning. As learners understand how their thinking influences their learning and subsequent behavior, they can exercise more intention for learning.

Further, cognitive theory tends to focus on the process through which students acquire knowledge—“how information is received; how information is processed and organized into existing schema; how information is retrieved upon recall. Cognitive theory seeks to explain the process of knowledge acquisition and the subsequent effects on the mental structures within the mind” (“Cognitivism (psychology),” 2021, [How does learning occur?] ). Piaget (1964) argued that “... it is a set of actions modifying the object, and enabling the knower to get at the structures of the transformation” (p. 177). Therefore, learning is viewed as occurring as a process rather than through a mechanical system of ‘doing.’ The process of acquiring knowledge is contingent upon knowledge or existing information the learner already possesses (existing information) and their process of acquiring new information (how they integrate new information into their existing schemas) (“Cognitivism (psychology),” 2021, [How does learning occur]).

Various Departments of Medicine at prominent learning institutions, including the University of Michigan and Harvard Medical School, incorporated the principles of cognitive learning theory into a variety of clinical teaching settings (conferences, ward rounds, and ambulatory clinics) (McSparron et al., 2019). Following, an observation of the cognitive learning



process supported the theorist's argument that the process of acquiring knowledge impacts learners phenomenologically because their ability to understand their thought process augments their learning. Observing, for example, that "pushing learners to develop a deeper understanding of new information facilitates the ability to apply, analyze and synthesize information,"...encouraging "higher-order thinking of learners with 'why' and 'what if' questions" (McSparron et al., 2019, p. 98).

Following this example, this researcher is confident that leader competencies can also be developed for Christian Leaders-Teachers through cognitive learning methods. Literature seems to provide a framework for leaders to discover competencies through safe opportunities to ask questions, be vulnerable to failure, and think openly. These approaches can aid the learner's ability to understand their thought process and employ that knowledge to develop higher/deeper learning (McSparron & Smith, 2019).

**Constructivist Learning Theory.** Constructivism as a learning theory assumes that experience and internal knowledge frameworks enable one to construct an individual perspective of the world (Chuang, 2021). Moreover, "constructivism is a theory of learning that views knowledge as actively constructed by learners in a social process. Constructivism requires the learner to engage in interpretation, organization, and inference creation about knowledge, with the cognitive structures that they had previously constructed" (Stabile & Ershler, 2016, p. 13). Further knowledge acquisition follows a personalized process of knowledge construction with this theory (Ertmer & Newby, 2013).

Theorists supporting constructivist learning underscore "naturally cumulative learning in individuals by creating personal meaning through experiential learning, which focuses on hands-on and active learning events to enhance learners' engagement and learning retention" (Chuang,

2021, p. 7), Stabile and Ershler (2016) expand upon that and include “the process of construction of meaning, of learning, and of knowledge development involves active engagement with the objects and people in the environment, a sense-making reminiscent of the child as a philosopher or a scientist (Dewey 1933; Papert 1999; Kohlberg 1968)” (p. 33). Contemporarily, and as an example, social media can play a role in constructivist learning, because it serves as a “useful vehicle for the active construction of knowledge via an interactive process (McLoughlin and Lee 2008). This shared process leads to the development of meaning from the learned material through the interaction of individuals within the learning environment” (Stabile & Ershler, 2016, p. 14).

For the teacher (leader) charged with the design of pedagogical frameworks, in the case of this study, for leader competency development, the constructivist theory of learning classifies teaching as “less about “covering” content and more about using the content to develop unique and individual ways of understanding (Weimer 2013)” (Stabile & Ershler, 2016, p. 14). Because knowledge is considered to be actively constructed, this theory suggests that “the relationship between teaching and learning is about “interactions, growth, and development” rather than simple changes in behavior (Fosnot 2005)” (Stabile & Ershler, 2016, p. 14).

**Transformative Learning Theory (TLT).** Transformational learning is the process of drawing on a prior understanding to analyze a new or revised rationalization of the meaning of one’s experience (Mezirow, 2000, as cited in Marmon, 2013). That new understanding then serves as a guide for future action. Regarding the transformative learning theory (TLT), Marmon (2013) offers that it “alters problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change” (p. 425). In other words, transformative learning theory is concerned with the frequent requirement for learners to

reevaluate, adapt, or engage in a paradigm shift to assimilate new information inconsistent with their current worldview.

Marmon (2013) observes two important distinctions made by Mezirow (2000) regarding TLT that other learning theories largely omit — andragogy and how uniquely adults make meaning from their experiences. Adult learning can be complicated; adults often must unlearn long-held, unquestioned assumptions before they are ready to accept new understandings (Marmon, 2013). Three levels of transformation necessary to comprehend the conventions or “habits of mind” or “broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience” (Marmon, 2013, p. 425) include:

- Meanings (basic content can be changed by modifying knowledge and skills) (Marmon, 2013);
- Premises, assumptions, or habits of mind (processes of learning; how we come to know; why we value what we do; “meaning schemes”) (1990, p. 2, as cited in Marmon, 2013);
- Meaning perspectives (general framework of meanings and cultural understandings underlying assumptions, premises, or habits of mind) (2000, pp. 10-11). (Mezirow, 2000, as cited in Marmon, 2013, pp. 425-426)

When an adult adopts a new worldview, he or she has experienced transformative learning (Marmon, 2013). This example of TLT is drawn from the Bible involving the Hebrew people. The Hebrews and early Christians experienced as reality the phenomenon Mezirow (2004) identifies as a learning theory. A new way of existing within ecologies of faith resulted due to thoughtful questioning, challenging dialogue, and contemplation—transformation occurred by considering what it meant to revere the one, true God:

Looking at life through the lens of God's character altered attitudes about women, slaves, and outsiders. Following the example of Christ meant putting others before self, refraining from court battles between believers, and understanding that circumcision was not required to be a Christ follower. (Marmon, 2013, pp. 426-427)

**Additional Learning Theories.** Three additional learning theories follow in this section. The learning theories considered here are humanism, connectivism, and social. This researcher

summarized these perspectives after a review of Western Governors University's (WGU) (n.d.) "Five Educational Learning Theories."

***Humanism Learning Theory.*** This theory is very closely associated with constructivism. However, it directly emphasizes the philosophies of self-actualization. Humanist protagonists rationalize that everyone functions within a hierarchy of needs. Self-actualization crowns the hierarchy of needs—realizing or fulfilling one's maximum potential, even if fleeting.

Those committed to teaching and cultivating leader competencies within those in leadership (and emerging leaders) can look to this theory to create learning environments conducive to learners' pursuit of their personal self-actualization and Christian spiritual formation. For example, Christian teacher-leaders can help fulfill learners' emotional and physical needs, giving them a safe and comfortable place to learn, plenty of food (perhaps spiritual fodder), resources, and the support they need to succeed (WGU, n.d., para. 13-14).

***Connectivism Learning Theory.*** Connectivism is an emerging educational learning theory. It retains an ecological perspective that presumes people acquire knowledge and grow through formed connections. "This can be connections with each other or connections with their roles and obligations in their lives. Hobbies, goals, and people can all be connections that influence learning" (WGU, n.d., para. 15-16). From the literature, this researcher infers that teacher-leaders can employ connectivism in their pedagogies to help learners connect to things that stimulate and inspire them, helping them learn. Competency developers can engage leaders through digital media, such as online learning platforms, to promote positive connections to learning. Roberts (2019) illustrates the successful implementation of this theory with "The Community of Inquiry" framework for the online education instructional design model.

This model for teaching and learning in an online environment was put forward by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) and draws on the earlier works of Dewey (1938).

They state that when the three presences of social, cognitive and teacher presence intersect, then a collaborative, constructive learning experience occurs. (Roberts, 2019, p. 4)

***Social Learning Theory.*** According to WGU (2020), Psychologist Bandura is credited with contributing his expertise to research, resulting in the development of the social learning theory. Bandura argued that people could learn new behaviors and acquire information by observing other people (observational learning) (WGU, 2020). Bandura's controlled Bobo doll experiment (1961) involved models engaged in aggressive behavior toward a doll called "Bobo." Observation of the children's behavior after they watched the aggressive acts resulted in similar acts of aggression by some of the children, verifying that children have the ability to learn social behavior through the observation of another person's behavior. This verification is among the noted strengths of the theory. However, a related weakness is that the theory cannot clarify why some children observe violence (e.g., via TV shows and video games) yet do not copy the behavior (WGU, 2020).

Bandura (1977) chronicled his findings, detailing social learning theory and how it affected the behavioral development of students. Four elements are central to social learning theory:

- Attention calls upon different or unique lessons or activities to help the learner focus.
- Retention focuses on how the student will internalize information and recall it later.
- Drawing on previously learned behavior and when it's appropriate to use it is considered reproduction.
- Motivation can extend from seeing other learners rewarded or punished for their actions. (WGU, n.d., para. 21)

Social learning has been an area of inquiry for religious and spiritual teachers and educators for millennia. Religious educators often highly esteem the power of example, coining phrases about religion and spirituality like they are "caught, not taught." Consequently, a social learning

perspective represents significant common ground shared by scientific and religious communities (Oman et al., 2009).

Similar to the various learning theories, many have posited ideas about leadership. This researcher agrees with Northouse's (2018) conclusion that no conclusive definition of leadership exists. She, therefore, asserts that no one leadership model can conclusively serve every situation. As many factors influence approaches to learning, numerous factors also influence the type of leadership model required for any given individual, team, organization, or ministry. This researcher will explore several leadership modalities in the following section.

### **Leadership Modalities**

Leadership modalities are theoretical frameworks or models. These models typically propose a method or style in response to people or organizational needs. Pivoted leadership and learning-oriented leadership modes are discussed here.

#### ***Pivoted Leadership—Five Modes***

Wyatt's (2019) five modes of leadership give the reader a simple way to navigate through the intricacies of leading people. Wyatt's five modes progress when applied sequentially as Vision, Plan, Delegate, Enable and Empower (pp. 49-50). However, Wyatt (2019) advances that because leadership is more often not sequential, the leader needs to become proficient at pivoting between the modes to cope with changing circumstances. See the following summary of the five leadership modes.

In Vision Mode, leaders decide their vision for the future and then set a goal that they can see clearly in their mind's eye. Once their goal is clearly defined, that indicates that success is measurable. Leaders determine the criteria for success, so they will know that desired goals have been reached. Achieving their goal may require hard work and skill and coping with uncertainty,

but vision requires leaders to believe the goal is feasible. Some leaders get to decide their own goals, and others must accept the goals set for them.

In Plan Mode, leaders plan how the work will be done. They define the few critical and most important milestones that must be achieved along the way to completion. Leaders decide what tasks must be completed to achieve each milestone. As they determine what actions must be taken, leaders arrange (individually or through delegation) all the tasks and milestones into a sensible sequence. Leaders consider what action(s) must be taken, who will perform the work, and what resources or training are needed. With that, leaders have a plan which enables them to believe more strongly in forthcoming success.

Employing the Delegate Mode, leaders delegate tasks, and things start to happen. People see the vision start to become a reality. The team starts to make progress, which helps to increase their belief that the goal is possible to achieve.

Enable Mode prescribes that leaders enable individuals and groups of people to succeed by making sure each person will not be held back in any way through a lack of skills, knowledge, materials, methods, outside support, and so on. Leaders coordinate the work between people. This is when team members have a real opportunity to experience effective leadership. Followers feel fully engaged in the process of achieving the goals.

Finally, but not necessarily sequentially, in Empower Mode everything is progressing according to plans or possible contingencies. The work is underway and to the standard required. Some, perhaps even all, followers can complete their tasks and achieve their individual objectives without leader input or control. Leaders can now empower others to take full command of themselves and their work, liberating and motivating followers. In this mode, people tend to deliver their highest levels of personal productivity. And when they contribute to

work that reaches or expands their potential ability, they feel good about themselves. They may even achieve the highest level of motivation and fulfillment, which the psychologist Abraham Maslow called ‘self-actualisation’ (pp. 48-49).

Wyatt’s (2019) proposed modes clearly relate to competencies that can be developed within leaders. When applied to the advancement of a leader development program, they appear to provide a systematic design strategy. For example, most instructional design theories include components reminiscent of these five modes vision (analyze), plan (design), delegate (develop), enable (implement), and empowerment (evaluation)—ADDIE (Stefaniak & Xu, 2020).

### ***Learning-Oriented Leadership—Two Modes***

Ellström and Ellström (2018) explored the role of individuals directly responsible for front-line production (of goods and services, supervision of administrative staff, or shop floor employees, for example.) In light of the devolution of human resource (HR) responsibilities to these front-line managers (FLMs) and according to research on occupational learning, Ellström and Ellström (2018) argue for two modes of learning-oriented leadership. They include the logic of development (developmental learning) and the logic of production (adaptive learning).

The first mode, the logic of production, emphasizes the mastery of given responsibilities, situations, or procedures and the efficient, dependable, and steady performance of tasks (Ellström & Ellström, 2018). Adaptive learning is the central idea for this mode. Examples of adaptive learning include “learning a particular way of working in accordance with prescribed routines in an organization or learning to improve task performance (Ellström, 2001)” (Ellström & Ellström, 2018, p. 547). According to the authors, the logic of production emphasizes a decrease in performance variation through, for example, standardization of work methods to encourage adaptive learning. “In terms of the typology of leadership practices (interventions)



proposed by Döös et al. (2015), learning-oriented leadership consistent with the logic of production focuses on narrowing employees' discretion in performing their work" (Ellström & Ellström, 2018, p. 547).

The second mode is divergent in theory. "The logic of development entails developmental (creative) learning and thereby preparedness to reflect upon and question the tasks at hand ("are we doing the right things?"), and, if necessary, to change established practices into new solutions...(Ellström, 2001)" (Ellström & Ellström, 2018, p. 547). The researchers intimate that developmental learning is promoted by creating safe conditions for honesty, variation, and diversity in thought and deed within the organization by adopting leadership practices (interventions) that intend to widen rather than narrow employee discretion within their work (Ellström & Ellström, 2018). To summarize, Ellström & Ellström,

The two logics are understood here as two ideal-typical patterns of managerial practice and leadership that both entail learning as a basic mechanism for promoting efficient performance (in the one case) and innovativeness (in the other case). One pattern or the other is assumed to predominate for a given manager because of individual and/or contextual factors. (p. 547)

### ***Other than Leadership***

Alvesson and Blom (2019) maintain that "there are many ways of providing and getting direction, advise, support, coordination, feedback, encouragement, and inspiration other than leadership/followership" (p. 35). Continuing, the authors strongly assert that "the established "truth" of leadership as a panacea for all types of organizational challenges is unrealistic, narrow-minded and unhelpful" (Alvesson & Blom, 2019, p. 35). The authors argue that "leadership is just one of many useful tools in the managerial "Swiss army knife" (Alvesson & Blom, 2019, p. 35). They propose six modes of organizing, vertically or horizontally, through

The 6M Model – leadership (vertical), management (vertical), power (vertical), peer (network), influencing (horizontal), group work (horizontal), and autonomy (horizontal).

Leadership is an interpersonal influencing process in an asymmetrical relationship, targeting meaning, feelings, and values. Inspirational talk or behavior to provide direction, meaning, and emotional or moral support are examples of leader behaviors to undertake—Exemplary Behavior. Conditions for success include time, skill, and receptive followers.

Management is viewed as an authority based on formal rights and hierarchy. Management activities might include planning, budgeting, supervision, schedules, rules, guidelines, and performance evaluation. Conditions for success rely on formal authority over the actors the leader is trying to influence.

Power is exercised through authority that is based on force or political skills, for example. Examples include threats and sanctions, promising rewards, mobilizing group pressure, and the use of client or patron networks. Conditions for success rely on leverage and control over critical resources in relation to the actors the leader is trying to influence. Guidance and support from members of the workgroup constitute group work. Co-decision-making, team meetings, and mutual adjustments daily are example activities. Conditions for success rely upon co-workers that accept and can work together without significant hierarchical direction or support.

Peer influencing (network) involves guidance and support from peers within the same occupational specialty or community of practice (outside one's immediate workgroup/organizational unit). Conditions for success are contingent upon co-workers with strong and relevant network resources that accept and can work without significant hierarchical direction or support. Activities include work in subject matter expert networks, conferences, informal contacts, problem-solving, informal meetings outside work meetings, lunches, etc.

Group work is presented as a mode of leadership where guidance and support come from within the peer work group. Here, members practice mutual adjustment daily. Collaboration, team meetings, and co-decision-making are characteristics of success within this mode.

Autonomy comprises self-orchestrated work processes. Thinking for yourself significantly, setting your own standards, planning, and evaluating your work and performance are sample activities. Conditions for success require independent co-workers with high professional and work ethics and a large portion of intrinsic motivation.

Alvesson and Blom (2019) close out by stating that “making organizations function well is, of course, a leader’s overall duty, but sometimes best carried out together with people actively working with others, not necessarily all the time best seen as followers to superior leaders” (pp. 35-36). Christian organizations may be able to draw from this literature on the implications of using various resources to mature the ecclesia spiritually. Particularly to develop leader competencies for strengthening Christian ecologies of faith through developing leaders in every seat.

This researcher acknowledges that missional Christian ministers, who may function despite lacking training, can advance viable ecclesiastical programs. However, engagement, effectiveness, satisfaction, and affect may increase when they are exposed to leader competency development models informed by scholarly leadership and learning theories. Further, the ecologies of faith they serve, support, and share in may thrive.

### **Related Literature**

In this section, this researcher will evaluate related literature comprising academics with extensive involvement and practical expertise in the study and application of leader development. The researcher will explore leader(ship) competency pursuant to answers for what

knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOCs) previous researchers have identified as pertinent to leader development. A literature review of eight works, including both Christian and secular perspectives, will ensue.

First, in *Christian Leader Development: An Outcomes Framework*, Krispin (2020) studied prevailing leadership development theories and noted that “efforts to develop Christian leaders would benefit from a more clearly articulated, comprehensive, research-grounded theory underlying the practice of Christian leadership development” (p. 19). During his research, Krispin (2020) discovered that the assertion of certain authorities on secular leadership had begun to include distinctions between ‘leader’ (individual leader) and ‘leadership’ (growing the collective’s capacity) development. These distinctions are intimated by Krispin (2020) as indicators of a need to clarify leader competency and a strategy for its development.

These Krispin (2020) theories support the premise of this researcher’s study. The catalyst for Krispin’s (2020) study and this researcher’s study is leader development, as distinct from but not eliminating leadership development. Further, both studies are more interested in defining leadership development in praxis.

Krispin (2020) includes his research purpose as creating a synthesized framework that establishes what knowledge a learner will have acquired and will be able to perform after successfully completing a learning period—intended learning outcomes. Krispin (2020) argues that while “principles and tips for effective leadership [are] sometimes helpful, there is no overarching theory or guiding framework” (p. 19). Through his work, Krispin (2020) aspired:

- to integrate Christian-view and worldview perspectives about leadership;
- to synthesize the inherently fuller and more significantly specific set of secular learning outcomes with areas vital to Christian character and spiritual formation; and
- to advance a robust and multifaceted set of potential learning outcomes for Christian leader development.

Krispin's (2020) research is related to this work by focusing on developing Christian leader competency. His evaluation of Christian and secular worldviews also aligns with this researcher's focus on leaders who minister outside the traditional church or organized system. Krispin (2020) responsibly integrates secular competency concepts and presents a paradigm that seems beneficial for equipping Christian leaders to effectively minister in a missional context (i.e., outside the walls of the place of worship). Krispin's (2020) conceptualized three-part scaffold demonstrates the successful accomplishment of his goals of establishing a Christian competency model with:

- A narrowed description of “intended outcomes to be cultivated in individual leaders.” Leadership development thus includes both the development of the person for leadership roles, fostering their ability to encourage direction, alignment, and commitment in a group, as well as the development of the collective ability of all involved to contribute to the process of developing direction, alignment, and commitment for a group (McCauley, Velsor, & Ruderman, 2010).
- A broader perspective on the ‘who’ involved in Christian leader development, addressing the development of leaders and potential leaders across the organization. Expanding the scope for whom to consider for leader development, “Provides outcomes for the development of individual Christians for effective leadership in a variety of roles across organizational levels and organizational contexts. The framework articulates the broad development needs across a wide variety of leadership roles.” (Krispin, 2020, pp. 20-21)

Secondly, Hlophe (2021) conducted another related study entitled *Ministry Formation of Emerging Christian Leaders: Equipping Emerging Leaders to Minister Among the Marginalized*. The purpose of Hlophe's (2021) study was: “To identify and measure the standards being used to prepare (train and form) emerging pastors from various selected denominations of different traditions in South Africa and determine what else denominations are providing” (p. 5). Hlophe's (2021) mixed-methods study included accredited theological institutions with programs recognized for ministry leadership development, senior church leaders or bishops from varying

Christian ministry traditions, and emerging ministry leaders serving in either traditional or non-traditional church contexts.

Although Hlophe's (2021) work takes place in various parts of South Africa and not within the Eastern United States, it was selected for this related literature review due to its close alignment with this researcher's participant group demographic. Both works consider Christian leaders actively serving in ministry either as church leaders or in other ministry leadership capacities. Also, the inclusion of ministry leaders in the study, whether they had or had not received formal or informal ministry formation training, relates Hlophe's (2021) study to this work.

Data was collected from Hlophe's (2021) participants through semi-structured one-on-one interviews, by telephone, e-mail, and structured focus groups. Hlophe's (2021) study revealed that:

- Formal pastoral/theological training is still critical in the process of preparing emerging pastors for effective ministry leadership.
- Character building and inculcating a Christ-like image in the life of a pastor should be the ultimate objective during the process of forming and shaping them for ministry leadership (a view shared by all twenty-two interviewed study participants).
- The training of emerging pastors should be holistic enough to ground them with sound Bible and theology and equip and empower them with other essential life and organizational leadership skills.
- The experience gained through personal and other life events and mentoring by seasoned ministry leaders are some of the most potent ways of cultivating emerging pastors for effective ministry leadership.
- The training of pastors should be as practical as possible so as to prepare pastors to read the signs of the times and effectively minister in their unique ministry contexts. (pp. 120-121)

This third study, conducted by Faggart (2022), is entitled *Discovering, Developing, and Deploying Emerging Ministry Leaders in the Assemblies of God*. Based in a denominational setting, Faggart's (2022) study is relevant here because it also endeavors, through transcendental

phenomenology, to understand from emerging leaders the “...ministry experience in the development of their call to ministry” (p. 23). Faggart’s (2022) purpose for his mixed-method study is: “To explore and better understand the nature of the discovery, development, and deployment of a call to ministry for emerging leaders who are credentialed ministers with the North Texas District [NTD] Council of the Assemblies of God and under 40 years of age at the time of the study” (p. 22). Faggart (2022) summarizes his conclusions as follows:

- The NTD and its churches must provide intentional teaching on the general and specific call to ministry to help potential ministers realize their call.
- The NTD must provide opportunities for their ministers to build spiritual parenting and mentoring relationships.
- The NTD must offer and encourage practical continuing education for its ministers.
- Spiritual fathers and mothers, arising in the North Texas District Council of the Assemblies of God, must” prophetically call out the greatness in young people with ministry gifts and then walk with them, resourcing and encouraging them as if they were the only hope for our future”
- Emerging ministry leaders must not “let anyone think less of [them] because they are young, [but] be an example to all believers in what [they] say, in the way [they] live, in [their] love, [their] faith, and [their] purity” (1Timothy 4:12). (pp. 146-147).

A fourth research study about leadership competency development is found within Turgeon's (2019) efforts. In this related literature review, the inclusion of his research study, *Identifying the Leadership Skills Needed to Develop the Competencies to Lead in a Postcrisis Organization: A Delphi Study* is noted within his purpose statement. Turgeon (2019) says, “The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the leadership skills needed to promote organizational resilience, to act with integrity, and to possess a learning orientation of organizational leaders in the postcrisis phase” (p. 63). This researcher deemed Turgeon’s (2019) work of identifying skills foundational to competency cultivation appropriate and relevant to this study. Also, Turgeon’s (2019) study is deemed relative considering Christian ministry leaders’ responsibility and response-ability during critical situations and circumstances.

Turgeon (2019) employed two distinct stages of data collection: surveys and combining and synthesizing expert knowledge. Three specific expert populations yielded the purposive sample (n=30). They included “educators who teach in the fields of organizational leadership [5] and the field of crisis leadership [5]... persons who are practitioners of crisis management [10]... senior-level managers who have led an organization in a time of crisis [10]” (Turgeon, 2019, p. 71). This researcher acknowledges the differences between her study and Turgeon’s (2019), including the secular vs. Christian organizational environments.

A fifth study dealing with the intentional development of Christian leaders is *Shepherding Church Staff: Stakeholders' Perceptions of a Useful Leadership Development Plan* (Thompson, 2022). Through this study, Thompson (2022) contributes to the corpus of literary work on leader development with this purpose: “...To understand church leaders’ perceptions of a useful LDP [Leadership Development Plan]” (p. 14). Gaining an understanding of what is considered practical for leader development through the perceptions of the ministry leaders is the chief point of relativity between Thompson’s (2022) qualitative study and this research. It is why Thompson’s (2022) is included in this review. Thompson (2022) succeeded in garnering the participants’ insights into what would be considered a useful LDP in six areas:

- Alignment of the mission and vision of the church, replication of leaders, development of skills, and performance comprise the goals of an LDP.
- All staff members, including volunteers, encompass the team involved in an LDP.
- A combination of one-on-one, large groups, modeling, and informal (organic) interactions between the team and supervisor describe the actions of an LDP.
- The one whom the team identifies as most qualified and passionate about leadership development (e.g., the lead pastor, executive pastor, or even an outsider) dictates by whom the LDP process is guided.
- A comprehensive approach: spiritual, emotional, physical, safety, and healing needs to be addressed by an LDP.
- Alignment of mission, generation of leaders, and development of skills measure the success of an LDP.



Bredfeldt (2006) argues that eight competencies are central to the effectiveness of the leader-teacher. Of those eight competencies, he asserts that “four of these relate to the teaching aspect of the leader-teacher’s calling” (p. 116). In that regard, this researcher has included as a sixth study Warnock et al. (2022), *The Perceived Benefits of Instructional Coaching for Teachers*. The Warnock et al. (2022) study supports this work as it relates to the equipping of the laity. Further, their study adds relevance to this research by exploring teacher perceptions through their lived experiences. This researcher notes that the Warnock et al. (2022) study is based on academia and without a Christian worldview.

Warnock et al. (2002) gained phenomenological insight into the perceived benefits of instructional coaching for teachers. Their research advanced through 11 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with high school teachers based in the United Kingdom. Warnock et al. (2022) have stated this as their research purpose: “To present an investigation relating to the benefits of instructional coaching to teachers as perceived by the teachers themselves” (p. 328). Based on the participating sample, Warnock et al. (2022) propose five benefits of instructional coaching: “improved relationships, awareness, reflectiveness, enhanced practice...[and] positive attitude, which captured a sense of increased confidence, motivation, and positivity” (p. 328).

*The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) Leadership Handbook* (2010) joins as a seventh study the literary voices of those considering the difficulty of clarifying the proficiencies of effective leadership. ASTD offers this preamble, “As our world becomes more complex, the competencies required of today’s leaders likewise become more complex. Identifying the most ‘important’ competencies becomes increasingly difficult because they both multiply and become more complicated. Competencies grow in breadth as well as

depth” (ASTD, 2010, as cited in Gigliotti, 2019, pp. 3-4). Therefore, one must define leadership competencies to the extent they are capable.

As an eighth comparative research study, in *Competencies for Effective Leadership*, Gigliotti (2019) argues from the vantage point of his research conducted within Rutgers University’s Center for Organizational Leadership (OL) for a leader competency framework. Gigliotti’s (2019) close study of organizational leadership competency for more than a decade supports the purpose of his work: “To articulate and communicate the many ways in which a competency framework can be used within an organizational setting” (p. 12). Gigliotti (2019) demonstrates the fulfillment of his research purpose with the suggestion of two scorecards. He proposes “Brent Ruben’s Leadership Competency Scorecard (2006) and the Leadership Competency Scorecard 2.0 (2012) [LCS]” (Gigliotti, 2019, p. 12) along with practical applications.

Gigliotti’s (2019) insight was included for review concerning his work to present “a simple and intuitive heuristic for understanding the study and practice of leadership” (p. 12). The research participants for this study may serve in ministries with limited leadership development resources. A framework that enables and supports self-learning is then considered suitable for review here.

The ninth review includes a 2014 qualitative study. The National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE) yielded seven comparable leadership competencies (NACE, 2014). “Competencies [viewed] as essential to new college hire success when considering new college graduate candidates for their workplaces” was measured by the responses of more than 600 participants (NACE, 2014, para. 5). Participants included a variety of HR professionals and other people with expertise in related career service disciplines from different aspects of career

development, such as varying sectors (e.g., public vs. private and organization size (NACE 2014). The seven competencies identified include “professionalism/work ethic (97.5%), critical thinking/problem-solving (96.3%), oral/written communications (91.6%), teamwork/collaboration (90%), information technology application (72 %), leadership (55.9 %), and career management (45%)” (NACE, 2014, [Figure 1]).

While the previously identified competencies were primarily developed without a Christian worldview, the literature suggests that Christian leader competency has intersectionality with and then expands upon those ideas. The literature was included for review in that regard. A view of the competencies recognized by organizations seeking to impact the vibrancy and longevity of their organizations seems to this researcher reminiscent of the traits desired for current and emerging leaders. The NACE (2014) study also provided relevant observations in that manner.

The tenth and final review, entitled *Casting a New Net: Developing Lay leadership in the South District Through Transformational Leadership Coaching*, was performed by Jones-Ramsey (2020). Jones-Ramsey’s (2020) study was in response to an observed continual decline in attendance and service of members in the local church. The purposive sample included eleven participants. The writer stated that after a year of pastoring and observing the functions of the church, it was apparent the church would benefit from the development of lay leaders. The research problem was presented as a question: “How can transformational leadership coaching positively impact an effective church-based contextualized curriculum that trains members to assume leadership roles in South District Fellowship?” Jones-Ramsey’s (2020) purpose for the quantitative study was “To determine if the servant leader who currently pastors this congregation can facilitate a significant increase in lay involvement in the life of the church,

specifically their willingness to assume responsibility for the key roles defined in the Discipline of the denomination.” The study aimed to measure the effect a structured development program would have on lay members accepting leadership positions.

Data collection instruments for the Jones-Ramsey (2020) study included pre-and post-assessments to measure participant leadership skills, a spiritual gifts psychometric to identify the participants’ top five Spiritual giftings and an in-person one-on-one follow-up session for coaching. The study activities comprised an orientation and four sessions during a six-week timeframe—session one: Christian Leadership seminar; session two: Spiritual gifts review; session three: a digest of church leadership roles and responsibilities; and session four: individual wrap-up sessions with participants.

Jones-Ramsey (2020) determined, after six weeks of undertaking the study with the lay members of St. Luke AME Church, that no definitive answer has been revealed regarding the identified research problem. She cited a need for more time with the participants was necessary. Although Jones-Ramsey (2020) focuses her work within a small AME church located in a rural community in the northern Florida region, the study “addressed the need for a structured leadership development program to empower lay members to serve within the church” (p. 90). That focus on the development of the laity resonates with this researcher’s study. The quantitative methodology used by Jones-Ramsey (2020) was also complementary to this study.

### **Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature**

This researcher’s rationale is that because missional ministry leaders may not be able to rely on the corpus of literary works for substantiative studies or resources related to leader competency development, the experiences had by missional Christian leaders during developmental programming and the impact of those experiences on competent leadership

engagement (dynamic), effectiveness (transactional), satisfaction (authentic), and affect (transformational) need to be understood so that improvements can be made and the development of leaders and lay leaders can commence with greater efficacy, and according to Matthew 28:16-20. On the nondenominational church presence in the U.S., Thumma (2020) says, "There is no doubt that the nondenominational church phenomenon is significant in the American religious context" (para. 1). However, recognizing the gap in research focused on independent ministries, Thumma (2020) conducted a 2019-2020 study of nondenominational churches in the U.S. His inquiry included a census and a sample survey of a few hundred nondenominational churches. While his database is not purported as comprehensive, it fills a gap few other scholars have explored. According to his report on the data, "Nondenominational churches, if counted as a single group, would constitute the third largest group of religious adherents in the country, behind the Catholic and Southern Baptist" (para. 1).

In this literature review, the researcher has carefully considered areas of research that focused on leadership development—Christian and non-faith-based leadership considerations were sought. Studies centered on the experiences had by missional Christian leaders during a competency development program, and the subsequent influence on laity development seems negligible. Related literature involving Christian leader competency development, Bible-based leadership, leadership education, and associated leadership areas is plentiful. A gap in the literature relates to the perceptions of missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through religious activities outside an organized church hierarchy or denominational system about their competency development program.

WorldCat (2022), the prolific global index of library collections, lists approximately 23,000 articles, over 4,000 books of various formats, and hundreds more audiovisual media

related to ministry leadership development. A search for the term ‘ministry leadership competency development’ yielded more than 8,400 items in all formats: leadership competency development resulted in over 79,800 resources. A search in WorldCat (2022) for “the perception of competency development training programs for Christian ministers” yielded 166 results. Narrowing the query to non-denominational Christian leadership competency development returned 644 results. The Jerry Falwell Library (JFL) returned results for 211 articles for this same query. JFL showed 44 books and over 2,300 articles. A cursory review of WorldCat’s (2022) results revealed that various resource summaries within those results did not address the research sample for this study. Further, this researcher’s consultation with Liberty University library staff resulted in literary resources generally based on leadership competency development, not representing this study sample.

A gap is also observed within the texts considered for this study’s related literature review. Only one source closely aligns with this researcher’s participant group demographic. Another source does focus on leaders who minister outside the traditional church or organized system. However, none of the sources hold as their chief audience missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside an organized church hierarchy or denominational system. Therefore, a gap in the literature is represented.

### **Profile of the Current Study**

This is a qualitative phenomenological study to understand and assess the leadership development experiences of missional Christian ministers who engage in ministry outside of larger religious organizations during their involvement in either structured or unstructured leadership readiness programs. In addition to gaining insight into the lived experiences during such programs, this researcher will endeavor to assess and understand how participants felt about

their competent readiness for dynamic engagement in ministry. The goal of this research is to review and understand the relationship, if any, between missional Christian leader competency development and select outcome assessment criteria: engagement (dynamic), effectiveness (transactional), satisfaction (authenticity), and affect (transformational).

This researcher will be seeking answers to five guiding research questions throughout this study:

**RQ1.** How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?

**RQ2.** What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?

**RQ3.** What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context?

**RQ4.** What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?

**RQ5.** How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?

The qualitative research methodology will comprise two phases: 1) an online demographic survey and 2) an inductive one-on-one virtual interview. The primary data collection method will serve to discover the subjects' lived experiences. The researcher will develop and distribute a prerequisite electronic survey before the one-on-one interviews. The qualitative survey, interviewer, and interview questions will serve as the instrumentation. The Husserlian (1970) theoretical framework will guide this study.

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This qualitative phenomenological research design will seek to assess and understand the competency readiness experience of Christian ministry leaders serving outside of a traditional organized church structure or denomination. This work will be a nonexperimental study following a transcendental phenomenological research design. The lived experiences of individuals within a specific phenomenon provide the context of phenomenological research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). A phenomenological review of the participants' lifeworld will serve as the perspective into the participants' leadership readiness experience.

This chapter will describe the research methodology employed for the study. In this chapter, the researcher will also include information about the research participants, the setting, the role of the researcher, and ethical considerations. Data collection methods, instruments, and the employment of data analysis will round out Chapter Three.

#### **Research Design Synopsis**

This section will provide a summary of the research design of the study. This will include a review of the research problem, purpose statement, questions, and methodology.

#### **The Problem**

Research exploring the experiences had by leaders who submitted to pedagogies designed for the preparation of Christian ministers who serve outside of larger religious constructs may be lacking even though, in the aggregate, nondenominational churches are arguably the third largest group of religious adherents in the country (Thumma, 2020).



## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study will be to assess and understand the leader competency development experience of missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

## **Research Questions**

The following Research Questions will guide this study:

**RQ1.** How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?

**RQ2.** What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?

**RQ3.** What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context?

**RQ4.** What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?

**RQ5.** How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?

## **Research Design and Methodology**

A qualitative phenomenological methodology has been selected for this study because this researcher will seek to assess and understand what missional Christian ministry leaders encountered throughout their preparatory training. Phenomenology is effective for gaining insight through another person's perceptions (Bernard, 2013). This researcher also believes phenomenology will be effective for assessing and understanding the participants' experiences articulated throughout this research. Ormrod and Leedy (2018) also advance that "...a phenomenological study tries to answer the question What is it like to experience such-and-such?" (p. 233). They agree with Bernard (2013) that a qualitative research design is beneficial

when it aims to elucidate a phenomenon through insight into an individual's experience within specific circumstances (Ormrod & Leedy, 2018).

Power et al. (2018) discuss three points that support this researcher's employment of a qualitative research design. They offer first that qualitative procedures are "augmentative" (Power et al., 2018). They argue that qualitative methods can enhance quantitative research methods in ways that develop knowledge about social psychological events. This additive quality may prove helpful for researchers endeavoring to expand this current research quantitatively. Secondly, Power et al. (2018) express that the qualitative method has the potential to be generative. They offer an example of this generative quality through a study conducted during the development of a new housing estate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). The qualitative research and observations led to interviews that led to survey development, resulting in the revelation of patterns and the evolution of theory about group norms and attitudes. Their third point highlights the legitimacy of the independent use of qualitative methods within social research. They advance that the use of qualitative methods enables readers to assess experiences that cannot be understood through a scientific reduction in a lab or quantitative numerical facts.

Additionally, Power et al. (2018) state that "Qualitative methods provide a rich description and a flexibility of categories..." (p. 367). In their discussion about inductive reasoning, Ormrod and Leedy (2018) echo this sentiment arguing that the qualitative research design facilitates the flexible discovery of meaning through patterns within "separate and individual" (p. 22) data. For this research, each participant's experience during a structured or unstructured readiness process will be a phenomenon involving their ability, through direct participation or observation, to apprehend a thing, event, thought, or emotion through the

senses, mind, or memory (Creely, 2018). That apprehension brings awareness of the person, place, thing, event, etc.—an experience. In other words, a phenomenological study will aid the researcher in understanding the meaning of the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

This researcher will undertake a purposive sample for this phenomenological study. Criteria are selected ‘for a purpose’ with this sampling method (Battaglia, 2008); for instance, one might choose participants they have determined to be representative of a group (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). Regarding purposive sampling, Nikolopoulou (2022) states that the primary aim “is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population.” Specifically, sample selection for this study will be contingent upon the researcher’s review of and ability to effectively choose the participants, circumstances, or events that can produce the data best suited to achieve the research objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Each participant in this study will possess direct experience with structured or unstructured leadership competency preparation for missional ministry leaders.

A phenomenological exploration of the participants' lifeworld will provide the necessary vantage point for their experience during their preparation for ministry leadership. Advancing the research this way is expected to reveal the Husserlian (1970) view of essence. Ross (2006) agrees that essence is interpreted as a sense of something. Unlike substance, which is durable (endures over time), separable (exists independently of other things), and identical (remains the same as itself or a group) (Ross, 2006), essence is variable, considering the attributes of a thing and the particular observer. Since those attributes inhere in a substance, they thereby make that thing what it is, individually by the observer. (Ross, 2006; Williams, 2001).

This researcher will endeavor to understand essence through data collection during a qualitative survey and subsequent inductive interviews. The survey and interviews will serve as the study's instrumentation. Participant responses will facilitate the researcher's discovery of the guiding research questions. Participants will individually answer the semi-structured interview questions regarding their involvement, observations, feelings, thoughts, opinions, memories, and reactions to the structured or unstructured ministry preparation they received. This is a process Husserl regarded as intentionality (Thomasson, 2017). The sense of the participants' experience(s) will become more apparent to the observer (Thomasson, 2017). This intentionality will also aid the researcher in achieving the transcendental phenomenological approach—assessing experience as the participant directly portrays that experience (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Setting**

This research will comprise missional Christian ministry leaders within the Eastern United States. Leedy and Ormrod (2018) provide guidance to include 5-25 participants in a phenomenological study. Following their guidance, this researcher will take care to select a "small" sample of 10 to 15 participants, all with "direct experience with the phenomenon being studied" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 233).

Vaters (2021), a pastor serving in ministry for more than 40 years and author of four books dedicated as resources for helping small churches to flourish, suggests a church is small when there are approximately 350 or fewer regular attendees (About section, para. 7). Other observations seem to support Vaters's notion. According to a 2020 review of over 15,000 United States religious congregations, Faith Communities Today (FACT) reported that half of United States churches have fewer than 65 people in their weekly worship service (Earls, 2021b). From this perspective, this researcher will include ministries where the size of the followership is no

more than 250 people. Limiting the followership will mitigate situations where the ministry leaders will be positioned within a setting led primarily by others and may be removed from the practical application of ministry within the laity. Also, larger churches may experience resources that can supplement a competency growth area. For example, a ministry bolstered by state-of-the-art technology may have experiences that present as outliers in the data compared to smaller ministries providing data for this study based on their need to creatively employ competent ministry, absent the same technological advantage (Allen, K., 2019).

Individual participants will complete an electronic qualitative demographic survey. Participants will receive a link by e-mail inviting them to complete the electronic survey. The included link will connect participants directly to the survey, with an opportunity for confidentiality. Upon completing the survey questions, the participant will electronically submit the survey, routing it back to the researcher's e-mail. Data collected from the survey will be studied and enciphered for themes. Semi-structured inductive interviews will follow.

Virtual person-to-person interviews will be conducted and audiovisual recorded by the researcher through Microsoft Teams, a web-based meeting platform. Per the research questions, the researcher will use an interview guide to conduct the interviews and accommodate the researcher's handwritten or typed notes. The researcher will also use the interview guide to accommodate her notes, as electronic technology is not failproof. Interview questions will be open-ended to encourage thoughtful, comprehensive responses that draw out points relevant to the participant, notwithstanding the researcher (Patton, 2014).

### **Participants**

Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that "the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants...that will best help the researcher understand the problem and

the research question" (p. 186). In accordance with a purposive sampling strategy, survey respondents "that meet a predetermined inclusion or exclusion criterion" (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015) —a "criterion homogenous" sampling (Luciani et al., (2019) — will be selected. The 10 to 15 participants for this study will identify as missional Christian ministry leaders, applying Christian biblical and theological tenets to ministerial service for a minimum of three years. The sample size of 10 to 15 is in alignment with the guidelines of Creswell and Creswell (2018) for "3-10" (p. 186) for a phenomenological study. However, to collect unique statistics, data collection will continue until "saturation" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 186) is achieved. Participants will also have common leadership responsibilities, including "an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members" (Bass, 1990, p.19). More notably, the participants will share the experience of undergoing structured or unstructured leader competency training, as determined by the survey.

Additionally, for this purposive study, the participants will serve in ministry outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system. They may also engage in periodic collaboration with a parachurch body (i.e., any organization outside the Church that comes alongside for fellowship or support). Saunders (2015) defines para as a Greek term "to come alongside." Wilson (2014) further defines a parachurch as "an organization that operates alongside (*para*) the church. Parachurch organizations usually include groups of Christians, members of the communal church, who engage in specific areas of ministry that serve or supplement the ministry of local churches" (para. 6). Furthermore, parachurches often perform fundamental services that churches or ministries cannot fulfill alone (e.g., administration services, conference planning and hosting, food shelters, food banks, homeless ministries, drug,

and alcohol counseling, learning and development, or evangelical resources). Parachurches do not typically meet for regular worship services, administer the edicts, or display other characteristics of the organized church. Parachurch members frequently belong to sundry churches (Erickson, 2001) (see Ephesians 2:19-20 and consider the Apostles and their work alongside the local churches).

For this study, participant ministry leadership is not restricted to leading a church body. Rather, participants will include those engaged in regular ministerial activities, convening at least monthly, who provide a spiritual covering for two or more followers, and where the laity receives direction or inspiration from the leader (e.g., open-air/outreach, homeless, shelter, transitional housing, mentoring, hospital visitation, or prison ministries). Further, participants will have answered affirmatively to the survey question soliciting interest in the study.

Parachurch organizations offering covenant ministry programs such as Christian leader competency training will be solicited to establish potential participant contact information. The researcher will compile a list of five to ten qualified parachurch organizations offering ministry support or programs. This researcher will also contact by e-mail or phone Scott Thumma, PhD., Professor of Sociology of Religion, Hartford International University, having obtained related research data, for potential participant contact information. Outreach to the parachurch organizations and scholars will include an introduction to this researcher, this study, and a request for participant contact information or to forward the researcher's contact information. Survey outreach to potential participants will derive from the contact information.

In addition to parachurch affiliation and the attainment of saturation, participant criteria for inclusion in the sample will include engagement, structure, and followers. For engagement, the participant must be personally occupied with leading ministerial activities such as serving as

senior pastor or outreach leader. Those activities include but are not limited to teaching, preaching, conference or seminar hosting, retreat administration, and mission trips. Secondly, an apparent structure for the advancement of ministry must be in place. The structure should include a consistent schedule of ministry efforts, convening at a minimum monthly. Sample participants' ministry efforts should be toward dynamic missiology or be evangelical in nature. Ministry goals for these activities include the furtherance of the gospel and the spiritual conversion and formation of others.

### **Role of the Researcher**

This researcher earned a bachelor's degree in organizational management and a Master's in Public Administration. This training has informed the researcher's ministerial duties in unconventional ways related to the typical advancement of the Church. This experience and response to God's call to equip leaders have prompted this study of the stated research problem.

Unlike quantitative research, where instrumentation includes an object-subject approach (e.g., test-researcher), this qualitative social science research will employ subject-subject instrumentation (e.g., researcher-participant). The researcher will serve as part of the study instrumentation. Given the nature of qualitative studies, this researcher's engagement with participants (subject-subject) will be sustained, meticulous, and inherently hermeneutical (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). This attribute of qualitative study "introduces a range of strategic, ethical, and personal issues into the qualitative research process" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). For instance, the researcher serves in the capacity of ministry leader within a non-denominational context and with parachurch affiliation. This experience informs the researcher's perspective on missional Christian leader competency and readiness to lead others.



Recognizing this researcher bias, a vital aspect of the role of this researcher will be to focus on the phenomenon and emerging data while ensuring the integrity of the data and research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) are not impeded. To achieve this, bracketing or holding at abeyance the researcher's biases, assumptions, judgments, or experiences through reflexive journaling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) will be utilized as an integral component of the study. The inclusions in the journal will be included as part of this study's report.

Learning and development have occurred both informally and formally for the licensure and ordination aspects of this researcher's ministry. However, it has mainly been self-directed study and zeal for God and the people of God that have driven this researcher's pursuit and attainment of competencies for ministry. Researchers' pre-conceived notions about the shortcomings in literature and practical application for missional ministry leaders, therefore, have the potential to accommodate researcher bias. This researcher will rely on the reflexive process to set aside potential experiential influences or biases that may arise out of her more than 20 years of missional Christian ministry.

Bracketing through reflexivity involves an exploration of one's judgments, observances, practices, and belief systems during the data collection process (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022). The principal undergirding of reflexivity is to identify any individual beliefs that may have incidentally affected the research (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022). Chan et al. (2013) suggest, "To bring reflexivity into consciousness, a reflexive diary is used to write down our thoughts, feelings and perceptions" (p. 3). They also advance that reflexivity "allows us as researchers to re-examine our positions when issues are raised that might affect the research process" (Chan et al., 2013, p. 3). This researcher will include in the final report personal biases identified through this journaling process to add to the credibility of the study (Ormrod & Leedy, 2018).

## **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher will evaluate ethical considerations related to qualitative research within this section. Theories about ethics in research will guide the following discussion. In addition, concerns from the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approval process will be included in this section.

### **General Ethical Considerations**

Researchers must anticipate ethical matters that might develop during their research. It is, therefore, this researcher's duty to engage in planning to "protect our research participants; develop a trust with them; promote the integrity of the research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions; and cope with the new, challenging problems" (Israel & Hay, 2006, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 88). Before research commences, this researcher will include in her planning submission of a proposal for approval to the IRB for Liberty University (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **The Process**

This researcher will ensure that vital IRB components of the research plan transpire. The researcher will be the sole interviewer; however, she will give credit to anyone contributing to the work performed in the study. Given the virtual platform, the researcher will need to obtain only participant permission to conduct the study. Participants will secure their site locations. The ability to select their site location will mitigate researcher-participant issues related to power imbalances and ensure equitable interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### ***Ethical Considerations for Beginning the Field Study***

Pursuant to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the following will ensue: A qualitative survey will serve as a tool to gather demographic data. An e-mail invitation to take the survey will

include disclosure of the purpose of the study. This researcher will also request that participants complete a consent form, included with the survey email.

### ***Ethical Considerations for Data Collection***

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are several areas to consider for data collection. The data collection process for this study will include an explanation of the reason for the research. The researcher will explain how she will use participant data. During the study, the researcher will demonstrate respect for the virtual site locations by minimizing disruptions at her location and planning to overcome potential disruptive technical issues. Each participant will be treated equitably and afforded the same opportunity for participation. The researcher will organize the interview protocol before the participant interview and use it consistently for standardization across all interviews. The researcher will employ an objective approach to the questions to avoid interjecting personal opinions, leading participants, or disclosure of sensitive or harmful information.

### ***Ethical Considerations for Data Analysis***

Findings will be reported objectively and without disparate treatment of the results. The researcher will include the complement of perspectives captured during the study—avoiding “going native” or taking the position of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 89). The researcher will codify and encrypt participant information with regard to their privacy and confidentiality (Reno Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), 2021).

### ***Ethical Considerations for Reporting, Distributing, and Gathering Data***

Creswell and Creswell (2018) present nine potential ethical considerations related to this section. Eight will pertain to this research study. The researcher will: (a) not falsify reporting such as data, authorship, or conclusions; (b) follow guidelines if she will recreate the work of

others; (c) not engage in plagiarism; (d) not provide sensitive or harmful participant information; (e) utilize language that is clear and free of bias; (f) work collaboratively, sharing data; (g) retain research procedures and artifacts for a minimum of five years (APA, 2010); (h) contribute new material for multiple publications; and, state ownership, giving credit to contributors.

### **Instructional Review Board**

This researcher will submit her proposed research study protocols and all procedural material for approval to the IRB for Liberty University (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The IRB templates and protocols will be represented by a consent form (Appendix A), pre-survey questionnaire and demographic survey (Appendix B), interview protocol (Appendix C), expert panel invitation letter, permission request letter—membership list (Appendix E), permission request letter –database access (Appendix F), permission response letter (Appendix G), recruitment e-mail (Appendix H), recruitment –social media, and expert panel feedback form—demographic survey and interview protocol. Subsequent submissions to include an application to the IRB, executed signature page affixed with a signature from the Dissertation Chair to the IRB will be included and added to the appendices. A Proof of Permission letter has been included in the appendix.

When conducting their review, an IRB follows three essential ethical principles regarding protecting humans during social science research – Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice (Miracle, 2016; Friesen et al., 2017). This research will demonstrate Respect for Persons by acknowledging participant autonomy and respectfully accepting their right to decide for or against cooperation with the study. Protecting those who may demonstrate diminished autonomy will also ensue within this study. This researcher will exclude participants where the potential to cause harm due to participant vulnerabilities seems evident (e.g., neurodivergent respondents,

insurmountable challenges with accessibility or comprehension of protocols/materials, and trauma survivors or other sensitivities with possible triggering).

Friesen et al. (2017) discuss the limitation of consent forms to overcome the potential of inimitable harm to whole communities. Friesen et al. (2017) further discuss examples of communities that have suffered enduring maltreatment histories in the spirit of research. For instance, communities striving within socioeconomic disparities, some indigenous people, and other marginalized groups. Adding to the discourse, Lebacqz (2005) and Levine (1982) argue for the expansion of the principle of Respect for Persons to “respect for persons and communities” (Lebacqz, 2005, as cited in Friesen et al., 2017, p. 17). Aligning with the latter theory, this researcher will include a question designed to assess sensitivities related to perception in the survey. It may be that some of the participating missional Christian leaders have engaged in self-development. Holding informal ministry preparation may inspire trepidation within some participants related to the judgment others may place on them or their ministries. This researcher will communicate the value of the participants’ experience to the research to overcome this and demonstrate respect for this community of Christian leaders.

Beneficence will also be a guiding principle throughout this study, safeguarding against foreseeable harm. The researcher will obtain an informed consent document from participants. The researcher will include information about what it means to participate, including a guarantee of confidentiality, potential risk, and the opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns before consenting to enter the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ormrod & Leedy, 2018). Additionally, this researcher will communicate that participants possess a voluntary status and freewill participation.

Physical and data security are within the scope of measures to safeguard against harm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher will securely maintain hardcopy files under lock and key and within a locked private office. Passwords will protect data stored electronically. Data will be secured using BullGuard and Microsoft Defender software to provide cyber security. The participant's physical location will be kept confidential.

Fairness and equity for all are vital components of justice. The researcher will employ this principle of justice. Further, the research instrumentation for this study will include questions formed with objectivity (Miracle, 2016; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Selected participants will possess related experience within the research problem. They will be able to anticipate similar benefits and risks (Miracle, 2016; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Additionally, this researcher will comply with the participants' right and ability to enter or depart the study freely, without issue (Miracle, 2016; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

### **Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

This section will provide a review of the types of data this researcher will need to answer the research questions, therefore elucidating the problem under consideration in this study. The section will also describe how the researcher will gather the data for the study. Information about the methods of data collection, any instruments used in that data collection, and the procedures and approvals the researcher will follow in data collection, including the IRB approval process, are included in this section. Further, during data collection, this researcher will employ a transcendental phenomenological approach to illuminate the details and nuances that distinguish

phenomena through the ways the participants perceive them (Cerbone, 2020; Junguo, 2021; Neubauer et al., 2019).

### **Collection Methods**

Data collection for this qualitative study will comprise primary sources—participant surveys and one-on-one semi-structured virtual interviews (Archibald et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lobe et al., 2020). This researcher will collect primary data through an online survey and subsequent one-on-one semi-structured virtual interviews to drive this purposive research. The researcher will invite participants to complete the survey and a follow-up virtual interview.

As part of a qualitative study, surveys and interviews afford participants a way to contribute vivid and substantially detailed descriptions (i.e., the raw data) of their lived experiences with the phenomenon under review (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). In-depth participant insights will serve as a vantage point from which this researcher will begin to consider the meaning of the phenomenon for each person. The dual-faceted data collection (survey and interview) will facilitate triangulation, lending to the study's credibility (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). Additionally, the participant accounts will become the scaffolding for future researchers' interest in transferability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018).

Some researchers engaged in online qualitative research posit that “fully qualitative surveys can produce the rich and complex accounts of the type of sense-making typically of interest to qualitative researchers – such as participants’ subjective experiences, narratives, practices, positionings, and discourses” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, as cited in Braun et al., 2021). With that in mind, this researcher has included a demographic survey in the data collection

process to obtain initial participant data such as age, race, gender, cultural background, family status, occupation, avocation, education, time committed to ministry service, and the number of years in ministry. This researcher will schedule virtual interviews at a convenient time for the interviewee and after the survey.

### **Instruments and Protocols**

A description of the instruments and protocols that the researcher will utilize for the data collection process will follow in this section. Chief among these instruments is the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative survey, interviewer, and interview questions will serve as the instrumentation.

#### ***Survey***

Following the guidance of Creswell and Creswell (2018), this researcher will create and use a qualitative survey that includes “good psychometric properties (i.e., [collectively] validity, reliability)” (p. 224). Although psychometrics are often associated with math, researchers can apply psychometric properties to qualitative instruments, tools, or protocols (e.g., surveys/questionnaires or tests) (Mokkink et al., 2010; Souza et al., 2017). Examples of psychometric properties include but are not limited to face and content validity (Mokkink et al., 2010; Souza et al., 2017).

Assurance in the validity of research instruments, such as a survey, means that a researcher has determined that the instrument evaluates what is intended. The consistency with which an instrument maintains stability throughout the rigors of multiple coders and datasets and remains unchanged over time demonstrates its reliability. This researcher will carefully manage these and other psychometric properties (e.g., face and content validity) of this study.



**Face Validity.** Face validity is the extent to which, on the surface, an instrument looks as though it will measure a particular characteristic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). This researcher will assess face validity by asking a three-person expert panel to rate the validity of the survey instrument as it appears to them.

**Content Validity.** Content validity looks at the extent to which the items on an instrument measure the content or attributes the test intends to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). For example, if a study is designed to study the data management skills of people functioning as ‘proficient’ in Microsoft Excel, it would not achieve content validity if the content represented people new to spreadsheets. An instrument geared to new spreadsheet users would not include all facets of Excel operation (e.g., advanced formulas, PowerPivot) considered to be at a ‘proficient’ level.

Research instruments designed to assess a level of knowledge, skill, or ability have high content validity if the items or questions appropriately demonstrate the various parts of the area or discipline of interest (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). Also, if the instrument involves particular behaviors and skills that are fundamental to the specific field (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018), high content validity will be established. This researcher will employ the same three-person expert panel to assess the face validity and content validity of the study through a Likert scale, considering whether the instrument is (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018; Nevo, 1985):

- highly appropriate for measuring leader experience;
- very appropriate for measuring leader experience;
- appropriate for measuring leader experience;
- inappropriate for measuring leader experience; or
- irrelevant and therefore unsuitable for measuring leader experience with the phenomenon (Mcleod, 2013)

Microsoft Forms will be the survey instrument used for this study. The form will comprise 25-30 questions and will be sent via e-mail to the expert panel members. Open-ended

questions related to the primary variables—participant’s leadership training experience and current engagement in the development of others for ministry/leadership.

### ***Interview Protocol***

The researcher will employ a semi-structured interview approach. The interview protocol will comprise open-ended questions linked to the research questions and guide the researcher while also facilitating the opportunity for probing questions (Stofer, n.d.). The interview protocol will also contain “one or two central research questions” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 133). Additionally, the researcher may include subsequent questions after probing to ensure substantive responses and to verify understanding. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend limiting sub-questions to no more than seven. However, Leedy and Ormrod (2018) suggest “... the questions can be as few as 5 and as many as 20, depending on their scope” (p. 245). To prioritize engagement and time management, the researcher will include in the guide, minimally, two central and 10 additional questions, allowing time for probing questions.

The researcher will compose interview questions guided by concepts considered essential for competent leadership. For instance, Benzel (2021) propounds the idea that leaders should possess a passion for others and self-awareness to effectively answer the ministry’s call on their lives. More cerebrally, Diskiene et al. (2019) present cognitive theories this researcher will consider when forming interview questions for this study. One example Diskiene et al. (2019) offer is related to thinking corporately (systems thinking). The authors describe this systems thinking competency as “seeing a particular event from different points of view, understanding that this event will have some kind of consequences for the organization, or a society as a whole” (Diskiene et al., 2019, p. 115). This researcher will devise a question aimed at revealing the participants’ perception of a “leader” (individual impact) versus “leadership” (overall impact)

based on their experience within their LDP. The purpose of the question will be to gain insight into the LDP's effective preparation of the leader's corporate mindset about ministry.

Pattern identification (visionary) is also offered by Diskiene et al. (2019) as a leader competency. This competency is described as the ability to observe opportunities and make connections between events that may seem random or insignificant (Diskiene et al., 2019). The authors assert that pattern connection can be useful for problem-solving and aids in the ability to see beyond current circumstances (Diskiene et al., 2019). This researcher will be interested in assessing and understanding the participants' LDP/P experience related to a training focus on recognizing emotional, intellectual, or other patterns and the participants' ability to verbalize how they connect to further the ministry, the Gospel.

This researcher will collaborate with the three-person expert panel to closely review the instrument. The researcher will enlist their "informed opinions" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018) about the interview guide's suitability and validity for the study. The researcher will arrange independent virtual meetings with the panel experts to discuss the interview guide, receive their feedback, and review their completed Likert scale entries. The researcher's Dissertation Chair will also receive the questions for consideration and final approval.

## **Researcher**

Creswell and Creswell (2018) theorize that in a qualitative study, the role of the researcher is not only to gather the information, perhaps using a tool or following a protocol to record collected data. The authors argue that an integral responsibility of researchers is to also draw inferences from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This researcher will be a component of the instrumentation in that regard.

### ***Document Analysis***

Document analysis encompasses skimming (cursory examination), reading (in-depth examination), and the interpretation of primarily digital and physical documents (art and other sources can apply) (Bowen, 2009). This analytical process combines content and thematic analysis aspects (Bowen, 2009). For this study, the researcher will analyze documents such as public records (e.g., student records), personal documents (e.g., blogs), course materials for leader development programs physical evidence), and other material related to leader development and as aligned with this research problem (Bowen, 2009).

Census records and research based on that public data will also be reviewed as these sources may provide demographics pertinent to this research sample. The census data inclusion criteria will involve the requirement for demographic data to be related to the research problem and guiding questions. For example, knowing the educational level of a participant may enrich the insight gained about their experience in their leader development context.

Saldaña (2009) offers ways to advance the process of qualitative document analysis. He suggests that when researchers have a few documents to analyze, they often choose to create a list of all of them. A sample may be used instead if a copious number of documents are available to analyze (Indeed editorial team, 2022). Due to the data-driven emergent nature of this phenomenological study (themes and patterns will become apparent through an analysis of the interaction with the participants' spoken, written, or other communication), this researcher will perform a thematic analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Specifically, this researcher will systematically analyze the documents for a common premise across a single source or a group (e.g., an entire interview or group of interviews).

After this researcher determines which types of documents to include for thematic analysis, she will create a list of the selected documents or resources (Saldaña 2009). Next, the researcher will familiarize herself with the documents through a study of their content. This researcher will concentrate on identifying and specifying the elements within the documents to organize them for reference during the data analysis. While immersed in the review of the documents, the researcher will be careful to identify when content includes certain word choices, phraseology, characterizations, or unique verbiage, data, information, or potential connections regarding the phenomenon under review and to note and track them on a matrix developed in Microsoft Excel (Bowen, 2009; Saldaña 2009). The researcher will likewise employ a consistent review of the research questions during the document analysis. Doing so will guide the researcher to also continue to bear in mind the research problem and to select documents for evaluation accordingly (Bowen, 2009; Saldaña, 2009).

### ***Procedures***

The steps necessary to conduct the data collection phase of this study will be outlined in this section. The researcher will delineate when, where, and how the data will be collected. The information to be included will be, but not limited to, eliciting participants for the study, steps for collecting and recording data, and the process of obtaining IRB approval.

### ***Eliciting Participants***

This researcher will contact by e-mail or phone parachurch organizations and research scholars having obtained related data for potential participant contact information.

The specific request will be for them to forward an e-mail containing the recruitment letter (Appendix E) and a link to the electronic consent form and demographic survey (Appendix A) to 20 ministry leaders on their membership list or within their database. This researcher will ask to be copied on the outgoing e-mail so that she may be informed of any exchange of

communication with the potential participant for planning purposes. A request for five additional backup participants' names and their contact information will be included. Alternatively, if granted access to the database or membership list, this researcher will inform the contact of her availability and willingness to contact potential participants directly. This researcher will use the data attained from her contacts' database, directory, or other suggested means of outreach to produce a purposive sample representative of the research population.

### ***Gathering and Recording the Data***

Data collected from the parachurch organizations and research scholar(s) regarding the potential participants' contact information will be added to the Microsoft Bookings software for organization, future contact, potential interview scheduling, and general recordkeeping. Upon receipt of a Microsoft Forms-generated or direct e-mail indicating that a potential participant(s) has submitted the electronic consent form and demographic survey, this researcher will access Microsoft Forms to view the response(s). Participant contact information and survey entries will be exported from Microsoft Forms to Microsoft Excel for further data management (sorting, categorizing, etc.).

Administration of the demographic survey to gather data will include an adaptation of Salant and Dillman's (1994) "four-phase administration process" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 153). The mail-out process suggested by the authors was replaced with an electronic mail-out process:

- The **first e-mail-out** will be initiated by either this researcher's point-of-contact at the parachurch organization(s), the research scholar(s), or the researcher directly.
- The **second e-mail-out** will include a short welcome introducing the researcher to all sample members and providing the researcher's contact information, distributed approximately 24 hours after the first e-mail-out.
- The **third e-mail-out** will consist of a brief follow-up sent as a reminder and checkpoint to all sample members approximately 72 hours after the first e-mail-out.

- The **fourth e-mail-out** will be sent to all nonrespondents approximately 48 hours after the third e-mail-out. A link to the consent form, demographic survey, and a call to action will be included in the fourth e-mail (adapted from Salant and Dillman, 1994, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 153).

Consent and demographic survey responses will be returned to the researcher through the Microsoft Forms automated routing feature or e-mail and retained for further review and analysis. Receipt of respondent answers will serve to initiate the process of coordinating one-on-one interviews.

The interview process consists of several important components (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, data collection will occur through 90-minute, one-on-one, and inductive virtual participant interviews. An inductive interview process will be used because it is advantageous for discovering (lifeworld) details, patterns, theory development, and meaning (Bernard, 2017). The meaning will be discovered by talking with participants about their experiences and then analyzing themes and patterns in the data (Bernard, 2017).

The one-on-one interviews will include the researcher and one participant. This researcher will be the sole interviewer. Interviews will be conducted with audiovisual recording through Microsoft Teams, a web-based meeting platform. However, the researcher will avoid total reliance on digital recording devices. The interview protocol will include enough spaces between the questions for interview notes and quotes. Handwritten or typed notes will be included in the spaces to record participant responses further. This researcher will rehearse the questions and be well-versed in the interview protocol to facilitate a more conversational cadence and interaction with the participant. This researcher will ask each participant the same questions in the semi-structured interview guide.

This researcher will conduct the interviews from her private home office in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The researcher will ensure that the environment is private, safe, and secure in

alignment with the principle of beneficence— not to do any harm (Miracle, 2016; Friesen et al., 2017). This researcher will ask participants to interview from a secluded area of their choice that is free from disruptions, ideally behind closed doors, to maintain confidentiality and facilitate open dialogue. Survey respondents without the ability to participate virtually or from a distraction-free environment will be excluded from the study. This researcher will allow up to ten minutes for interview setup, including the review of pre-and post-interview instructions, resolution of any technical issues, participant orientation to the virtual platform, and attainment of any necessary tools (writing utensils, e.g.), etc. The interview protocol will be arranged before the interviews and used consistently in all discussions for standardization. This interviewing method can aid the researcher in attaining potentially consistent data useful for data analysis and maintaining research integrity (Bernard, 2017; Stofer, n.d.).

To protect participants' confidentiality, this researcher will utilize encrypted computer-based files (i.e., password as encryption key) and locking file drawers in physical document storage (e.g., hardcopy signed consent forms or interview notes) (Reno Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), 2021). Personally identifiable information (PII) will be replaced with codified identifiers for study documents as soon as possible (Reno Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), 2021).

The researcher will incentivize respondents with a participation reward. Receipt of a completed survey and participation in the interview will be the basis for the incentive. Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. Participants who complete the one-on-one interview will have their names entered for a random drawing to receive a book from a collection related to Christian spiritual development. One of the books is entitled, *In Pursuit of Purpose: The Key to Personal Fulfillment* by Dr. Myles Munroe.



### **Data Analysis**

The significant phases of qualitative analysis include data preparation, data immersion, coding, identifying, and reviewing themes, defining them, and reporting the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher will discuss how the data will be organized and analyzed in this section. According to Saldaña (2009), content analysis is useful for identifying themes or concepts and then categorizing them to discover meaning. However, because of the potential that not all of the collected data will be useful, Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that the researcher must analyze the data and decipher what data can be used. This researcher will evaluate the data “ by examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 181). Observations will be limited to interactions with the participants during the virtual interview.

### **Analysis Methods**

Emergent thematic analysis, also known as open code development (Rubin & Babbie, 2013) and utilization, will be employed for this study. Coding is the application of a label to text. Codes effectively identify and summarize important concepts within a set of data, such as an interview transcript (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher will make use of the Microsoft Word dictation feature to transcribe each interview. The researcher will also create a standardized digital filing structure. Electronic documents will be sorted into electronic folders and labeled accordingly. The individual participant’s PII will be filed in two separate locations so that the data collected cannot be easily linked to their pseudonyms. The file containing the PII and pseudonym will have numeric values in common, known only to the researcher and accessible to the researcher's Dissertation Committee members.

For thematic analysis, this researcher will use QualCoder 3.1, computer-aided data analysis software (CADAS) (Oun, 2014). The software will be used to assist this researcher with transcription analysis, coding, text interpretation, recursive abstraction, and content analysis. Oun (2014) argues for the benefit of CADAS due to the provision of efficient data storage and easy data retrieval.

Leedy and Ormrod (2018) also suggest some other data management steps for organization. Organizational factors may include chronological time periods in which different research items were acquired or created, etc. For example, the data may be sorted on the matrix by the date acquired or created. A preliminary list of potential themes will be made to include terms such as competency strengths, structured training, parachurch affiliation, active missional program, and the like. Leedy and Ormrod (2018) also suggest making “initial passes through the data,” allowing an “open-minded search for meanings and potential codes...often called open-coding” (p. 296). This researcher will make a minimum of three passes through the data. Data collected during this exercise may reveal “stand out” themes. This researcher will include *In Vivo*—or “living”—coding to develop a preliminary list of codes. *In Vivo* coding is often used as a first step to summarize things told directly to them during the interview, by the participant, into single words or phrases, making it an ideal approach as those “stand out” themes seem to emerge (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). For example, certain characteristics, words, expressions, or other attributes might prompt early coding. Data sets that appear to not be aligned with the purpose of the study will be set aside and omitted.

Interview guides, the corresponding respondent sheet, and notes will be arranged chronologically. Interview transcription will be completed according to this chronological organization. Preliminary codes from the first pass will be noted and applied to any early

emerging themes. However, capturing dynamic and emergent themes is inherent to inductive coding (Delve & Limpaecher, 2020). An important note about this study is that a data-driven approach to coding will be used for data analysis to ensure that codes come from the analyzed data but not from outside sources or the researcher's conventions.

Coding will be finalized throughout the analysis and in accordance with the arising patterns or themes (Saldaña, 2009). The coding process supports the researcher's ability to gain vicarious insight into the participants' lived experiences. This researcher will practice epoché—or bracketing—to avoid focusing on her assumptions and experiences while analyzing the data (Chan et al., 2013). Manual and QualCoder 3.1 electronic software coding will be employed.

There are several statistical tests and measures to assess the validity of quantitative instruments; however, the same is not true about qualitative instruments. Creating validity and reliability in qualitative research can be less accurate (Lincoln et al., 2011). However, this researcher will use methodological triangulation to encourage validity by administering the participant surveys and interviews (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). When a test or instrument is validated, it indicates that the researcher has reached the belief that the instrument measures the intended variable (McLeod, 2013; Souza et al., 2017).

This researcher has consulted with the CEO and President of a statistics consulting organization as an additional safeguard for the validity and reliability of this study. The CEO and President is a biostatistician, possessing two Master of Science degrees and more than 15 years' experience in graduate-level academia. This researcher will employ the organization's services or that of a similarly qualified data analyst for statistical analysis.

The measures taken to document the various aspects of the study employ reflexivity for credibility, reliability, and triangulation for validity. Detailed documentation chronicling any

unique topic, changes, or researcher's thoughts about the coding will also be employed to explain themes clearly. These measures will ensure that the study is replicable for confirmability, deemed credible, and dependable.

### **Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is the measurement that establishes validity and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To establish the trustworthiness of a study, Lincoln et al. (2011) suggest that researchers should consider terms such as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This section discusses the criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness of this qualitative research regarding its credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. This section reviews the principles this researcher will engage in for evaluating the trustworthiness of this study: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

#### ***Credibility***

Credibility is a measure of trustworthiness, establishing whether the study's findings are deemed reliable and valid (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The use of multiple validity procedures will be used in this study. For example, the comparison of data obtained through the interview process to patterns that emerged from survey responses will be helpful to ensure a systematic approach is demonstrated in the research. This method will lend credibility to any associations between theories derived from the study and the process. Coding and categorizations that result from the use of detailed and descriptive notes to communicate the findings will also benefit this study in terms of added credibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018), to add credibility to this study, this researcher will be careful to include a discussion of "negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes" (2018, p. 200).

Demonstrating saturation will also be employed to substantiate sufficient sampling and data collection to provide credibility (Charmaz, 2006).

Acknowledging limitations in a study can also safeguard authenticity, aiding in establishing trustworthiness. According to Yin (2015), researchers “should also be concerned with demonstrating the authenticity of your work” (p. 86). Yin further suggests that authenticity can include, “for example, that participants made accurate representations of themselves, or that documents and other materials were produced under knowable circumstances” (p. 86). In that case, this researcher will include an acknowledgment that interviews conducted virtually may preclude some context given the missing element of synergy that occurs in person and face-to-face. An example may consist of an absent visual cue, such as if a participant has become uneasy or nervous and begins to tap their foot or otherwise move some body part that is out of view of the camera.

### ***Dependability***

This researcher will ask respondents to review and provide feedback regarding the researcher's notes and interpretations. The researcher will share a draft of the interview guide with her colleagues for additional review to resolve redundancy or missing items. Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the instrument with the following standards:

- Do you consider any questions to be biased or leading?
- Do you trust the questions will be useful in collecting accurate qualitative data for the related research question?
- What additional questions or components do you suggest, if any?
- Do you believe the questions collect experiential data?

In addition, thematic analysis of the interview research notes will serve as a method of triangulation (Lincoln et al., 2011) to assess validity and reliability.

The researcher will demonstrate the dependability of the study through the coding process. This researcher will organize the data using clear labeling to represent each category (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). *In vivo* data collection will aid in establishing the dependability of this labeling process, as it relies on “the actual language of the participant” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 193). Consistent comparative analysis of the emerging categories and the assigned labeling is an additional feature of this study's dependability. This researcher will also rely on an intercoder agreement with a qualified colleague(s) to cross walk the assigned codes to the established list to ensure there is agreement on which codes have been used for which passages (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### ***Confirmability***

The details of the research process, including data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the data, will be documented with replication in mind. Throughout these phases of the study, the researcher will be careful to identify the steps taken and the rationale for decisions made and clearly and carefully represent the data in the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This organized approach to documentation, coding, and categorization will serve as an audit trail for future reviewers in search of additional findings.

The principal undergirding reflexive journaling will be employed to create confirmability. Reflexivity is used to identify any individual beliefs that may have incidentally affected the research (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022). This researcher will closely consider her background for potential influences on the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) (i.e., selecting the methodology, interest in the problem, analyzing the data, rendering the results, and presenting the conclusions). This researcher will include personal biases in the final report to add to the credibility and confirmability of the study (Ormrod & Leedy, 2018).

### ***Transferability***

Transferability infers that the results of a research study can be pertinent to similar situations or individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). One of the ways this researcher will seek to promote transferability is to confirm that participants have the experience to discuss the phenomenon the researcher seeks to explore (Lincoln et al., 2011). This researcher will also endeavor to enhance transferability by performing a thorough description of the research process.

### **Chapter Summary**

The goal of this chapter was to outline the qualitative methods used to answer the research questions and to understand what inspires these leaders to engage in the equipment of lay members and also to lead. This goal was achieved in three major sections of the chapter. First, the research design synopsis considered the research problem, purpose statement, research questions, and research design methodology to include purposive sampling; the setting which described the geographical location for qualified participants, the parameters for the sample size, other factors for participation to include missional ministry context, number of followers, parachurch affiliation, and a description of the virtual interview setting. Secondly, the data collection methods and instruments section describes the research process, which will include the survey instrument, interview protocol, the elicitation of participants, and steps to be taken for gathering and recording the data. Lastly, the data analysis section addressed credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability for the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

This chapter comprises four major sections, ordered in this way: Compilation Protocol and Measures, Demographics and Sample Data, Data Analysis and Findings, and Evaluation of Research design. The first section of the chapter discusses the researcher's compilation protocol and measures taken regarding collecting, recording, organizing, and processing the study data. In the second section, participant demographic and sample data are provided. The third section submits a comprehensive analysis and findings on the data acquired through the study. Finally, the fourth section concludes by assessing the strengths and weaknesses observed during the research methodology.

### **Compilation Protocol and Measures**

This section will describe the compilation protocol and measures employed for the study. Moreover, this researcher will expound upon Chapter Three regarding the collection methods undertaken to collect, record, manage, and process the data. The researcher will begin with a discussion regarding participant data collection. Each research participant was assigned a pseudonym for purposes of confidentiality.

### **Collecting the Data**

Within this section, the researcher discloses the development of the data collection process for the study. Specifically, she discusses the advancement of the research study, eliciting participants, informed consent and demographic surveys, and virtual semi-structured interviews. Phases of the study follow.



### *Advancement of the Research Study*

The researcher conducted this study following IRB procedures. This researcher utilized the IRB-approved Permission Request Template (Appendix E) and Recruitment Template:

Social Media (Appendix I). This researcher advanced the study as follows:

- Conducted Internet search to discover parachurch organizations and points of contact
- Sent permission requests to five parachurch organizations
- Recruited potential participants via email
- Provided respondents link to the demographic survey and consent form by email
- Scheduled and conducted virtual semi-structured interviews

**Eliciting Participants.** This researcher sent permission requests to points of contact for five parachurch organizations—Churches United, The Church Network (TCN), USA Churches, Believers Global Ministries, and New Beginnings Rehab—by email or direct message through the organizations' advertised social media platform. The solicitation included a request for permission to use contact information from their membership database of nondenominational ministries in the Eastern United States to recruit participants for this research. The researcher's explicit request was that they forward, by email, the Recruitment Letter (Appendix H) and Consent Form (Appendix A) to 10 ministry leaders in their database, copying the researcher. The researcher requested they provide her with five additional backup participants' names and contact information. Alternatively, for convenience, to encourage support, and if access was granted, this researcher offered to extract a sample of 10 to 15 people from the organization's list, send the Recruitment Letter and Consent Form, copying the parachurch point of contact.

This researcher sent an email requesting permission to use contact information from a nondenominational ministries membership database compiled by a university research scholar. The researcher received no response to this request. The researcher utilized contact information

obtained early in this dissertation's prospectus literature review phase to send an additional permission request.

**Informed Consent and Surveys.** At the counsel of the IRB, this researcher included a pre-survey questionnaire in determining participation eligibility based on the criteria set forth in the prospectus. This researcher provided a Microsoft Forms link to the consent form and demographic survey to participants via email. The demographic survey consisted of 28 questions.

After participants electronically signed the consent document, they were immediately and electronically routed to the online demographic survey. Clicking on the submit button at the end of the online survey electronically returned the consent form and survey responses to this researcher's email, sending a notification to the researcher of its arrival. The researcher exported the survey results, which included confirmation of the participant's informed consent response, to Microsoft Excel for analysis.

**Interviews.** The interview protocol included the five guiding research questions with three to six follow-up questions, respectively. Further, the research questions served as central or broad questions to facilitate the exploration of the phenomenon under review, while the sub-questions narrowed the focus (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 133). To support the utilization of the interview protocol, this researcher employed a panel of three independent expert panelists per IRB protocol.

The three expert panelists included Dr. Anthony Blair, president of Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown, PA; Rev. Dr. Melvin E. Jones, Board of Directors, The Church Network; and Mrs. Lisabeth Eames Gencavage, Organizational Development Consultant with conferred M.S., D.Ed. in Adult Education candidate, Penn State Harrisburg. The panelists scrutinized the

interview protocol for content and face validity to confirm that the interview questions measured the content or attributes intended for the study. The ten virtual research interviews included one bishop, one overseer with global ministries oversight, six senior pastors, one traveling evangelist, and one elder engaged in church and community service.

### **Recording the Data**

Microsoft Teams provided a transcription of the interviews as a feature of its audiovisual recording functionality. The transcription feature negated this researcher's use of the Microsoft Word dictation feature as proposed in Chapter Three, Analysis Methods. Subsequently, this researcher electronically and securely saved each participant's transcription data.

### ***Organizing and Processing the Data***

QualCoder 3.2, computer-aided data analysis software (C.A.D.A.S.) (Oun, 2014), was used to organize, manage, and analyze the interview transcriptions. The researcher followed the process of creating a project within QualCoder 3.2 (namely, CLED989\_Participant interview). This project creation process included steps to set up a file for each case (i.e., each participant) within QualCoder 3.2— add attributes or descriptive values (e.g., pseudonym, age, gender, and corresponding to alpha/numeric designators for each element).

With the cases created within QualCoder 3.2, this researcher electronically linked the saved transcript files to QualCoder 3.2 in preparation for transcript and thematic analysis. Proceeding with the file linkage to QualCoder 3.2, this researcher accessed the transcript text within QualCoder 3.2 and immersed herself in reading the transcripts on-screen. At this immersion stage, the researcher vigilantly reviewed the transcripts for meanings and patterns within the data, noting any initial thoughts or potential codes. Next, open coding or an initial pass to discover initial codes ensued. As a matter of further immersion into the data, the

researcher viewed the corresponding Microsoft Teams recorded interviews or listened to the audio, also later referring to transcription excerpts or segments of video as necessary throughout this iterative review process.

The researcher utilized features within QualCoder 3.2 and *In Vivo* coding—using the language and terminology used by the participants—to engage in inductive open coding (Ormrod & Leedy, 2018) of the transcription text. She electronically created and applied initial codes to the transcribed text representing the broad meanings and patterns observed in the dataset. While coding (highlighting with the cursor) excerpts of transcription text, the researcher leveraged the features of QualCoder 3.2 that "categorise codes into a tree-like hierarchical categorisation scheme," (Curtain, 2023), as the software applied color coding. The ability to add journal notes and memos in addition to QualCoder 3.2's hierarchical grouping system resulted in an electronic code tree (i.e., codebook).

QualCoder 3.2 systematically grouped (i.e., into categories and sub-categories) the transcribed excerpts with the associated initial codes, as applied by the researcher. Next, the researcher began a second pass through the data to compare the codes critically and arduously, using the QualCoder 3.2 drag-and-drop feature to combine codes or adjust categories according to the narrowing emergent details. Upon completing the second pass, this researcher generated a report listing the initial codes for each research question within QualCoder 3.2. She subsequently exported the initial codes report to Microsoft Excel. The researcher applied conditional formatting rules within Microsoft Excel to dedupe the list of initial codes. The researcher proceeded to format the Microsoft Excel worksheet (e.g., created columns and rows and applied font and fill formatting) for effective data analysis.

This researcher performed data management within Microsoft Excel (e.g., codes were

further modified as similarities or redundancies became more apparent) to sort the initial codes into potential themes. The researcher returned to QualCoder 3.2 to generate and export a codes-by-file matrix report to Microsoft Excel. This report included columns for the respective codes and categories for each participant that the researcher had created within QualCoder 3.2. The participants' coded comments were populated by QualCoder 3.2, respectively, to rows of the Microsoft Excel worksheet.

Table 1 illustrates that 67 initial codes were identified. After coding was complete, the list of codes was reviewed for similarities in alignment with the research questions. Further refinement of the codes (e.g., grouping, combining, reordering, omitting) began to give way to emerging themes. This researcher began a thematic analysis by reviewing the list of refined codes and the QualCoder 3.2-generated codes-by-file matrix report. The researcher carefully scrutinized the data and started the iterative process to combine or reorder transcription excerpts into coherent, meaningful, and broad themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), ensuring the integrity of the participants' responses and the guiding research questions.

**Table 1***Initial Codes*


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Action-oriented	Hermeneutics
Administrative	Homiletics
Administrative, legal, compliance	How to connect, honor, serve others
Apostolic	Imago Christi
Apostolic, kingdom connection	Impart to others
Application execution of Bible study/training	Intercessor
Basic Learning	Interpersonal capacity, good relationships
Be willing to sacrifice, suffer, 'pay the price'	Know how to pray
Bible as model, pattern	Knowledgeable
Bible college tract with goals/objectives	LeaderSHIP competence result of leader competence
Bible college/Seminary	Leadership tried by OJT
Bible study (time spent, application)	Leading with a w/board of directors
Biblical inspiration	Learned
Called by God	Learner feedback sought RE: desired outcomes
Can hear/discern Holy Spirit	Learning
Church, ceremony, sacraments	Lends experience not present within the ministry
Communicative	Local church support (specialty areas deficiencies)
Communicating the church's vision, unified	Love
Courage	Meeting community needs
Cultural competency/sensitivity	Ministerial etiquette
Degreed (extrabiblical)	Official Christian educ, training, schooling
Develops others	Outside of the church/Outreach- RQ3
Divine direction	Patience
Divine guidance	Pastoral duties/ministry
Divine, spontaneous, Holy Spirit	Performance
Duty/Responsibility	Principles of Christianity, calling, operating in the call
Dynamic leadership	Professional/Management
Empathetic	Reliance on the power of God
Evangelism	Resource for others
Exegesis	Self-Assured
Faith-full	Servanthood
Follows instructions	Spiritual development; Holy Spirit as Teacher
Global (All)	

The researcher incorporated the exercise of data management (e.g., moving, arranging, and re-arranging data) within Microsoft Excel to visualize the relationship between the various codes to discover themes (or that no apparent relationship existed). Eight themes emerged following the five research questions. Further, the researcher has displayed the code applications and corresponding codes in Table 2.

- RQ1—Applied knowledge, skills, and other characteristics are indicators of ability, and Christian leader(ship) skills are not only developed from ministerial training/service.
- RQ2— It's not what's wrong with him; It's what happened to him.
- RQ3— Where much is given (Matthew 28:18); much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48 and Values learning and development.
- RQ4—Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment and Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical.
- RQ5— Parachurches add a specialization not present within the ministry according to each ministry's unique needs.

The researcher concluded the thematic analysis with the creation of a thematic map. Pursuant to trustworthiness—credibility, validity, and transferability—, the researcher performed a secondary member check by emailing the participants the codes and emerging themes (Table 2). The email was sent with a reminder of what member checking is, as the researcher performed a member check after the interview for participant feedback, clarification, or correction. This researcher requested that the participants review and reply to observe if the essence of what they intended to share was captured

**Table 2***Research Questions, Codes, and Themes*

Research Question	Code(s)	Emergent Theme
RQ1. How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?	Performance	Theme 1: Applied knowledge, skills, and other characteristics are indicators of ability
	Professional/Management	Theme 2: Christian leadership skills are not only developed from ministerial training/service
RQ2. What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?	Communicative Empathy Imparts to others	Theme 3: It's not what's wrong with him; It's what happened to him
RQ3. What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context?	Apostolic, kingdom connection Courage Dynamic leadership Duty/Responsibility Evangelism Global (All) Imago Christi Self-Assured	Theme 4: Where much is given (Matthew 28:18); much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48
	Addressing deficient Bible basics Bible training/studies Bible as a model, pattern Disciples for Christ primary learning, development Exercise patience Invest in others Teleconference Bible Study	Theme 5: Value learning and development
RQ4. What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?	Can hear/discern Holy Spirit Divine direction Faith-full Intercessor Know how to pray Reliance on the power of God	Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment
	Cultural competency/sensitivity Interpersonal capacity, good relationships Love Servanthood	Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical
RQ5. How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?	Lends experience not present within the ministry Local church support (specialty areas, deficiencies)	Theme 8: Parachurches add a specialization not present within the ministry, according to each ministry's unique needs



For the secondary member check, this researcher allowed each participant to comment on any feedback they felt required further review for inclusion. One participant, Elayne, offered constructive feedback and suggested adding a citation for Luke 12:48 to RQ3. The researcher included the citation as recommended. Three participants responded in the affirmative, approving the codes and themes. There have been no further replies to the email for a member check. Research Questions (RQ) are displayed in Figure 1(Appendix L) as they relate to themes from the study. A discussion about each theme follows. Excerpts from participant interviews further elucidate the data.

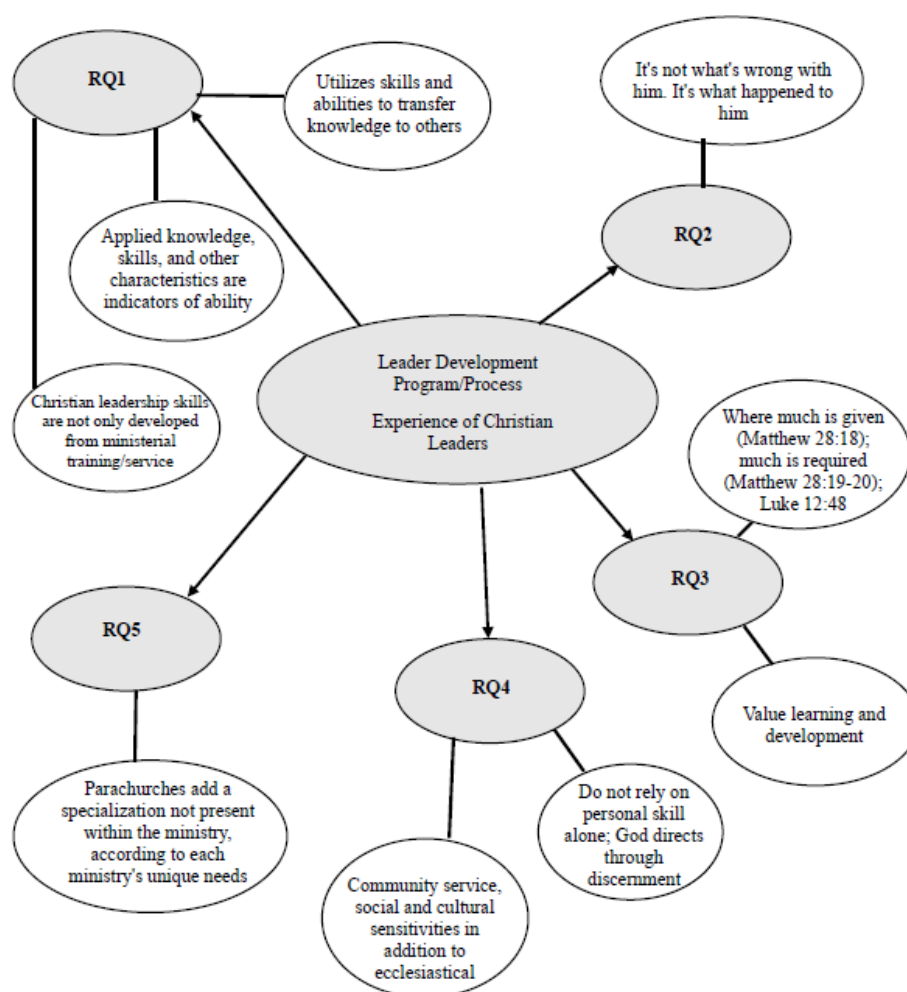


Figure 1. Thematic Map

## **Demographic and Sample Data**

This section explores the demographic and sample data for the study. The sample comprised participants who are currently active ministry leaders. The participants identified as espousing a Christian biblical theology and were leading or in a leader(ship) capacity within nondenominational and missional ministries.

### **Demographic Data**

Through the effort to elicit participants, the researcher obtained contact information for 21 potential study participants. A purposive sample of five research participants (24%) was produced (Pseudonyms: Bruce, Donald, Freeda, Horace, Worf). Also, during the confirmation process of verifying completed consent forms and surveys, this researcher received referrals from participants and one local bishop of five others that might qualify for participation, increasing the population— ( $n=21$  plus  $n=5$ ).

The researcher secured contact information from the current participants and followed up with a recruitment email to the five potential participants. A snowball sample of five (100%) resulted from those referrals (Pseudonyms: Lisette, Desiree, Fragrance, Elayne, Tory), 24% of the population. As depicted in Table 3, the overall research sample comprised 10 participants—purposive ( $n=5$ ) and snowball ( $n=5$ ). Some declined altogether ( $n=3$ ). There was no response from other potential participants ( $n=13$ ) in the population ( $n=26$ ).

**Table 3***Rate of Response and Participation*

Potential Population	Actual Population	Participants Yielded (Purposive)	Participants Yielded (Snowball)	No Response	Declined
21 Purposive	26	5	5	13	3
5 Snowball	100%	19%	19%	50%	12%

**Gender**

This researcher reviewed the demographic data for gender representation and displayed the results in Table 4 (Appendix M). Survey respondents indicating male as their gender represented 50% of the sample. Equally, at 50% were those characterized as female-gendered.

**Table 4***By Gender (n=10)*

Gender	Total	
Female	5	5
Male	50%	50%

**Age**

This researcher used age brackets to collect the data. The minimum qualifying age for participation in the study was 21 years old. Participant age distribution was between 45 years old and 75 years or older. One participant was between the ages of 45-54; three participants were in the 55-64 age bracket; four were 65-74 years of age; and two were 75 or older. The researcher has provided Table 5 (Appendix M) for review.

**Table 5***By Age Bracket (n=10)*

Age Bracket	Number	Percentage
45-54	1	10%
55-64	3	30%
65-74	5	50%
75 or older	1	10%

***Ethnicity***

Participants' ethnic backgrounds represented are depicted in Table 6 (Appendix M). Respondents characterized their ethnicity as Black (not Hispanic) ( $n=7$ ), Mixed ethnicity ( $n=2$ ), and White/Caucasian ( $n=1$ ). The researcher displayed the percentage for each characterization in Table 6.

**Table 6***By Age Ethnicity (n=10)*

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
African American	7	70%
Mixed	2	20%
White/Caucasian	1	10%

***Location***

The researcher reviewed data regarding where participants resided compared to where they served in ministry. Six participants indicated that they live and serve in ministry in Pennsylvania. Three resided and performed ministerial duties in Maryland. One lived in Florida and traveled extensively for ministry. See this data depicted in Table 7.

**Table 7***By Location (n=10)*

Residence	Number	Percentage	Same residence and ministry location	
Florida	1	10%	0	0
Maryland	3	30%	3	1
Pennsylvania	6	60%	6	1

***Education***

The researcher reviewed the level of education attained by each respondent, as shown in Table 8 (Appendix M). Participants indicated levels of completed education as follows: high school ( $n=2$ ); technical school ( $n=1$ ); matriculating ( $n=1$ ); conferred bachelor's degree ( $n=3$ ) and master's degree ( $n=2$ ); juris doctorate ( $n=1$ ).

**Table 8***By Education (n=10)*

Educational level	Number	Percentage
High School Diploma	2	20%
Technical or Skills Training	1	10%
Matriculating	1	10%
Bachelor's Degree	3	30%
Master's Degree	2	20%
Doctoral Degree	1	10%

***Years in Ministry or Leader(ship) in Respective Church or Ministry***

Demographic data was sought again regarding the average number of years participants served in their church or ministry. The researcher learned from the data that participants possessed an average length of 22 years in a ministerial or leader(ship) capacity in their church or ministry. The data shows a range of seven to 48 years in ministry or leader(ship) in the participants' respective church or ministry. Table 9 (Appendix N) presents the data.

**Table 9**

*By Years in ministry or leadership in your church or ministry (n=10)*

Years	Frequency
7	1
11	1
15	1
18	1
21	2
25	1
26	1
29	1
48	1

### ***Leader(ship) Development Program or Process***

Survey data shows that four participants described their leader(ship) development program or process (LDP/P) as Informal (church or ministry mentorship). Four more responded that their LDP/P was Formal (e.g., seminary or university); one other listed Biblical studies degree, corporate as their description. This researcher assigned it the description of Formal (e.g., seminary or university). One final respondent indicated both Informal (church or ministry mentorship) and Formal (e.g., seminary or university). Data are summarized in Table 10.

**Table 10**

*By Leadership development program or process (LDP/P) (n=10)*

Type of LDP/P	Frequency	Percentage
Informal (church or ministry mentorship)	4	40%
Hybrid (both formal, informal represented)	1	10%
Formal (e.g., seminary or university)	5	50%

## Demographic Analysis Synopsis

Examining the analysis of the demographic data from this study revealed the following according to the classifications of gender, age, ethnicity, location, and educational level. Survey respondents designated male as their gender, representing 50% of the sample. Evenly, at 50%, were those indicating as female gendered.

Next, the researcher reviewed the participants' age and ethnicity data. The participants' demographic survey responses indicated that 50%, or half of the sample, were aged between 65 and 74. The remaining distribution revealed 30% were 55-64 years old, and equally representing 10% were those aged 45-54 and 75 or older, or one participant each. Evaluating the replies corresponding to ethnicity revealed this distribution: Black ( $n=7$ , 70%), Mixed ( $n=2$ , 20%), White/Caucasian ( $n=1$ , 10%). Data by residence is presented as follows: 10% Florida ( $n=1$ ), 30% Maryland ( $n=3$ ), and 60% Pennsylvania ( $n=6$ ). For the level of education, the researcher observed that the data were: three participants (30%) had–Bachelor's; two participants (20%) had–Master's; two participants (20%) had–High school diploma and each of the following had one participant represented (10%)–Technical or Skills Training, (10%)–Doctoral, and (10%)–Matriculating (Bachelor's). Reviewing the data by years in ministry or leader(ship), the researcher disclosed this frequency: 7 years ( $n=1$ ), 11 years ( $n=1$ ), 21 years ( $n=2$ ), 25 years ( $n=1$ ), 30 years ( $n=2$ ), 40 years ( $n=1$ ), 47 years ( $n=1$ ), and 48 years ( $n=1$ ). Regarding participation in a leader(ship) development program or process, half ( $n=5$ ) of the participants indicated they took part in formal (e.g., seminary or university) developmental training. Informal (church or ministry mentorship, e.g.) training showed 40%. One participant, or 10%, indicated hybrid training.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

This researcher endeavored to present demographic data regarding the research population and answer five research questions. These five guiding research questions are related to the leader(ship) development program or process (LDP/P) experienced by the sample. The researcher will analyze objective data with appropriate tables and illustrations in this section.

This researcher consulted with Joshua Uhalt, Ph.D., for a review of the demographic data analyzed for this study. Dr. Uhalt possesses an earned Ph.D. in Psychology with a minor in Applied Statistics in addition to two M.A. degrees in Philosophy and Psychology. Dr. Uhalt is a part-time lecturer at California State University, Dominguez Hills. A summary of each research question's findings and statistical analysis also appears herein.

### **Research Question 1 (RQ1)**

The first research question asked: "How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?" The researcher designed this question to ascertain the participants' perception and context for leader(ship) competency. Therefore, this researcher posed this open-ended question without first defining competency or offering context. The researcher explained to the participants that her use of the combination 'leader(ship)' was to preclude limited responses from one vantage point or the other—leader, leader(ship), or both viewpoints were welcomed. Each research participant was assigned a pseudonym for purposes of confidentiality. The researcher observed two themes emerge from the data for RQ1—Applied knowledge, skills, and other characteristics are indicators of ability, and Christian leader(ship) skills are not only developed from ministerial training/service. She considers the data and emergent themes next.

In Table 11, the researcher displayed the results of the data analysis for RQ1. The data revealed that seven (70%) participant comments framed leader(ship) competency within a



performance context. For example, according to Freeda (2023), an indicator of leader(ship) competency is whether "they perform the job well." In another example, Lisette (2023) expressed that "being involved in actual, you know, work in the Kingdom and being involved in the ministry" is what demonstrates competency. Performing the work assigned was also posited as a measure of leader(ship) ability, "there's a lot of people that will not finish what they say when they start something, " according to Bruce.

**Table 11**

*RQ1 - How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency? (n=10)*

Thematic Trend	Theme 1	Total	Percentage
<b>Performance</b>	Applied knowledge, skills, and other characteristics are indicators of ability	7	70%

Thematic Trend	Theme 2	Total	Percentage
<b>Professional/Management</b>	Christian leadership skills are not only developed from ministerial training/service	3	30%

***Thematic Trend: Performance***

Analyzing the data further for RQ1, as it related to responses within the performance framework, the researcher considered participant responses by age, education, and years served in ministry or leader(ship) capacity. For age, the data shows that of the 70% who responded relating to performance, four were in the 65 to 74 years range, two were aged between 55 and 64 years old (20%), and one respondent (10%) was 75 years or older. There were no responses from participants in the 45-54 age range. All participant age ranges are represented. Table 12 displays the data.

**Table 12**

*RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Performance by Age (n=7)*

Age	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
45-54	0	0%
55-64	2	20%
65-74	4	40%
75 or older	1	10%

The researcher next reviewed participant education. The researcher observed an equal distribution of performance-focused responses among participants with high school (n=1), technical training (n=1), and doctoral (n=1) educations. The data showed that participants possessing a bachelor's or master's degree had the top responses. Specifically, there were two (20%) bachelors holding participants and two (20%) with masters. Table 13 illustrates the data.

**Table 13**

*RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Performance by Education (n=7)*

Education	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
Bachelor's Degree	2	20%
Master's Degree	2	20%
High School	1	10%
Technical Training	1	10%
Doctorate	1	10%
Matriculating	0	0%

As displayed in Table 14, responding participants reported their years in ministerial service or other leader(ship) capacities as ranging from 11 years to 41 or more years. The data showed that participants with 21 to 40 years of service were least likely to attribute performance as a measure of leader(ship) competency. Twenty percent of the respondents (n=2) reporting 11-20 years expressed performance as a competency component. This researcher observed that performance as a competency marker increased by 20% when participants possess over 40 years

of ministerial service.

**Table 14**

*RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Performance by Years Served in Ministry or Leadership Capacity (n=7)*

*Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
41 or more	3	30%
31 - 40	1	10%
21 - 30	1	10%
11 - 20	2	20%

*\*Least number of years participants have served is 11*

***Thematic Trend: Professional/Management***

Regarding the development of leader(ship) skills, three participants (30 %) recognized extrabiblical or professional/management experience as meaningful. For those participants, acknowledgment of the influence of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics gained through careers or other professional engagements in ministry leader(ship) was essential. For example, one or all three respondents noted people management skills, team formation experience, task coordination, and administrative and business acumen. An analytical review based on age, education, and years in ministerial service or other leader(ship) capacities follows.

Results were dispersed at 10% for those aged 65-74 years and 20% for the age bracket 55-64, as shown in Table 15. The researcher observed that participants in the age groups 45-54 and 75 or older had no response related to the professional or management theme.

**Table 15**

*RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Professional/Management by Age (n=3)*

Age	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
75 or older	0	0%
65-74	1	10%
55-64	2	20%
45-54	0	0%

The results for education were evenly distributed at 10% each across high school, matriculating, and bachelor's education levels. Technically trained, master's, and doctoral level participants did not comment expressly pertaining to this thematic trend (see Table 16)

**Table 16**

*RQ1 Responses - Thematic Trend: Professional/Management by Education (n=3)*

Education	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
High School	1	10%
Matriculating	1	10%
Bachelor's Degree	1	10%
Technical Training	0	0%
Master's Degree	0	0%
Doctorate	0	0%

Regarding years in ministerial service or leader(ship) experience, refer to Table 17. Here, the researcher observed that the two (20%) respondents who served between 41 or more years in ministry or leader(ship) considered a professional, career, or other extrabiblical leader(ship) pertinent to developing competency. One respondent (10%) with 11-20 years' experience agreed that Christian leader(ship) skills are not only produced from ministerial training or service.

**Table 17**

*RQ1 Rezponses - Thematic Trend: Professional/Management by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity (n=3)*

*Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
41 or more	2	20%
31 - 40	0	0%
21 - 30	0	0%
11 - 20	1	10%

*\*Least number of years participants have served is 11*

### **Theme 1: Applied Knowledge, Skills, Other Characteristics, and Knowledge**

**Transfer are Indicators of Ability.** The subtext associated with this theme was how effectively leaders perform within their responsibilities or agencies. Participants discussed how a leader's knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (K.S.A.O.C.s) should result in the effective execution of their mission, task, assignment, etc. The application of leader(ship) K.S.A.O.C.s as an indicator of ability resounded.

Freedra (2023) offered an example from her senior pastor role regarding the ministry's elders and aspirant leaders. Here is what she stated, "... they perform the job well; they do it in the time frame; they might do it with less supervision; they are knowledgeable about what they're supposed to do or the topic of discussion. She added, "...and if they follow my instructions well, then I believe they are very competent with what I've asked them to do." Worf (2023), a senior pastor, addressed the attitude someone shows while fulfilling their leader(ship) responsibilities. He said, "...if I'm giving you things and you keep striking out, it's not just whether you're striking out or getting it done, but what is your attitude with how you strike out or get it done." He seemed to suggest that the mannerisms displayed during ministerial or ecclesiastical duty, mainly

when not performed to the aspirant's self-imposed high standard, might be definitive of the mental command that demonstrates leader competency. Evangelist Desiree (2023) said,

I feel that the leader should be knowledgeable in being able to provide counseling direction as well as spiritual direction to help an individual. Being that most faith-based pastors are more focused on theology and teaching and the basics of praying when it comes to real-life situations, I don't think a lot of pastors are competent in that area unless they have that training.

Lisette (2023) favored on-the-job training as a measure of ability. Her feedback was, "that leader(ship) that has been tried by actual on-the-job training if you will, then you know them being involved in actual work in the Kingdom and being involved in the ministry or church or something like that." Whether or not a person finishes what they have committed to was essential to Bruce (2023). He offered this,

That's how I recognize that [the competency to get things done] in other people because there's a lot of people that will not finish what they say when they start something... and that goes with a lot of leaders that I know... but then they'll come back and try to make it look like somebody else's got a problem.

Through the lens of practicality, Donald (2023) speculated to establish his views of a competent leader. Here is Donald's (2023) account, "if you have a feeding ministry, well, are the people fed, you know, are they fed with good things? How easy is it for them to get fed...?"

Aligning with the other comments, Fragrance (2023) conveyed that people "have to show what they can do... We can recognize what they bring to the table. I guess the competency of it is how well they have done it." The final comment on the theme of applying K.S.A.O.C.s is from Elayne (2023). She commented, "How I see you perform based on the mission that has been given to you then that will tell me how skilled you are or whether we need to help to develop those skills a little bit more."

Regarding knowledge transfer as a leader(ship) competency, most participants included expressions about the transference to others knowledge gained. For example, as it pertained to

elders under her leader(ship), Freeda (2023) drew from her personal experience. She stated, "I make sure that I also get the training and development that I need and then also bring Christian leader(ship) along and provide the same training for them as well." Worf (2023) broached the idea of developing emerging leaders when he said:

Working together to carry forth the Church's vision and so forth is good. You're motivating each other. You're moving the vision of the Church forward. You're working within the congregation to find other leaders as they kind of begin showing themselves, whether they are deacons, elders, and so forth.

Lisette (2023), an overseer of international ministries, communicated her idea that a leader assumes an inherent responsibility to be competent in their knowledge of the word of God. Christ embodied the "ability to see past someone's inadequacies to their strengths" was Bruce's (2023) observation of how Christ demonstrated mentorship as a leader. Bruce (2023) commented further on the leader(ship) challenge of meeting the obligation to develop others who exhibit problematic behavioral tendencies. He referenced the shortcomings and inconsistencies of the Apostle Peter. Bruce (2023) framed Christ's loving approach toward Peter as a challenge to leaders considering the developmental needs of others who present as a challenge behaviorally but possess latent leader(ship) potential. Bruce's (2023) quip, accompanied by a change in intonation and body language, interjected a sense of humor that did not diminish the gravity of his sentiment, "Of course, He [Jesus] knew about them [inadequacies and strengths], but even so, He saw them [inadequacies and strengths], and He taught them [disciples] by example of what and who they were. I mean, you saw Peter." Bruce added, "So, if you're the leader and you see what the individual needs, then you've got to be able to speak to that individual on those terms, to bring them into leader(ship)."

The participants were collected on the idea that competency indicates that the leader should know how to cultivate Christian spiritual development in others. Donald (2023) answered

the research question with one of his own. Regarding her request for a definition of competency within a leader, Donald (2023) offered to the researcher that he would ask, "Do people get something out of their ministry."

Leader transparency and humility also arose in this part of the interview. Some participants seemed to intentionally frame teamwork as essential to achieving the effectiveness of the whole body. Therefore, another indicator of leader(ship) competency is the awareness and openness to ask for help for the greater good of the ministry team. Capturing this characteristic, Desiree (2023) commented,

If I am leading a group and I feel that I might not have the skills to do a certain task as the leader(ship) working together to build the body, the Church, and the ministry, then as a leader... a good leader would use what they have to develop the leader(ship) based on building the team...based on skills.

Desiree (2023) commented that if the required knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics (K.S.A.O.C.s) are absent from the ministry leader or team, a competent leader will ferret out resources necessary to strengthen the team. Desiree (2023) added, "It's my job to recognize that and get the necessary resources ... to build the team." Elayne (2023) encapsulated well all the comments related to the theme. Her feedback was, "When I think of leader(ship), it then means from what I've been able to learn, what I've been able to gain, the skills and the abilities that I've learned, now I have to be able to transfer that."

**Theme 2: Christian Leader(ship) Skills are Not Only Developed from Ministerial Training/Service.** Competency development is often discussed in the business sector. As it relates to ministry leader(ship), the discussions are not as common. However, the participants often referred to their competencies in terms of careers or other extrabiblical experiences to answer RQ1. Freeda (2023) offered,



From my experience at Verizon, I was in management, and also, I formed what we called a self-directed high-performance team ... so I know what it means to have a team and be a team player... which helped me also in my Christian walk with God as well. (personal communication, March 6, 2023).

Although he cautions that we ought not "bind ourselves to it to the letter," Worf (2023) referred to the literary work of Stephen Covey, his prior military experience, and "business models and how they define leader(ship)..." Addressing the systematic programmatic approach to competency development, Lisette (2023) extended that, "I taught at [school name omitted] State University for many years, and so I know about formal education and how important it is to have a syllabus and to have a systematic approach to education..." Pastor Bruce (2023) posited this,

Developing my Christian leader(ship) actually was in the secular world because God had me working as a manager in several different programs, on several different jobs where I managed people. So, He helped me understand how to manage people I work with.

Pastor Donald (2023) earned a business administration degree that, coupled with his Bible training, has undergirded his administrative competency for ministry. Evangelist Desiree (2023) has a "business background," having completed a vocational certification, owned and operated her own business, and earned appointments to seats on several community organization boards. She defined her leader(ship) competency as the knowledge, skills, abilities, and characteristics required for this experience. From Pastor Elayne (2023), this researcher received this response,

For a good many years of my life, I have been in managerial positions, and so my leader(ship) skills have not only come from, you know, the ministerial trip, if you will, but also from the secular track because I've managed people and my leader(ship), skills, have been honed over all those many years.

Pastor Tory (2023) presented this unique perspective,

I've noticed that so many people don't recognize and understand or see themselves in a leader(ship) role, and competency is buried from person to person. Some people are

competent and have competencies in raising children in the Christian community, and some others have competencies in preparing to serve others in food ministries.

## **Research Question 2 (RQ2)**

This question asked: "What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program or process?" It's not what's wrong with him; It's what happened to him is the theme aligned with RQ2. The participants provided their thoughts, as captured in the responses that follow.

### ***Theme 3: It's Not What's Wrong with Him; It's What Happened to Him***

This theme embraces the perceptions shared with the researcher about a leader's capacity to see beyond themselves and realize others' woes, viewpoints, or the value conflict can add. The participants mentioning empathy, understanding, or related concepts such as responsiveness, compassion, love, or imparting to others (all codes now combined to create this theme) in reply to RQ2 are represented herein. An objective relaying of participant feedback follows.

Prioritizing empathy, positioning himself in the capacity of one in distress, and seeing the spiritual fruit from lives that too often "people throw away the key on..." is one crucial aspect of Horace's LDP/P experience. Worf (2023) narrowed it down with levity, stating that "...one of the things was being an effective communicator; I try to make sure that what is in my head is what comes out of my mouth and going into other people's ears." Horace (2023) tearfully recalled a time before his more than 40 years of ministry when the "Spirit of the Lord" drew him "out of the world" and "had compassion and love and patience." In his walk now as a bishop, Horace (2023) recited Matthew 25:35, where Jesus says, "For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in" (Holy Bible, King James Version).

Reflecting on her time of development for street ministry in the "hard hood," Lisette (2023) talked about her time in outreach training with a former prominent Maryland advocate for the impoverished and houseless. This researcher has assigned this advocate the pseudonym Dee Hattie. Working under Dee's leader(ship), Lisette (2023) acquired, among others, the competencies of empathy, mental toughness, and fortitude to work within her ministry service. Lisette (2023) disclosed her experience during this training time:

It's a survival mentality, and you feel like you're in a war when you go there because people are cutthroat; they'll do anything to get by. This is the survival of the fittest atmosphere and mentality. So, I had to learn to deal with that right on the job, if you will.

Lisette (2023) offered many times, during the interview, her expression of gratitude for this time of training and the depth of love for people instilled in her. She counted this as one of the areas of competencies directly related to her LDP/P.

On empathy, a clear point among the respondents was that empathy requires intentional communication to have the ability to provide feedback in a way that inspires others to act. Communication involves encoding, transmission, decoding, and feedback (Sanchez, n.d.; LinkedIn, 2023). From the idea of empathy as responsiveness, Elayne (2023), a senior pastor, provided her feedback. She referred to counsel she often receives from her highly regarded spiritual mentor, "That's one of the things my mentor keeps honing in. You must be able to be a good listener, and you must be able to motivate to implement the vision."

The gospel is primarily relational and interpersonal, Donald (2023) surmises. It is essential to know "...how to share the gospel in every kind of setting. I'd say that's another competency that I've learned, he added." Donald (2023) shared that he had a propensity for shyness at the outset of his ministry and pastoral journey more than 20 years ago. Now, Donald (2023) attributes his ability to impart the gospel to others to his LDP/P experience, "It taught me

how to start with a natural conversation and move it towards the gospel." Bruce (2023) commented that his LDP/P included etiquette training for emerging ministry leaders that has been helpful in "dealing with people having to learn how to be calm when you're talking to them."

The experiences that have cultivated the competency of empathy in these participants were not isolated phenomena. Joining them is Fragrance (2023), who added, "I've learned how to be empathetic. I've learned how to, you know, place myself in the other person's shoes." Fragrance (2023) openly shared with this researcher her experience as a former substance abuser and the sometimes maltreatment of others (including members of the Church) she endured even after accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as her savior. Fragrance (2023) rounded out this theme with a perspective on empathy gained from her more than 20 years in ministry and community leader(ship), "It's not what's wrong with him; It's what happened to him."

From a different vantage point, Freeda's (2023) leader(ship) development program or process (LDP/P) has given her the tools to develop methods to increase flexibility. Practicing self-awareness to remain flexible is a competency that has helped her to see things from the other person's viewpoint. Freeda (2023) shared with this researcher that she has learned that flexibility gives way to clarity of vision and her ability to see, set, and communicate the vision and resolve conflict. Also, Freeda (2023) has used the competencies developed during her career and workplace LDP/P to build high-performance teams by finding ways to identify with others. This has led to her gaining "trust" and reciprocating "mutual respect" among those she leads and the leaders under her ministerial care.

Evangelist Desiree's (2023) comments also diverged from the others. She reflected on the aspect of her leader(ship) development process, including her period as adjutant serving high-ranking bishops and other leaders with significant ministerial responsibility. She said,

One of the things that I had to learn was just because I'm in that circle, I have not been granted privileges, as the Evangelist, to give my point of view, and these were disciplines whenever I traveled with my leader. So, a person that is being groomed for leader(ship) gotta know the competencies of being a leader or the protocols that are necessary to keep harmony and to keep things in perspective.

Also displayed in Table 18, the responses to RQ2 centered on communication represented 40% of the time. Empathy was the following most frequent response at 30%. Participants responded equally to imparting a gospel-related message, discipline, and flexibility at 10%, as competencies learned. For this sample, females (40%) were more inclined to identify empathy as a competency cultivated through LDP/P participation. Their responses spread evenly across the remaining variables, at 20% each. Male respondents reported competencies related to being communicative (sending, receiving, listening, processing, responding, etc.) at 60%. Empathy and imparting to others each achieved a 20% response rate within the male sample. Two participants moved away from the theme but responded that their LDP/P was instrumental in developing their discipline (10%) and flexibility (10%).

This researcher further recognized comments that were coded congruently with the theme (communicative, empathy, imparts to others, flexibility) were represented most frequently within the 65-74 age bracket—four times (or 40%). She further observed that this same group (65-74) has attained post-secondary or advanced levels of education—technical training ( $n=1$ ), bachelor's ( $n=1$ ), and master's ( $n=2$ ) See Table 19 for an overview.

**Table 18**

*RQ2 - What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program or process?*  
*by Code, Gender (n=10)*

Frequency by Gender and Gender %						
Thematic Trend	Frequency	Percentage	Female	Female %	Male	Male %
Communicative	4	40%	1	20%	3	60%
Empathy	3	30%	2	40%	1	20%
Impart to others	1	10%		0%	1	20%
Discipline	1	10%	1	20%		0%
Flexibility	1	10%	1	20%		0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Reviewing by code, education, and age bracket, the researcher observed that the distribution of responses is mostly even at 10% across the variables. For the code communicative, however, two participants with bachelor's degrees are in the age brackets 55-64 and 65-74. Discipline and flexibility are depicted with a distribution of 10% each. See Table 19 for an overview.

**Table 19**

*RQ2 -What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program or process? by Code, Education, Age (n=10)*

Thematic Code	Education	Age Bracket				Percentage
		45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older	
Communicative (n=4)	Bachelor's degree		1	1		20%
	Doctorate				1	10%
	High School		1			10%
Empathy (n=3)	High School				1	10%
	Master's degree			1		10%
	Technical			1		10%
Imparts to others (n=1)	Bachelor's degree	1				10%
Discipline (n=1)	Matriculating		1			10%
Flexibility (n=1)	Master's degree			1		10%
Response % by Age		10%	30%	40%	20%	100%

### Research Question 3 (RQ3)

The third research question is: "What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leader(ship) in the missional church context?" This researcher introduced this question to assess and understand the specific experience(s) (e.g., exposure, discovery, encounter) that helped the participants' development of knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics now working (or previously engaged in working) toward missional (outward focused vs. attractional) ministry.

Where much is given (Matthew 28:18), much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48 and Value learning and development were the emerging themes.

***Theme 4: Where Much is Given (Matthew 28:18); Much is Required (Matthew 28:19-20);***

***Luke 12:48***

Regarding RQ3, Table 20 overviews each theme showing the age bracket cross-analyzed with the number of years each participant has served in ministry or leader(ship) in their respective community. The distribution in Table 20 reveals an even representation across the community ministry or leader(ship) year ranges. For example, one participant is represented each year for the years ranging from 11 to 31 or more.

**Table 20**

*RQ3 - What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context? n=10*

Respondents		Age Bracket	Years in Ministry, Leadership in Your Community						
			1- 5	6- 10	11- 15	16- 20	21- 25	26- 30	31 or more
50%	Theme 4 Where much is given (Matthew 28:18); much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48 n=5	45-54				1			
		55-64			1				
		65-74					1	1	
		75 or older							1
50%	Theme 5  Learning and development: worthwhile investment n=5	45-54							
		55-64	1	1					
		65-74		1					1
		75 or older							1



The researcher observed in Table 21 (Appendix N) that respondents serving in their community for 31 or more years ( $n=3$ ) represented 30%; those serving 6 to 10 years ( $n=2$ ) or 21 to 25 years ( $n=2$ ) represented 20%, each. For the remaining years of service, relative to Table 21, the researcher observed a 10% frequency for each year from 1 year to 30 years, excluding the years range from 16 to 20 where there is no representation or 0%,

**Table 21**

*RQ3 - Yrs in Ministry, Leadership in Your Community ( $n=10$ )*

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	1	10%
6-10	2	20%
11-15	1	10%
16-20	0	0%
21-25	2	20%
26-30	1	10%
31 or more	3	30%

Related to the themes for RQ3, half, or five, of the participant responses were related to the codes that comprise the theme Where much is given (Matthew 28:18); much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48. Those codes included courage, dynamic leader(ship), sense of duty, or evangelism necessary for the establishment of an Apostolic or Kingdom effort to cultivate in others the Image of Christ. The respective average number of years in ministry, leader(ship), or membership within their community, or ministerial leader(ship) in the church is shown in Table 22 (Appendix N).

**Table 22**

**Theme 4:** *Where much is given (Matthew 28:18); much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48 (\*n=5)*

Number years served in a ministry or leadership capacity in your community		Number years as member of your community		Number years served in a ministry or leadership capacity in your church or ministry	
Average Yrs.	Years	Average Yrs.	Years	Average Yrs.	Years
	11		21		11
	21		28		18
25	25	44	35	21	21
	30		65		25
	40		69		29

*\*the same five people are depicted within each scenario*

For Horace (2023), at one point at the beginning of his ministry, he did not possess the boldness or confidence to operate fully in the ministry, "...a lack of knowing what the word really meant to you and the lack of knowing who you are in Christ and that is my goal to emphasize who we are in Christ Jesus." Now, courage has been developed as a competency within Horace. Horace (2023) emphasizes "the power that is in the word of God when you step out and do what the word of God said." He also discussed his perception that fear in the Church has caused many to be afraid to "open their mouth and talk about the gospel to somebody, to a stranger or to even the coworkers." Quoting Mark 8:38 and Jeremiah 1:8, Horace (2023) expressed this to the researcher, "The Lord has admonished us to don't be afraid of their faces. It's when we step out in the word that we see the word come into action." Called to prison ministry many years ago, Horace (2023) has grown in the courage he developed through his LDP/P, hosts a teleconference bible study, and supports local churches as needed or led.

Lisette (2023) spoke about her involvement as overseer of several international ministries and their COVID-response to moving to online ministry and outreach. Having a natural aversion

to interacting online, she stated, "I had to really have God talk to me about that, to let me know I called you to this and it's time; you've got to step up to the plate. I've poured a lot of information into you, and you have to share it with people," added Lisette. She continued, "God has pushed me to be in dynamic leader(ship)." Now, her ministry is developing the Church, bishopric, and eldership in Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, and other African regions.

Elayne (2023), a senior pastor, has a Juris doctorate. By creating an educational forum, she served the community based on her expertise (competency) in a popular subject matter. During the conference, the opportunity for the community to receive objective information was provided in response to an earlier (unrelated to Elayne's ministry) community event where the miseducation of the community on a controversial and potentially socially harmful subject matter ensued. Elayne's (2023) response was, "... I'm talking to God, and I said now I know, you educated me. I know this is not right. I know what was said is not right. I know that what I'm hearing is not right. I decided that we should do something to educate."

Concerning evangelism, Desiree (2023), a traveling evangelist, shared an encounter that helped to develop and create greater faith within her. Desiree (2023) explained to the researcher that the encounter occurred during a visit from Pennsylvania to North Carolina to see a family member. This visit led to her unexpected meeting with a woman she had not known and a medical issue with the woman's husband. Desiree (2023) recalled, "I was only supposed to be there for a weekend. I ended up being there for three months, not knowing that her husband [an atheist] was going to be hospitalized because his kidney had failed after 25 years." Although the woman befriended Desiree, she cautioned strongly that Desiree should not approach her husband with the gospel. With what this researcher would describe as exuberance, Desiree (2023) shared with the researcher how the Lord "opened a door" for her to lead the man to Christ. She added,

"When my assignment was up, [I] got back home, and about two weeks later, I got a call that he had passed away."

Bruce (2023) discussed an LDP/P experience of casually

Walking down the street... wearing a pair of shorts and a tank top...and a gentleman pulls me aside...he looked at me and said, can you pray for me?... Who did that? I didn't do that [implying this interaction was God-inspired]. He didn't know me from anybody... he wasn't seeing somebody dressed in the clothing of a minister or a pastor or anything. He saw a guy in a pair of shorts and a tank top and said, can you pray for me?"...and I did offer prayer.

That exposure, encounter, and experience for Bruce (2023) "was that God is mission minded and that he just needs someone who feels capable and able to respond in ministry in that way...there's a lot of people out there who will come and accept prayer from you."

#### ***Theme 5: Value Learning and Development***

The respective average number of years in ministry, leader(ship), or membership within their community; or ministerial leader(ship) in the church is shown for the theme Value learning and development in Table 23 (Appendix N). Responses from the other 50% of the participants relate to the codes that comprise the theme of Value learning and development. The associated codes included concepts such as addressing deficient Bible basics, Bible training/studies, Bible as a model, pattern, and investing in others.

**Table 23****Theme 5: Value learning and development** (\*n=5)

Number years served in a ministry or leadership capacity in your community		Number years as member of your community		Number years served in a ministry or leadership capacity in your church or ministry	
Average Yrs.	Years	Average Yrs.	Years	Average Yrs.	Years
	7		2		7
	7		3		15
22	3	22	7	23	21
	47		43		26
	48		55		48

*\*the same five people are depicted within each scenario*

Continual learning is invaluable for competency development. Horace (2023) has recently launched a weekly teleconference Bible study, and the feedback he has received is that "it has helped them a whole lot they can see the value of learning what the word of God is really saying to them today." For those with leader(ship) aspirations who participate in the weekly Bible study, Horace (2023) has "offered private session[s]." He shares with them how the Bible is a reliable model or pattern for daily living and learning because you can read and see that "things that were spoken of in the Bible is coming to pass today."

Framing learning and development as an investment and cause for patience in others, Freeda (2023) added to the discussion. She stated that her development program or process has helped her to

Get a better understanding... it does take time, and also you have to invest in people, and I've tried to tell my people also to invest in themselves with just buying a book, a Bible commentary, whatever the case may be.

Her comments went on to clarify that for her, the competency of patience has benefited her in ministry,

It's helped me to learn how just to take my time and really try to develop people to, first of all become a disciple for Christ... and that takes time, a whole lot of time, a lot of investment in people.

Lisette and the elders she oversees also invest their competency in training into the learning and development of emerging leaders within their ministry. Describing an area of the ministry's internal leader(ship) developmental program and process, she explained,

We have specific classes for specific ministry gifts that people are striving toward and also for ministries of helps gifts like for example, Deacon or Deaconess. Each and every one of those has a specific learning development class and we do them online virtually and we also do them in person. We have a schedule for it. We have a curriculum that we use and we've been doing a lot of training.

At Donald's (2023) (a senior pastor) church, he says, is a simple but effective leader development program based on competencies cultivated through "the basic leader(ship) course I went through..." He added this about emerging leader training at his church, "Our processes are simple, but we have a process to further develop their leader(ship) skills...I've also communicated that to people who want to learn more about leader(ship). I've done it one-on-one, and I've done it also in groups."

Senior pastor, Worf (2023), was visibly energized, through hand motions, intonation, and facial expressions, as he theorized about the importance of breaking the Bible down for others in a way that they can learn its worth beyond "just oh, what the Bible said..." or what "Pastor said." Developing others by teaching them the "why" and "what" of the Bible will help them to understand. Theorizing the word of God as meat, Worf (2023) responds to the research question further, adding, "...if I throw meat to you, you can say, 'oh, that's meat right there.'...that's not just, oh, what the pastor said."

#### Research Question 4 (RQ4)

The fourth research question is: "What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?" This researcher designed this question to explore the participants' thoughts about what K.S.A.O.Cs, gained through their leader(ship) development programs or processes, which they have found to be the most instrumental for meeting their ministry responsibilities. This researcher observed the following themes: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment and Community service and social and cultural sensitivities, in addition to ecclesiastical.

In Table 24, the researcher exhibited the results of the data analysis for RQ4. The data revealed that six (60%) participant comments outlined leader(ship) competency within the context of Spiritual reliance (Theme 6). Forty percent of the participants' comments concerned cultural competency, increasing interpersonal abilities, love, or servanthood (Theme 7).

**Table 24**

*RQ4 - What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry? (n=10)*

Thematic Trend	Theme 6	Total	Percentage
Can hear/discern Holy Spirit Divine direction Faith-full Intercessor Know how to pray Reliance on the power of God	Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment	6	60%
Thematic Trend	Theme 7	Total	Percentage
Cultural competency/sensitivity Interpersonal capacity, good relationships Love Servanthood	Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical	4	40%

Further analyzing the data related to comments within the Spiritual reliance context, this researcher considered participant responses by age, education, and years served in ministry or

leader(ship) capacity in Table 25. For age, the data shows that of the 60% who responded relating to Spiritual reliance, two were 75 years old or older, two others were in the 65 to 74 years range, one was aged between 55 and 64 years old (10%), and one additional respondent (10%) was in the 45 to 54 years bracket. All participant age ranges are represented.

**Table 25**

*RQ4 - Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment by Age (n=6)*

Age	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
75 or older	2	20%
65-74	2	20%
55-64	1	10%
45-54	1	10%

Considering education for RQ4, the data indicates that participants possessing a bachelor's or master's degree provided the most responses. Specifically, two bachelors (20%) holding participants and two (20%) with masters expressed a reliance on God to direct Spiritually through discernment as a competency marker. The researcher observed an equal distribution of comments on spiritual dependence among participants with high school ( $n=1$ ) and doctoral ( $n=1$ ) educations. There were no similar responses from participants matriculating ( $n=1$ ) or with technical training ( $n=1$ ). Table 26 (Appendix M) illustrates the data.



**Table 26**

*RQ4 - Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment by Education (n=6)*

Education	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
Bachelor's Degree	2	20%
Master's Degree	2	20%
Doctorate	1	10%
High School	1	10%
Matriculating	0	0%
Technical Training	0	0%

Presented in Table 27, responding participants reported their years in ministerial service or other leader(ship) capacities ranging from 11 years to 41 or more years. The data shows that 20% of the participants (n=2) had 41 or more years of service and were most likely to attribute reliance on Spiritual direction as an assessment of leader(ship) competency. Twenty percent (20%) of the like-minded respondents (n=2) indicated 21-30 years of ministry or leader(ship) service. At 10% (n=1) each, were respondents with 11-20- or 31-40-years' experience. This researcher also noted that Spiritual reliance as a competency indicator increased by 10% beyond 40 years of experience.

**Table 27**

*RQ4 - Theme 6: Do not rely on personal skill alone; God directs through discernment by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity (n=6)*

Frequency	*Number of Years	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
2	41 or more	20%
2	21 - 30	20%
1	11 - 20	10%
1	31 - 40	10%

*\*Least number of years participants have served is 11*

***Theme 6: Do Not Rely on Personal Skill Alone; God Directs Through Discernment***

Learning how to pray is a transferable skill. Effectual praying is a competency.

According to Bruce (2023), "one of the major things is that the individuals that are in the church need to be able to do the basics, pray... praying to the Lord and knowing how to pray to the Lord." Having a love for the word of God...really getting into the scriptures...knowing the Holy Spirit...relying on the power of God..." That's a competency that has been most advantageous for our ministry," Donald (2023) offered. He added, "... I could share the word with someone, but it's God that does the heavy lifting." Bishop Horace (2023) included this outlook on the Bible,

Well, the way it shaped me in my ministry is just to see it come to life itself, seeing the word of God come to life itself and become a reality. So...if you know it's in the word, and you get 'a know all' on the inside of you saying this is the right way to go, to try that, and you try that...and then you watch how that works, and then you put on top of that something else... the Lord says in the self-same hour he'll give you what to say.

After sharing with the researcher, a couple of testimonies about the miraculous providence of God, Elayne (2023) asserted, "You don't have to worry about whatever; we have to have faith in God that He's gonna provide if He's called us to do it, He will make provision for it." Practical wisdom from a spiritual point of view was offered by Lisette (2023), who said to make sure "that you're loving...that you're demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit in your life, that you are a loving and caring person. Because you need that as a foundation to be able to carry out the ministry ...God has a vision for the Church; every ministry or church should contribute to that vision." Freeda's (2023) thoughts were expressed as, "understanding, communicating, knowing or seeing the vision; or being a visionary... if we understand what our purpose is together, then we'll be able to work better and have better results."

About the development of leader(ship) skills, four participants (40 %) identified community service, social and cultural sensitivities, in addition to matters of the church (Theme

7) as necessary. An analytical review of the participants' age, education, and number of years in ministerial service or other leader(ship) capacities follows. On age, results are clustered in the middle ranges, 55-64 and 65-74, at 20% each. No similar comments were expressed by participants in the 45-54 or 75 or older age brackets. See Table 28 for a synopsis.

**Table 28**

*RQ4 - Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical by Age (n=4)*

Age	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
75 or older	0	0%
65-74	2	20%
55-64	2	20%
45-54	0	0%

By education, the results are evenly distributed as 10% each across the respective levels of education. The exceptions noted were due to no related comments from participants holding master's or doctoral degrees. Table 29 highlights the data.

**Table 29**

*RQ4 - Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical by Education (n=4)*

Education	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
Bachelor's Degree	1	10%
High School	1	10%
Matriculating	1	10%
Technical Training	1	10%
Doctorate	0	0%
Master's Degree	0	0%

The researcher observed that two (20%) respondents with 41 or more years in ministry or leader(ship) consider Spiritual reliance as pertinent to developing leader(ship) competency. Two other respondents (20%) in the 11–20-year range agreed. Regarding years in ministerial service

or leader(ship) experience, refer to Table 30.

**Table 30**

*RQ4 - Theme 7: Community service, social and cultural sensitivities in addition to ecclesiastical by Years Served In Ministry or Leadership Capacity (n=4)*

*Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage of total sample (n=10)
41 or more	2	20%
31 - 40	0	0%
21 - 30	0	0%
11 - 20	2	20%

*\*Least number of years participants have served is 11*

***Theme 7: Community Service and Social and Cultural Sensitivities, in Addition to Ecclesiastic***

Lisette (2023), overseer of a "multiethnic" and "diverse" ministry, offered this about sermon writing and interacting with people from all facets of life, "I had to learn...consider who your audience is...the competency of being able to speak in a vernacular that people can understand at the lowest common denominator if you will." Thinking only about the church's programming, agenda, or mission is ineffective. This paradigm formed within Lisette (2023) during her ministry in the streets of Maryland with Dee Hattie. Lisette (2023) deemed that street experience as "advantageous for our ministry" and has contributed to "learning how to be compassionate, loving people, listening to them...trying to understand where they are, meeting them where they are..."

Cultural competency came up in this researcher's interview with Fragrance (2023), whose evangelical ministry takes her to the heart of her community. There, she specializes in connecting those who need assistance and support systems while recovering and reintegrating into society after substance and/or alcohol abuse. Born out of her personal recovery and deliverance testimony, is an "Exodus ministry" and community labor of love about which

Fragrance says, "God spoke to me and said lost people matter to God ...that's how we [her ministry and the several progeny ministries] came about because there were people that were sitting in church...still sick, sick and suffering."

The expertise to practicably incorporate biblical principles into conversations or interactions to influence or impact others is how Horace's (2023) response relates to this theme. Again, the theme of "reaching people where they are" was repeated. Horace shared with this researcher several experiences, notably an interaction with a lady who was distressed about a job-related matter. In practical situations like this, Horace (2023) commented, "I have the ability to encourage them...encourage them to overlook the downfall or the negative side of something; sometimes it may look negative to us, but sometimes it's for our hope."

Continuing with practical considerations for leaders, Donald (2023) talks about some of the administrative competencies inherent to the ministry leader(ship) role. Leaders must practice critical thinking, decisiveness, adaptability, and conflict resolution competencies. Donald (2023) posited,

As a pastor, you are dealing with a lot" there are considerations about "the safety of the children... the youth...the adults...the single people... a conglomerate... you have a greater dynamic of things that you gotta think about that you gotta plan for, that you have to consider.

Counseling certification was a recurring theme among four of the participants. Pastoral counseling certification was of chief concern for most of the participants. Freeda (2023), on the matter of pastoral counseling, "There's just so much more to pastoring, and we just have to be so mindful... sometimes pastors say the word counselor but if don't have a degree or certified you just really can't say that..." In addition, Freeda, Lisette, Bruce, and Fragrance (2023) commented about a desire for certification in areas related to mental health (suicide, depression, e.g.), grief, or self-identity (e.g., LGBTQ+). Fragrance (2023) and Desiree (2023) have acquired state or

county certification related to community advocacy (prison, drug, and alcohol, e.g.). Lisette (2023) summarized this phenomenon,

You know, now we're dealing with other deep concerns with people... It's, I would say, one of the biggest issues now that most leaders are going to be faced with in the church ...that we did not have to deal with 20 or 30 or 40 years ago or 50 years ago...

### Research Question 5 (RQ5)

Research question five asked: How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leader(ship) context? The researcher observed from their responses or inability to respond that the participants had varying understandings of the term parachurch. Table 31 displays the data. Five (50%) of the participants had a clear definition of the term parachurch. Two participants (20%) were able to associate the term based on word composition (para – coming alongside and church). Three (30%) of the participants had no definition. The researcher offered this definition in that case: Parachurches come “alongside” (para is Greek) churches to provide ministries those churches cannot fulfill alone (Saunders, 2015). Parachurches do not typically meet for regular worship services, administer the edicts, or display other characteristics of the organized church. Parachurch members frequently belong to sundry churches (Erickson, 2001).

**Table 31**

*RQ5 - Theme 8: Parachurches add a specialization not present within the ministry, according to each ministry's unique needs (n=10)*

Parachurch definition	Frequency	Percentage
Clearly definitive	5	50%
No definition	3	30%
Associated with definition	2	20%

With parachurches defined, this researcher observed this theme emerge from the data for RQ5— Parachurches add a specialization not present within the ministry, according to each ministry's unique needs. Four (40%) of the participants discussed their ministerial or church association with at least one parachurch. One participant (10%) commented on the parachurch organization she leads. This researcher considers participant responses next.

Lisette (2023) described parachurches as valuable because serving in ministry in a "...complex world...you can't do everything your vision calls for without some kind of parachurch relationship...we partner to do mission outreaches with other people's organizations, and they come, and they support what we're trying to do as well." An evangelism-focused parachurch organization has been valuable in that the leader "helps train and develop my people on evangelism," added Freeda. The Church is now "energized" and actively engaging people (Freeda, 2023). Freeda stated that they also have suitable methods for following up with people they have engaged as an outgrowth of the evangelism training the parachurch provides. Donald's (2023) church has been able to expand its scope at times by enlisting a parachurch organization. He said, "That's been a very valuable relationship that has helped us accomplish ministry. It's helped us gain competency and it's helped us to minister to other people, like when we've had special events and different things like that." Elayne (2023) discussed how her ministry's connection with parachurch organizations helps increase the effectiveness and scope of their ministry outreach. Her statement was, "I think it enhances my abilities of how to reach out to people or even identifying what the needs are in the community because they do, I think, a much better job than we would do as a as our church because we're small." Distinctively, Desiree (2023) leads a parachurch ministry—an evangelistic outreach ministry. She describes how her parachurch organization adds value,

I extend my services, and I'm sent out to work hands-on within the community. [We] recruit and train volunteers. For example, I work with the Salvation Army, the American Legion, the homeless, and churches to help them with outreach efforts. Elayne finds value in partnering with a local parachurch organization due to the help it provides for "identifying what the needs are in the community. Partnering with them and doing some things benefits us, strengthens us, and connects us to other people.

### **Evaluation of the Research Design**

A qualitative phenomenological method was selected for this research study.

Phenomenological researchers engage with individuals to assess and understand their lived experiences and the meaning(s) they have assigned to a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), phenomenological research relies chiefly upon extensive "relatively unstructured" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015, p. 256) interviews (e.g., lasting 1 to 2 hours) with a small, purposive sample of participants. Interviews within a phenomenological study are typically characterized as interactive but involve the participant as the key contributor. At the same time, the researcher listens intently, noting feedback, context, and meaningful nuances such as facial expressions or voice intonation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Open-ended interview questions were used to encourage thoughtful, comprehensive responses from the participants (Patton, 2014).

In the following section, this researcher presents a reflexive exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology of this research study. A two-phase qualitative methodology was employed for this study. Phase one included an online demographic survey, and a subsequent inductive one-on-one interview comprised phase two. The researcher presents an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each phase.

### **Methodological Strengths**

The phenomenon under review within this study was the experiences of missional Christian ministry leaders after participation in a structured or unstructured leader(ship)



development program or process and their proceeding dynamic engagement in ministry. Phase 1 of the study was creating and implementing an online demographic survey. Data collected through the survey provided the researcher with a comprehensive view of the concepts, opinions, and experiences (Bhandari, 2022a) shared by the participants in phase two.

To further strengthen this study, for phase two, the researcher conducted semi-structured virtual interviews with a "small" sample of 10 participants, all with "direct experience with the phenomenon being studied" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 233). Exploring that experience allowed this researcher to discover the participants' contextual views (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). This researcher exercised bracketing and reflexive journaling (Moustakas, 1994) to help guide herself away from preconceived notions that might overshadow the experiences expressed by the participants. The exercise allowed the researcher the opportunity to transcend personal experiences, biases, etc., and was instrumental in revealing strengths and opportunities for the study. A critical strength of a qualitative research design is the emergence of rich detail (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). The individual experiences, stories, practices, positionings, and discussions (Braun & Clarke, 2013, as cited in Braun et al., 2021) of the research participants within this study have given way to such rich detail.

In RQ2 and RQ4, this researcher asked participants to share any concerns or knowledge gaps that existed after completing their leader(ship) development program or process. This inquiry resulted in additional discussion and understanding of competencies developed within or desired by the participants. Additionally, most participants commented that this type of research study or questioning promoted a paradigm shift in their ministry's learning and development efforts or design.

## Methodological Weaknesses

Regarding RQ1 (How do you define Christian leader (ship) competency?), the researcher discovered that a considerable amount of time to define competency was required for most participants. The researcher developed the question presuming participants would possess a solid definition of competency. Although thematic trends emerged, the presumption resulted in the researcher's need to provide competency examples or allow for the delay as participants retrieved an online definition.

Also, feedback was received about RQ1, sub-question 1 (Describe any Christian leader(ship) development program you participated in (e.g., informal, formal, group, self-directed, project/mission-based) that indicated to the researcher that the question needed to be focused on the participant as the learner. The question was too broad. The researcher overcame this quickly by specifying to the participant that the inquiry focused on them and would be better worded as Describe any Christian leader(ship) development program you participated in as a learner (e.g., informal, formal, group, self-directed, project/mission-based).

The researcher determined that RQ1 and RQ2 (How has your leader development program contributed to your competency definition? and What Christian leader(ship) competencies have you learned through a structured or unstructured leader development program? respectively) were worded in a manner that presumed all participants gained experiences through leader development programming. The researcher realized this during the first interview and was able to pivot to include 'or process' in the question. The change resulted in this: How has your leader development program or process contributed to your competency definition? and What Christian leader(ship) competencies have you learned through a structured

or unstructured leader development program or process? The abbreviation LDP/P was also adapted, with an explanation to the participants.

Contemplating success and failure leads to learning opportunities and discovery (Sutton, 2007). This researcher observed a missed opportunity by not intentionally designing a question asking participants to share their greatest successes or challenges. The researcher acknowledges that the study would have been further strengthened by what was an undiscovered layer of participant experience due to the lack of this line of questioning.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

In this chapter, the researcher derives conclusions from the data within this chapter. The chapter includes the purpose of the research and a listing of the research questions. In addition, the researcher presents conclusions, implications, and applications of the research, study limitations, suggestions for further research, in this order.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to assess and understand the leader competency development experience of missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

### **Research Questions**

The following Research Questions guided the data collection and analysis for this study:

**RQ1.** How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?

**RQ2.** What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?

**RQ3.** What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context?

**RQ4.** What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?

**RQ5.** How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?

### **Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications**

This section concludes the study by providing conclusions, implications, and applications. This study aimed to assess and understand the experiences had by ministry leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system. The conclusions discussed in this section emerged within a qualitative transcendental phenomenological approach to gain the essence of the participant's lived experiences (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994).

In addition to a demographic survey, data collection for this qualitative study included a semi-structured virtual interview conducted, recorded, and transcribed through Microsoft Teams (MSFT Teams). The interviews comprised open-ended questions. A sample of ten participants—purposive ( $n=5$ ) and snowballed ( $n=5$ )—answered the interview questions regarding their involvement in a leader(ship) development program or process (LDP/P). The responses related to phenomena such as the participants' observations, feelings, thoughts, opinions, memories, and reactions about the LDP/P. Procedures to document the study's various aspects utilized reflexivity for credibility and reliability. This researcher employed reflexive journaling (Moustakas, 1994) to examine how her perceptions or experiences could cause partiality during the data collection process, inadvertently affecting the research

Interview transcripts were downloaded from MSFT Teams and saved electronically. The saved transcripts were next imported to QualCoder 3.2 for *In Vivo* initial coding and categorization. An iterative process of thematic analysis and final coding followed. The researcher observed thematic trends and created corresponding themes. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain a sense of the phenomenologically of the participants' experience(s)

(Thomasson, 2017; Moustakas, 1994). Collecting the data through the demographic survey and interviews facilitated triangulation, contributing to the study's validity (Lemon & Hayes, 2020).

## **Research Conclusions**

The results of this study indicate that ministry leaders can draw effectively on formal and informal development resources to sustain their ministries. However, to stimulate future leaders' growth, this study's findings indicate that an opportunity exists. The researcher finds that an opportunity exists to equip the laity and emerging leaders more purposely by clarifying how to identify, characterize, categorize, and articulate leader(ship) competencies for incumbent leaders.

The findings from this study align with House's (1971) Path-Goal Leadership theory. On leadership approaches that effectively inspire others, House (1971) speculated that leaders should consider those they lead. Follower knowledge, skills, abilities, other characteristics (K.S.A.O.C.s), responsibilities they hold, and the degree to which they believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives and their formal authority are paramount (House, 1971). The Path-Goal Theory's consideration of the varying individual K.S.A.O.C.s differentiates it from the Trait Leadership Theory, which does not align with this research findings.

Some advantages have been gained through the Trait Leadership Theory, such as developing some benchmarks for identifying leaders and trait assessment measures used to offer information to leaders about their strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve their overall leadership effectiveness (Northouse, 2018). However, according to Northouse (2018), the trait approach is concentrated on the leader rather than the followers or situations. Complicating the trait theory further is that many theorists suggest different lists of traits, making the theory ambiguous (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

The Path-Goal leadership theory is relational. This study further aligns with House (1971) on the point that leaders who want to promote growth in others, in this study's case, for leader development, will draw from their own competency to teach others how to be interactive participants in their development (Delbecq et al., 2013; Northouse, 2019). The leader is responsible for facilitating, directing, and supporting those they lead (House, 1996; House, 1971; Northouse, 2019). The leader must hold fast to a view of the desired outcomes for the organization [relatively, the ministry] while adapting their leadership acumen to motivate followers to attain those outcomes (House, 1996; House, 1971; Northouse, 2019). The findings from this research also agree with Hellman (2014) that leaders need the ability to clear a path to learning for others.

### **Research Implications**

This section will present the implications of the research from two perspectives. Theological implications of the research will be presented, grounded in Nehemiah chapter 2 and Matthew 28:18-20. Finally, theoretical implications founded upon ideas within the literature will be included.

#### ***Theological Implications***

Wolff (2018) wisely noted leadership competency in action when recounting Nehemiah's ability to examine the Jerusalem wall, formulate a plan for its renewal, cast the vision to mobilize others, perform civil acts to restore peace and harmony and exasperate the enemies' countermeasures (*Holy Bible*, Nehemiah 2). An essential theological consequence of this study is creating the awareness required for developing leaders capable of similarly using their natural giftings, knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the Kingdom commission, according to Matthew 28:18-20. Beyond enthusiasm for God—for His mind, character, and

heart—practical Christian leader(ship) education is necessary for developing sustainable proficiencies. House (1971) included in the Path-Goal Leadership theory a consideration for individuals' ideas of their formal authority as essential to inspiring growth within them. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus announces that He has been given all the authority in Heaven and as it is on Earth. In verse 19, He empowers the disciples with that authority to '...go.' The implications of this study are that leaders can tap into that power by promoting leader(ship) competency, as observed through the participants' experiences, which is a Kingdom imperative.

The catalyst for this research study was to identify the elements for building a strong leader(ship) development competency framework. The participant experiences shared through this study add to the scaffolding necessary to erect programmatic competency development curricula and processes. Advancing the study within the participants' clear biblical context implies a sound theological foundation.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

As much as the responses to the semi-structured virtual interviews bore similarities, the researcher observed differences related to how competency development was integrated among the represented ministries. Some of the participants lead ministries within a house church, others from within a brick-and-mortar church building, and others serve in ministry within the community. None of them incorporate a comprehensive leader(ship) development program or process for emerging leaders. However, the participants shared in their theories the sentiment that competency among leaders is essential to advance the Kingdom. Their overall perceptions of competency were aligned once the researcher level set for a clear definition of competency.

When analyzing the participants' responses about what Christian leader(ship) competencies they learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured



leader(ship) development program or process, one overarching theoretical context resounded: intentionality (McIntyre & Smith, 1989; Husserl, 1969:1970). McIntyre and Smith (1989) theorized intentionality as occurring when an action is taken “with a certain “intention,” i.e., a mental state of “aiming” toward a certain state of affairs”(p. 1). This research study found that the manner in which competency was cultivated or manifested—individually or related to the ministries being served by the participants—was not often considered with intentionality (i.e., considering what makes competency what it is).

Furthermore, cognitive learning theory undergirded this research study. Aligning with intentionality, “cognitive learning theory focuses on the thought process behind the behavior” (Tyman, 2014, p. 540). Cognitive learning theory prompts a focus on the process through which learners acquire knowledge. It is concerned with the manner in which information is received, processed, and organized within existing paradigms. How information is retrieved upon recall is central to cognitive learning (“Cognitivism (psychology),” 2021, [How does learning occur?] ). This researcher finds the theories of McIntyre and Smith (1989), Husserl (1969;1971), Tyman (2014), and “Cognitivism (psychology) (2021) means for the creation of a comprehensive competency-based leader(ship) development program or process for emerging leaders.

Founded upon recurring ideas within the literature, this researcher recognizes an agreement that principally, leader(ship) competency comprises skill, ability, aptitude, agility, and temperance, to name a few. For example, Krispin (2020) evaluated Malphurs’ and Mancini’s (2004) schema for leadership development that argues for four leadership competencies as fundamental to Christian leader development—being (Christ-like character), knowing (role-based knowledge), doing (the growth of leadership skills), and feeling (managing self-awareness and others’ emotions). Implications of Malphurs’ and Mancini’s (2004) leadership schema, as

presented by Krispin (2020), for this study include informing those involved in the pedagogical development and readiness training of ministry leaders.

### **Research Applications**

This research study can be applied to the instructional design of Christian or extrabiblical leader development programs. Individuals developing competency models can submit to the insights gained from the experiences explored for this research study for clarified leader(ship) exigencies. Future researchers or academic practitioners undergoing an evaluation of leader(ship) competency could utilize this research for its reference value. Each research question is explored in this section.

#### ***RQ1 – How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?***

This researcher purposefully asked participants to answer this foundational question without first providing examples or context. The researcher wanted to discover how the participants perceived the essence of competency—the nature or significant characteristics of competency. Plainly, she wanted to assess and understand the participants’ thoughts or awareness of competency within themselves as leaders or as it related to the ministries they serve. Competency is the non-transferable combination of knowledge, skills, other characteristics, or behaviors that demonstrate one’s ability to successfully perform a certain task or role (Crabb, 1826; “Competence vs. ability,” n.d).

As it relates to RQ1, this researcher explored a Husserlian view (1969;1970) as applied to the participants in their capacity as observers of the sense of ‘competency’ (an abstract thing or substance.) Husserl (1969;1970) theorized about getting to the pure essence of something or the way people observe a thing or substance (a phenomenon). Central to Husserl’s (1969;1970) theory is intentionality—one’s conscious awareness of, thoughts about, or exercise of

interpreting (noesis) a substance or thing (noema)—phenomenology. He argued that this process of one exercising a conscious awareness of something within the actual moment (the horizon) of experiencing it is how one understands and assigns meaning to a thing. Furthermore, as qualities exist in a substance or thing, they consequently make that thing what it is, individually, by the observer (Ross, 2006; Williams, 2001). This process is called ‘intentionality’ by Husserl (1969;1970).

When analyzing the participants’ experiences—how they identified, characterized, categorized, or articulated leader(ship) competency—this researcher observed that most participants (all of whom are ministry leaders) were challenged to do so. While all participants generally understood competency, most were ambiguous about providing contextual references. This was demonstrated, in part, by the prolonged hesitations of most of the participants before they provided an answer to RQ1 as related to ministry.

Notably, five participants provided immediate contextual definitions. This researcher has observed within their demographics one terminal degree, two advanced degrees, one business degree, and one serving as the ministry leader of a parachurch organization. They each also shared extrabiblical experiences that required working knowledge of competency in leadership capacities. This researcher found within this trend that level of education or real-life experience may be linked to the individuals’ abilities to contextually describe the essence of competency.

Otherwise, the remaining participants provided a book or online dictionary, work or career-focused, biblically insular, or generally unclear definitions of competency ( $n=5$ ). This researcher recognized all of the participants’ abilities to engage in seemingly healthy ministries as evidence of their effective knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. Nevertheless,

the opportunity to support the development of competency as a conscious ministerial agenda related to equipping emerging leaders and strengthening incumbent leaders is ostensible.

During the interviews, all of the participants ( $n=10$ ) offered, often without necessarily or intentionally aligning with definitive observations of competency, descriptions of events or traits they have observed among the people they lead or through individual actions they had taken as ministerial leaders. However, as this researcher analyzed the transcripts, she was able to glean from those sometimes-fortuitous descriptions of events or traits the essence of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (K.S.A.O.C.) and assign codes accordingly. The researcher found that the participants were more inclined to express competency from within contexts such as events, actions, or behaviors.

During the iterative thematic analysis of the data, the researcher further observed the participants' responses regarding their respective calls to ministry. Participants responded individually to the call and to the responsibility as leaders accountable for the leader(ship) potential of others. However, some participant accounts indicated that they responded to the call without a personal opportunity for the intentional (Husserl, 1969;1970) establishment of the spiritual and practical scaffolding or framework required to promote, support, and sustain leader(ship) growth. Therefore, as it relates to leader(ship) competency development, this researcher asserts that a pedagogical framework focused on purposeful intentionality will likely enrich ministries similar to those represented by this sample.

***RQ2 – What Christian leader(ship) competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?***

The purpose of this question was to ascertain a participant-devised list of leader(ship) competencies coupled with participant explanations of the corresponding leader(ship) development program or process experience(s). The participants' responses to this question were thematically central to three competencies: Communicative, Empathetic, and Imparts to others.

In QualCoder 3.2, the researcher electronically and systematically assigned codes during the *In Vivo* coding process. Prior to close thematic analysis and code combinations, participant responses were dissimilar and resulted in this researcher's assignment of codes among different categories, yielding mostly one coded response per category in QualCoder 3.2. This distribution comprised codes such as exegesis, evangelism, following instructions, hermeneutics, ministerial etiquette, and patience. Through the iterative data analysis of all the codes, similarities were observed within the three codes: Communicative, Empathetic, and Imparts to others.

Once associated as a theme related to the encouragement and uplifting of others whom others cast away, the researcher found that these similarly coded responses to RQ2 emerged among 60% of the respondents. A couple of examples are included. Lissette (2023) responded that she "wanted to help people see Jesus and to learn about Jesus" as to why having the competency to perform street ministry effectively was important to her. Foundational to Lissette's (2023) leader(ship) process under the mentorship of Dee Hattie was the formation of authenticity and empathy followed by a deep love for people. Horace (2023) referred to the church-sponsored LDP/P that equipped him to be "able to pour into others." Horace also talked about being a leader and the inherent responsibility to "encourage somebody when they have a thought or a

goal in life but don't know how to go about doing it; you can become a like a Guide or a mentor.”

This researcher found these and the other responses to RQ2 and the corresponding theme to include elements related to authentic leadership. As explored in Chapter Two, “authentic leadership is a collective process created by leaders and followers” (Northouse, 2018). Additionally, Bredfeldt (2006) proposed encouragement as a competency in talking about leadership teams. Further, this researcher observed that across the codes which support the theme for RQ2 was an even distribution of responses (i.e., the same frequency of responses appears under each code). This researcher concludes that leader competencies demonstrated as communicative, empathetic, or in a manner that results in a relationship where gospel truths can be imparted do align with the theory of authentic leadership. Further, this researcher argues that spiritual and leadership growth can be cultivated within the laity or emerging leaders observing the phenomenon of authentic leadership lived out through these competencies.

***RQ3 - What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured preparatory program has been conducive to their competent employment of dynamic leadership in the missional church context?***

This question was introduced in an effort to assess and understand the individual experience(s) (e.g., exposure, breakthroughs, unexpected experience, insight) that helped the participants to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics that they currently employ (or previously engaged in) for missional (outward focused vs. attractional) ministry. Matthew 28:18-20 (also known as The Great Commission) was foundational to this question. Where much is given (Matthew 28:18), much is required (Matthew 28:19-20); Luke 12:48 and Values learning and development were the emergent themes.

Evangelist Fragrance (2023) discussed a yearlong investment of her time and commitment to a church-sponsored, extensive biblical studies program that was part of her preparation for ministry years ago, “I went through a long process to become a minister...long process.” She described the program as requiring her to “learn all the books of the scriptures and learn the information that was contained [within] them and how to rightfully divide it.” That foundational training, in addition to her completion of a community advocacy certification program through her state’s Certification Board, has been pivotal to her success as a well-networked, highly regarded, and humble community advocate and minister of the Gospel. Her influence has resulted in members of her church (up to 50 members) following her lead to prepare and deliver hundreds of care baskets and boxes filled with food essentials to families in need within their city. Faggart (2022), during a study involving the North Texas District [NTD] Council of the Assemblies of God and its churches, argued that intentional teaching on the general and specific call to ministry must be provided to assist potential ministers in realizing their call.

Lisette (2023) shared an experience also gained through a biblical study intensive, and the manifestation of that experience now benefits her in local and international outreach ministry. Elayne, Freeda, Desiree, and Tory also participated in a comprehensive ecclesiastical ministerial training school sponsored by a local church. Each one leads a ministry where they exercise the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for the successful planning, coordination, and administration of outreach—each at varying degrees.

These six examples are offered, notwithstanding the experiences shared by the remaining participants. For example, Worf (2023) also shared his experience in coordinating multifaceted community outreach. His start as a pastor came with little organizational support and less

knowledge about church operations. His LDP/P was mostly informal; however, by investing the time and a willingness to learn from others and “pay the price” of sacrifice and commitment, his ministry is progressing and has been able to serve his community. In line with Worf’s (2023) comments is Turgeon’s (2019) idea about the need to “identify the leadership skills needed to promote organizational resilience” (p. 63). Turgeon’s (2019) theory considers Christian ministry leaders’ responsibility and response-ability.

In addition to responsibility and the ability to respond, most leadership models imply authority, a particular set of characteristics, the ability to forge a path, or some other behavioral measure are the benchmarks of leadership (Northouse, 2018). Conversely, Heifetz (1994) contends from within his adaptive leadership theory that leaders engage in activities that mobilize, influence, organize, adapt, and focus the attention of others. As it pertains to RQ3 and the participant experiences, the research findings indicate the aptitude for dynamic outreaching (missional) ministry can be cultivated through learning and development. A key facet of the adaptive learning theory is embracing learning and constant growth. Further, as Heifetz (1994) and the research participants have demonstrated, adaptive leadership allows leaders to build critical thinking and problem-solving competencies. This study further finds that incorporating adaptive leadership theory elements into an LDP/P will likely yield positive ministry results.

***RQ4. What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?***

Analyzing this research question revealed that participants emphasized personal skill alone is not crucial to ministry leadership. Bruce’s (2023) experience was such that he did not learn much about discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit while growing up in church—a competency he finds advantageous as he ministers to people about unique circumstances he would only know at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Through the years, after accepting the Lord



as his personal savior at 11 years old, Bruce (2023) began to sense the Holy Spirit was speaking, but he was without understanding. Returning, as an adult, after some time apart from the church Bruce (2023) stated, “He [God] started increasing my faith more through the Holy Spirit, moving me more in faith to hear his voice better...the Bible tells us my sheep hear my voice, and I started hearing it.”

The ability to discern the power of the Holy Spirit and “Knowing the Holy Spirit, that's a competency that has been most advantageous for our ministry,” according to Donald (2023). Donald's (2023) experience also included comments from others who have stated to him that “...when you read the scripture, you put your heart and your soul into it.” Deferring to the scripture, Donald (2023) added, “It's kind of like when people listen to Jesus, and they were amazed at the authority by which he taught...I'm having a reliance on the power of God.”

Bishop Horace (2023), who is more than 75 years old and whose leader development program or process (LDP/P) has been mostly informal, has relied unequivocally for more than 40 years on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to perform the ministry to which he has been called. He talked about a time when the Holy Spirit instilled in him the courage to stand before a judge on behalf of someone relying on his spiritual guidance. Horace (2023) had been sharing with the young man many truths from the Bible. Following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Horace (2023) (who had been insecure in his early years about his eminence as a child of God) was first granted the favor of the privilege to go before the judge. While in front of the judge, Horace (2023) was granted the privilege of vowing for the young man and securing his release. Recalling the Bible account, Horace (2023) added, “It's little nuggets like that; they give you confidence or encouragement to go. I felt like Paul and Silas walking out of the prison when we got outside.”

Desiree (2023) and Fragrance (2023) serve in separate ministries dedicated to community service. They both operate out of the ecclesiastical office of the evangelist. Their work in the community is twofold—as community members and clergy. They know firsthand the nuances involved with cultural sensitivities. They both rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to accomplish their work. However, social training through state certification programs, board appointments for non-profit organizations, and affiliations with like-minded extrabiblical community partners means that their leadership experiences require capabilities beyond biblical wisdom. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shelter-in-place phenomenon, Fragrance’s (2023) community work was to assist families migrating to the United States from afar. These families needed assistance, “they wanted to know how to navigate through certain services and resources. So, the county commissioners pulled us all [certified specialists] in.” Fragrance (2023) explained to this researcher that many of these families were dealing with domestic violence, kids in the local school district, mental health and/or substance use disorder, required translation services, and more. Reading them a Bible verse alone was not going to serve them well.

Desiree (2023), a certified community outreach specialist within her prior state of residence’s Certification Board, serves in a community where English is the second language, but a lot of community services are needed. Community organizers look to Desiree’s (2023) parachurch organization to assist with volunteer coordination in addition to ministerial service. Segments of the population who are reentering society—from drug and alcohol rehab, prison, etc.—can depend on Desiree (2023) to connect them and plug them into the proper channels for support. This community work is her ministry in addition to the online Bible study and ministry programming she conducts. The LDP/P she participated in at the ecclesiastical school is

accredited for her Kingdom-minded approach to service. The capacity for leadership honed through her business ownership, community advocacy training, and business professionalism bolsters her ability to minister in and outside of the church.

This study found that missional ministers who serve in community-based ministry capacities can do so with efficacy and comprehensively. This researcher further finds through this study that a ministry LDP/P should incorporate training in areas such as organizational skills, communication, unconscious bias, and active listening in addition to biblical studies and theology. The former are some of the skillsets listed on the website for this researcher's state Certification Board as a qualification to serve in the certified capacity that Fragrance (2023) and Desiree (2023) serve or have served in within their communities. In light of this study, this researcher's position is that to aptly prepare ministry leaders, in general, for their ministerial responsibilities and for their role in developing a legacy of leaders that community service and social and cultural sensitivities must be an integral aspect of the development plan. According to Hlophe (2021), formal theological learning and development are necessary to prepare emerging leaders for effective ministry leadership (ship).

***RQ5. How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?***

This question involved an inquiry into the participants' affiliation with parachurch organizations and whether that affiliation was attributed to the operation of their identified leadership competencies. Half of the participants were aware of the parachurch concept or had some affiliation. The other half required a definition. Once the researcher provided clarification of the term, all participants aligned with parachurches as working alongside the church or ministry, adding a specialization not present within the ministry and according to each ministry's

unique needs. Saunders (2015), Wilson (2014), and Erickson (2001) support this parachurch definition. This study finds that there is no doctrine of the parachurch yet “there is a great need and opportunity for one in our own generation, Blair (2023).

### **Research Limitations**

This study was restricted to individuals who identify as Christian ministry leaders. This researcher presumed the context for competency would be better established by ministry leaders. Therefore, the study was limited by the narrow scope of a contextual lens as related to ministry and leadership.

The research sample did not include ministry leaders of solely non-traditional ministry contexts (e.g., open-air, social media, marketplace, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing). Contributions from this ministry area are vital for assessing and understanding the characteristics of missional (outreach vs. attractional) ministry. Additionally, the age brackets did not include anyone younger than 45 years of age. Perspectives from within a wider age span would enrich the data collection.

Limited knowledge about parachurches was observed during the study. Parachurch organizations usually include groups of Christians, members of the communal church, who engage in specific areas of ministry that serve or supplement the ministry of local churches" (Wolf, 2014, para. 6). The advancement of pedagogical parachurch affiliation with respect to leadership competency development programming is likely to increase the Church's ability to carry out Matthew 28:18-20 more effectively and more widely. The ability to develop a legacy of competent Christian ministry leaders relies on the furtherance of this type of review.

### Further Research

This research explored the experiences of Christian ministry leaders after their participation in a structured or unstructured leader(ship) competency development program or process and their ongoing dynamic engagement in ministry. The study provided data on how the participants identify, characterize, categorize, and articulate ministerial leader(ship) competencies. Through the study, additional considerations for exploration and further research were recognized, suggestions follow:

- First, to conduct a quantitative study of the personality and spiritual giftings assessment inherent among incumbent or emerging leaders. Data collection instruments could include pre-and post-assessments to discover participant leadership proclivities or a spiritual gift psychometric to identify the participants' Spiritual giftings (Jones-Ramsey, 2020).
- Another recommendation is to perform a 360-degree-type (Das & Panda, 2017) analysis of incumbent ministry leaders. Participating ministries could be solicited by the consent provided to the researcher to query ministry members for incumbent leader(ship) competency feedback. The results would inform the ministry of hidden areas of concern and reveal ideas for ways to engage emerging or aspirant leaders.
- Future researchers may find an exploration of the impacts of vocational workforce development principles as applied to ecclesiastical Kingdom force development add to our understanding of competency development within ministry leadership.
- One other recommendation is to use either a quantitative (e.g., psychometrics) or qualitative (e.g., case study) method to measure leaders' intelligence (e.g., emotional or social) to manage and lead others (Verlinden, 2021).
- Other quantitative research could focus on whether a relationship exists between educational or socioeconomic status and the assignment of competency development to ministerial practices.
- Further, another similarly structured (e.g., survey and interview) transcendental phenomenological study could be replicated in other areas of the country or abroad to explore whether there are similar results.
- A quantitative investigation of mentor-mentee relationships for data that may be generalized to create a more wide-ranging picture of trends or insights for the development of the laity for leadership.
- A qualitative study similar to this research (considering demographic and one-on-one interview primary data) to include perspectives that expand beyond the limitations experienced within this study. Specifically, limitations posed by the absence of the perspectives of anyone younger than 45 years of age, particularly those widely known as Gen Y (millennials), born approximately between 1980

and 1996. We see the importance of exposing younger generations to leadership with a view to Joshua, serving alongside Moses (Exod. 17:8-11; 24:12-13). Examining a similar model in the leadership competency context is suggested.

- Conducting a further study to measure the transformative effect on the laity exposed to pastoral shepherding as central to their spiritual and ministerial development. Transformational learning exercises the method of drawing on one's prior understanding to analyze new or re-formed reasoning of the meaning of one's experience (Mezirow, 2000, as cited in Marmon, 2013). That new understanding then serves as a model for future action. In the New Testament, the gospels demonstrate how Jesus, as a good Shepherd, works to build up his twelve disciples' faith, integrity, and leadership (Mt. 10:1-40) in preparation for the service of leadership (Mt. 20:28).

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Consent Form**

A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of  
 Missional Christian Leaders' Competency Development Experience:  
 Prepared to Equip the Laity

Shamekia Smith-Tucker  
 Doctoral Candidate  
 Rawlings School of Divinity  
 Liberty University

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

You are invited to participate in a research study. This research has significance for nondenominational independent Christian ministry leaders. Through competency development, ministry leaders who are equipped can exercise their knowledge, skills, and abilities within their ministries and also develop the laity. This research will help bring awareness to the effect that formal or informal leader development programs will have on the future of the Church. Sharing your experiences during your leadership development program will enable future readers and researchers to understand better what an effective leader competency development program for nontraditional nondenominational ministry leaders should entail.

To participate, you must:

- be 21 years of age or older
- have a minimum of three years of ministerial service
- identify as a ministry leader serving in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation) or communal ministerial activities (for example, open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries), not within an organized church hierarchy or denominational system
- be engaged in regular ministerial activities, convening at least monthly, and where the laity receives direction or inspiration from you as a leader
- be observed as the spiritual leader of at least two other people (i.e., looked to for spiritual counsel and clarification of biblical truths and a key contributor to the spiritual growth of two or more people)
- serve as the ministry leader where the size of the followership is no more than 250 people
- be located within the Eastern United States
- have either a formal (e.g., seminary) or informal (e.g., church mentorship program) leadership development training

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.

## **APPENDIX A (Continued)**

### **Consent Form**

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

The purpose of the study is to understand and evaluate the experiences had by nontraditional or nondenominational Christian leaders during their leadership training and how that experience influences their active engagement in ministry.

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

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

1. Participate in a 60 to 90-minute one-on-one, virtual interview with the researcher that will be audio-video recorded.
2. Provide a member check after the interview. Member checking allows the researcher to clarify any information gathered from the interview.

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

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

Society will benefit because this research will raise awareness about the implications that formal or informal leader development programs will have on the future of the Church.

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

- The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.
- Please note that I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

#### **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, faculty, and dissertation chair will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- The researcher will securely maintain hardcopy files under lock and key and within a locked private office. Passwords will protect data stored electronically. Data will be secured using software believed to be trusted to provide cyber security concerns (e.g., Microsoft Defender, BullGuard). The participant's physical location will be kept confidential. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

## APPENDIX A (Continued)

### Consent Form

- Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years. The researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

#### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. Participants who complete the one-on-one interview will have their names entered for a random drawing to receive a book related to Christian spiritual development worth approximately \$10.

#### **Is study participation voluntary?**

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

#### **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 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 the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is Shamekia Smith-Tucker. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Deidra [REDACTED].

#### **Who do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and want to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto: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.*

**APPENDIX A (Continued)**  
**Consent Form**

**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 B**

### **Demographic Survey**

A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Christian Leaders' Competency Development  
Experience: Prepared to Equip the Laity.

Shamekia Smith-Tucker, Doctoral Candidate  
Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

Welcome! You are invited to participate in a research study about leader competency development. This research has significance for nondenominational missional Christian ministry leaders. Through competency development, ministry leaders can exercise their knowledge, skills, and abilities within their ministries and develop the laity. This research will help bring awareness to the effect that formal or informal leader development programs will have on the future of the Church. Sharing your experiences during your leadership development program will enable future readers and researchers to understand better what an effective leader competency development program for nontraditional nondenominational ministry leaders should entail.

#### **To participate, you must:**

- be 21 years of age or older
- have a minimum of three years of ministerial service
- identify as a ministry leader serving in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation, house-based) or communal ministerial activities (for example, open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries), not within an organized church hierarchy or denominational system
- be engaged in regular ministerial activities, convening at least monthly, and where the laity receives direction or inspiration from you as a leader
- provide Spiritual covering for two or more followers
- serve as the ministry leader where the size of the followership is no more than 250 people
- be located within the Eastern United States
- have either a formal (e.g., seminary) or informal (e.g., church mentorship program) leadership development training

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to understand and evaluate the experiences had by nontraditional or nondenominational Christian leaders during their leadership training and how that experience influences their active engagement in ministry.

As noted in the Consent Form, taking part in this research project is voluntary. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or



**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Thank you!

**You also have the option** to [click here](#) to read and sign the consent document electronically. Once you electronically sign the consent document, you will immediately proceed to complete the online demographic survey. Clicking on the submit button at the end of the online demographic survey will return the survey to me electronically.

**Let's get started!**

**Note: If you decide to withdraw from the study, no further consent or survey responses are required. Please e-mail the researcher at [REDACTED] to notify her of your decision.**

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Pre-Survey Questionnaire**

**Please answer the following questions:**

- Are you 21 years of age or older?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Do you possess a minimum of three years of ministerial service?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Do you identify as a ministry leader serving in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation) or communal ministerial activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system? (for example, open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries)
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Have you been engaged in regular ministerial activities, convening at least monthly, and where the laity receives direction or inspiration from you as a leader?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Do at least two other people observe you as their spiritual leader? (e.g., look to you for spiritual counsel and clarification of biblical truths and a key contributor to the spiritual growth of two or more people)
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Do you (or have you) serve as the ministry leader where the size of the followership is no more than 250 people?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Is your ministry located within the Eastern United States?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- Have you participated in either a formal (e.g., seminary) or informal (e.g., church mentorship program) leadership development program?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

**General**

1. How do you describe your gender? Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your age bracket?

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55-64

☐ 65-74

☐ 75 or older

3. What is your ethnic background?

☐ African-American

☐ Asian – Eastern

☐ Asian – Indian

☐ Hispanic

☐ Mixed race

☐ Native-American

☐ White / Caucasian

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

4. What zip code are you located in?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the highest level of education you have achieved? Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify

☐ Associate degree

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Doctorate

☐ GED

☐ High School

☐ Master's degree

☐ Technical

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your marital status?

☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Separated

☐ Single

☐ Engaged

☐ Widowed

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

7. What is your employment status outside of the ministry? Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify

☐ Full-time

☐ Part-time

☐ Contract/ Temporary

☐ Unemployed

☐ Unable to work

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the level of your annual household income

☐ Less than \$25,000

☐ \$25,000 - \$50,000

☐ \$50,000 - \$100,000

☐ \$100,000 - \$200,000

☐ More than \$200,000

9. How many dependents do you have?

☐ None

☐ 1

☐ 2-3

☐ More than 4

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

10. What is your primary language? Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify

☐ English

☐ French

☐ Spanish

☐ Italian

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry**

11. Is your ministry connected with a parachurch?

Parachurches often perform essential services that churches or ministries cannot fulfill alone (e.g., food shelters (soup kitchens), food banks, homeless ministries, drug and alcohol counseling, administration services, conference planning and hosting, learning and development, or evangelical resources). Parachurches do not typically meet for regular worship services.

Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is the contact information for the parachurch organization Please include as much information as possible such as the name of the organization, address, phone number, web address, e-mail address, Facebook URL)

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**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

13. How long has your ministry been affiliated with a parachurch organization?

- ☐ up to 1 year
- ☐ 2-4 years
- ☐ 5 years or longer

14. What services does your parachurch organization provide to your ministry? Check all that apply. Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify

- ☐ Food shelter (soup kitchen)
- ☐ Foodbank
- ☐ Homeless Ministry
- ☐ Transitional housing
- ☐ Drug and Alcohol related
- ☐ Church administration (e.g., budgets, clerical)
- ☐ Leadership training
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. Describe your place of worship. Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify.

- ☐ Church building (e.g., steeple, pews, etc.)
- ☐ House church
- ☐ Community-based (e.g., storefront, shopping plaza, hotel conference room, meeting room, library, club, etc.)
- ☐ Virtual/Online
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

16. How many years have you been a member of **your church**?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

17. How many years have you been a member of **your community**?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

18. How many years have you served in a **ministry or leadership capacity**?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

19. How many years have you served in a ministry or leadership capacity **in your church or ministry**?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

20. How many years have you served in a ministry or leadership capacity **in your community**?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

21. Approximately how many hours per week do you serve your church or ministry?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

22. How would you describe the leadership competency development program you attended? Use the box marked "Other" to self-identify. Please be as detailed as possible.

☐ Formal (e.g., seminary or university)

☐ Informal (church or ministry mentorship)

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

23. Is your church or ministry service primarily volunteer or paid?

☐ Volunteer

☐ Paid

24. How many times per month do you gather to participate in ministerial activities  
(serving food, counseling, mentoring, prison or hospital visitation, e.g.)?

☐ 1 time per month

☐ 2-3 times per month

☐ 4 or more times per month

25. How many times per month do you meet to lead ministerial activities (preaching,  
teaching, open-air, e.g.)?

☐ 1 time per month

☐ 2-3 times per month

☐ 4 or more times per month

26. Does your ministry service primarily occur within your zip code or local  
community?

☐ Yes

☐ No

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

27. Approximately how many people do you regularly provide Spiritual covering for (e.g., pastoral, mentorship, prayer partnership, e.g.)?

- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5-7
- ☐ 8-10
- ☐ More than 10

28. How many regular attendees can your ministry account for? (e.g., the number of people in a congregation, the number participating in activities you lead, accompanying you in service to others, etc.)

- ☐ up to 24
- ☐ 25-49
- ☐ 50-74
- ☐ 75-99
- ☐ 100-124
- ☐ 125-149
- ☐ 150-174
- ☐ 175-199
- ☐ 200-224
- ☐ 225-249
- ☐ 250 or more

**APPENDIX B (Continued)**  
**Demographic Survey**

**Final Note and Thank you!**

**Note:** After the researcher has received the signed consent and survey responses, selected participants will receive an e-mail containing a link to schedule their one-on-one interview.

Thank you so much for your time in completing this survey. It is greatly appreciated, as your feedback will be used to create a better understanding of leader competency development experiences. This research will help bring awareness to the effect that formal or informal leader development programs will have on the future of the Church.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Interview Protocol**

☐ **RQ1.** How do you define Christian leader(ship) competency?

1. How has your leader development program contributed to your competency definition?
2. How do you recognize competency in another person?
3. Describe the differences between competency and skill.
4. What are your thoughts about competency related to Christian leader vs. Christian leadership?

☐ **RQ2.** What Christian leader(ship) competencies have you learned through a structured or unstructured leader development program?

1. Describe the leadership development program that you participated in (e.g., informal or formal, group, self-directed, project/mission-based).
2. How was it communicated to you which specific competency you would focus on for learning and development in the program?
3. Discuss the competencies you gained from that development program experience.
4. At what point during the development of a learning outcome did you typically experience the feeling of competence and confidence to meet your ministry obligations directly related to the training program?
5. Please share any concerns or knowledge gaps that existed/exist.
6. What do you value the most from that leader development experience?

**APPENDIX C (Continued)**  
**Interview Protocol**

□**RQ3.** What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured leader development program has been helpful for implementing competent dynamic leadership in the missional church context?

1. Describe a missional ministry context or event.
2. What activity(es) from your LDP helps you to identify underlying patterns that may be linked to the effectiveness of your ministry efforts? *[Interviewer's note/prompt: e.g., patterns of thinking, attitudes, or behaviors; maybe yours or those following the ministry].*
3. Tell me about a recent scenario where you identified a pattern that you could use to benefit the missional ministry. *[Interviewer's note/prompt: may have seemed insignificant at first; again, these may be patterns of thinking, attitudes, or behaviors; may be yours or of those who are following the ministry].*
4. Do you offer a learning and development process for emerging leaders in your ministry? If so, describe the process.

□**RQ4.** What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?

7. Name the three most common leader competencies demonstrated in your ministry. What is your reasoning for selecting those three?
8. In what ways were the three competencies you just shared developed in you through the leadership program you participated in?
3. In what area of ministry do you wish you had been more prepared to serve? (e.g., apostolic, preaching, evangelic, pastoral, teaching, administrative, missional, etc.)
4. Please share any concerns or knowledge gaps that existed/exist after completing your leader development program.

**APPENDIX C (Continued)**  
**Interview Protocol**

☐ **RQ5.** How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?

5. What comes to mind when you hear the term parachurch?
6. Is your church or ministry affiliated with a parachurch organization?
7. What do you feel is the primary reason for the existence of parachurches?
8. Describe how a parachurch relationship has been valuable for improving competencies relating to the environment you lead in (missional/communal, congregational, house, open air, stealth, marketplace, etc.?)

## APPENDIX D

### Expert Panel Invitation Letter

[Insert Date]

Dear Mr. [Name],

My name is Shamekia Smith-Tucker. I am a graduate student in the John W. 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. My research project is entitled: *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Christian Leaders' Competency Development Experience: Prepared to Equip the Laity*.

My research requires collaboration with an expert panel to review the interview questions proposed for my study. During the study, I will be interviewing ministry leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through traditional (e.g., leading a congregation, house church) or communal ministerial activities (e.g., open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

Will you be willing to serve on the expert panel? Your role would include reviewing the proposed interview questions, providing me feedback regarding their validity as it relates to this study, and offering your suggestions for including other questions.

I will follow up with you next week for your decision but feel free to e-mail me with a reply if you reach a decision sooner. If you accept this invitation, I will arrange a virtual meeting to occur, ideally within 72 hours of your notification of acceptance, to discuss the interview questions and receive your feedback. I expect the virtual meeting to last for 30 minutes or less.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration during this pivotal but exciting time in my doctoral studies. I look forward to speaking with you soon. I am available by e-mail at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED] or any questions about this request.

**Please only reply by e-mail to accept the request to serve on the expert panel.**

In His Service,  
Shamekia Smith-Tucker

## APPENDIX E

### Permission Request Letter – Membership List

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the John W. 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 *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Christian Leaders' Competency Development Experience: Prepared to Equip the Laity*. The purpose of my research is to understand and assess the competency development experience of ministry leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through traditional (e.g., leading a congregation, house church) or communal ministerial activities (e.g., open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

I am requesting your permission to use contact information from your membership list of ministries in the US to recruit participants for my research. Data collected during my study will be used to assess how the experiences had by the participants during formal or informal leader competency development programs have influenced these select outcome assessment criteria: engagement (dynamic), effectiveness (transactional), satisfaction (authenticity), affect (transformational), and the development of lay leaders.

#### ACTION REQUESTED

Please forward an e-mail containing **a recruitment letter and a link to an electronic consent form and demographic survey** to 10 ministry leaders on your membership list, copying me. I further request that you provide five additional backup participants' names and their contact information.

Participation in my study will include completing the attached demographic survey, a one-on-one interview, and a member check. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time. Informed consent information will be provided preceding any degree of participation.



**APPENDIX E (Continued)**  
Permission Request Letter – Membership List

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by e-mail to [REDACTED]. A permission response letter document is attached for your convenience to complete, sign, and return to me.

Sincerely,

Shamekia Smith-Tucker  
Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX F

### Permission Request Letter – Database Access

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the John W. 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 *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Christian Leaders' Competency Development Experience: Prepared to Equip the Laity*. The purpose of my research is to understand and assess the competency development experience of ministry leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through traditional (e.g., leading a congregation, house church) or communal ministerial activities (e.g., open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

I am requesting your permission to use contact information from your research database of nondenominational ministries in the United States to recruit participants for my research. Data collected during my study will be used to assess how the experiences had by the participants during formal or informal leader competency development programs have influenced these select outcome assessment criteria: engagement (dynamic), effectiveness (transactional), satisfaction (authenticity), affect (transformational), and the development of lay leaders. My specific request is for you to forward by e-mail the included Recruitment Letter and Consent Form to 10 ministry leaders in your database, copying me. I further request that you provide me with five additional backup participants' names and contact information. Alternatively, if you would find it more convenient to grant me access to the database, I will extract a purposive sample of 10 to 15 people and send the Recruitment Letter and Consent Form directly.

Participation in my study will include completing the attached demographic survey, a one-on-one interview, and a member check. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time. Informed consent information will be provided preceding any degree of participation.

**APPENDIX F (Continued)**  
Permission Request Letter - Database Access

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by e-mail to [sssmithtucker@liberty.edu](mailto:sssmithtucker@liberty.edu). A permission response letter document is attached for your convenience to complete, sign, and return to me.

Sincerely,

Shamekia Smith-Tucker  
Doctoral Candidate

**APPENDIX G**  
Permission Response Letter

[Date]

Shamekia Smith-Tucker  
Doctoral Candidate  


After carefully reviewing your research proposal entitled *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Christian Leaders' Competency Development Experience: Prepared to Equip Laity*, the following decision has been reached.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- ☐ I/We will not provide potential participant records or data to Shamekia Smith-Tucker, but I/we agree to access and utilize the records or data to forward her study information to potential participants on her behalf.
- ☐ I/We grant permission for Shamekia Smith-Tucker to access and utilize the records or data to contact potential participants to invite them to participate in her research study.
- ☐ I/We will provide access to the records or data to Shamekia Smith-Tucker and Shamekia Smith-Tucker may use the records or data to contact ministries to invite them to participate in her research study.
- ☐ I/We request a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Participant's Name  
Participant's Church Name  
Participant's Church Address  
Participant's Church/Contact Phone Number

## APPENDIX H

### Recruitment E-mail

Greetings, [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the John W. 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 *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Christian Leaders' Competency Development Experience: Prepared to Equip Laity*. The purpose of my research is to understand and assess the competency development experience of ministry leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through traditional (e.g., leading a congregation) or communal ministerial activities (e.g., open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

I am recruiting participants who

- are 21 years of age or older
- have a minimum of three years of ministerial service
- identify as a ministry leader serving in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation) or communal ministerial activities (for example, open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries) outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system
- engaged in regular ministerial activities, convening at least monthly, and where the laity receives direction or inspiration from you as a leader
- provide Spiritual covering for two or more followers
- serve as the ministry leader where the size of the followership is no more than 250 people
- are located within the Eastern United States
- participated in either a formal (e.g., seminary) or informal (e.g., church mentorship program) leadership development program

Participants in my study, if willing, will be asked to participate in a 90-minute one-on-one interview with this researcher, and provide a member check. The member check will occur after the interview. To accomplish the member check, this researcher will repeat or summarize information or responses and then question the participant to determine accuracy. Your name and other identifying information will be requested for this study, but the information will remain confidential.

**APPENDIX H (Continued)****Recruitment E-mail**

A consent document is included with this email and contains additional information about my research.

Please [click here](#) and answer the screening questions as well as read and sign the consent document electronically. Once you electronically sign the consent document, you will immediately proceed to complete the online demographic survey. Clicking on the submit button at the end of the online demographic survey will return the survey to me electronically.

Upon receipt of all signed consent documents, participants will receive an email from this researcher containing a link to schedule their one-on-one interview through Microsoft Bookings.

Participants who complete the one-on-one interview will have their names entered for a random drawing to receive a book (worth approximately \$10) related to Christian spiritual development. Participants will receive their book through the U.S. postal service [sample list of authors and titles to be included here].

Sincerely,

Shamekia Smith-Tucker  
Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX I

### Recruitment: Social Media

**ATTENTION FACEBOOK FRIENDS:** I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree at Liberty University. My research aims to understand and evaluate the experiences had by Christian leaders during their leadership training and how that experience influences their active engagement in ministry.

To participate, you must

- be 21 years of age or older
- have a minimum of three years of ministerial service
- serve in traditional (e.g., leading a congregation) **OR** communal ministerial activities (for example, open-air outreach, homeless or food shelter, transitional housing, or prison ministries), not within an organized church hierarchy or denominational system
- not be limited to thoughts that ministry settings only include leading a congregation
- be engaged in regular ministerial activities, convening at least monthly, and where the laity receives direction or inspiration from you as a leader
- provide Spiritual covering for two or more followers
- serve as the ministry leader where the size of the followership is no more than 250 people
- be located within the Eastern United States
- have either a formal (e.g., seminary) or informal (e.g., a mentorship working within the church or ministry program) leadership development program

Participants will be asked to **participate in a 90-minute one-on-one interview** with this researcher and **provide a member check**. The member check will occur after the interview. To accomplish the member check, this researcher will summarize information or responses you have given and then ask the participant to verify that the response was noted accurately. Note that your name and other identifying information will be requested for this study, but the **information will remain confidential**.

To take the survey, [click here](#).

## APPENDIX J

### Expert Panel Feedback Form - Demographic Survey and Interview Protocol

**Instructions:** Use this form during your close review of the survey and interview questions.

**Click here to complete this feedback form online, or click the checkboxes below, as applicable. Thank you for assisting with this research study.**

#### Demographic Survey

1. Rate the *face validity* of the **Demographic Survey**.

To what extent does the survey <b>appear</b> to gather data related to demographics for Christian ministry leaders and their ministry context?	Highly Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Irrelevant <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	---	---	--

Your additional feedback regarding the **face validity of the survey** is greatly appreciated:

2. Next, rate the *content validity* of the **Demographic Survey**.

To what degree does the survey <b>contain items</b> related to Christian ministry leaders and their ministry context?	Highly Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Irrelevant <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	---	---	--

Please provide additional feedback regarding the **content validity of the survey**:



## APPENDIX J\_(Continued)

### Expert Panel Feedback Form - Demographic Survey and Interview Protocol

#### Interview Questionnaire

#### 3. Rate the *face validity* of the **Interview Questionnaire**.

How well does the interview questionnaire <b>appear</b> to measure experience(s) related to a learning and development program?	Highly Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Irrelevant <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	---	---	--

Thank you for giving additional feedback in the space below about the **face validity** of the **interview questionnaire**:

#### 4. Next, rate the *content validity* of the **Interview Questionnaire**.

To what degree does the interview questionnaire <b>contain questions</b> that measure experience(s) had related to a learning and development program?	Highly Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/>	Irrelevant <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	---	---	--


**APPENDIX J\_(Continued)****Expert Panel Feedback Form - Demographic Survey and Interview Protocol**

Any additional feedback you offer about the **content validity** of the **interview questionnaire** in the space below is welcome. **Please consider:**

- Do you consider any questions to be biased or leading?
- Do you trust the questions will help collect accurate qualitative data for the related research question?
- What additional questions or components do you suggest, if any?
- Do you believe the questions collect experiential data?

## APPENDIX K

## Prospectus Defense Power Point Slides




A TRANSCENDENTAL  
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY  
OF  
CHRISTIAN LEADERS'  
COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT  
EXPERIENCE:  
PREPARED TO EQUIP THE LAITY

PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR  
CLED988: Research Methods for Christian Leadership VI  
for the Degree Doctor of Education by

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*RESEARCH PURPOSE  
STATEMENT*

The purpose of this phenomenological study will be to assess and understand the leader competency development experience of missional leaders who practice Christian biblical and theological tenets through ministerial activities outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system and their subsequent dynamic engagement in ministry.

## APPENDIX K (Continued)

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#### *RESEARCH QUESTIONS*

The following Research Questions will guide this study:

- RQ1.** How do participants define Christian leader(ship) competency?
- RQ2.** What Christian leadership competencies have participants learned through participation in either a structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program?
- RQ3.** What experience(s) from the structured or unstructured ministry preparatory program provides the participant motivation to develop others?
- RQ4.** What competencies do the participants perceive as most advantageous for their ministry?
- RQ5.** How do participating leaders describe the value of parachurch relationships for enhancing competencies pertinent to their particular leadership context?

#### *KEY TERMINOLOGY*

- **Dynamic Leadership** demonstrated when one is "fully engaged and intentional," (McFarland, 2019, para. 1)
- **Leadership** influences the actions of two or more other people, espousing Christian and biblical tenets.
- **Missional Christian Leader** is the gospel out and embodies the gospel within a specific cultural context (Wright, 2006).
- **Parachurch** organizations work alongside ministries.
- **Preparatory** means "to produce or make by combining elements; to synthesize" ("Prepare vs. Train," n.d.); "to produce make by combining elements; to synthesize" ("Prepare vs. Train," n.d.) is distinguished from training.
- **Preparedness** equated with the processes used to enhance one's readiness to respond with competence.
- **Readiness** is a component of preparedness and is associated with 'response' competent action
- **Training** means "to teach and form by practice" ("Prepare vs. Train," n.d.).

## APPENDIX K (Continued)

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#### *SIGNIFICANT ABBREVIATIONS*

American Bible Society (ABS)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.)
American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)	National Association of Evangelicals (NACE)
Faith Communities Today (FACT)	North Texas District [NTD] Council of the Assemblies of God
Harvard Business Review (HBR)	Organizational Leadership (OL)
Human Resources (HR)	U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
Jerry Falwell Library (JFL)	Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
Knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOC)	Reno Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)
Leadership Competency Scorecard (LCS)	Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
Leadership Development Plan (LDP)	Society of Professors of Christian Education (SPCE)
Liberty University (LU)	

#### *RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS*

##### **Assumptions**

- Jesus Christ's divinity and the Bible are infinite, inspired, inerrant, and infallible (Holy Bible 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Phenomenology accurately reflects intentionality and essence (Husserl, 1973; 1998; 2001; Moustakas, 1994).
- Observation of lived experiences is appropriate for qualitative study (Drummond & Höffe, 2019).
- Reflexive journaling is practical for bracketing to minimize bias (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).
- Analysis of significant statements, creating meaning units, and advancing an essence description are adequate for data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
- Some similarities among participants' characteristics may exist.

**APPENDIX K (Continued)**  
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## *RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS*

### **Delimitations**

- Ministry leaders will be included according to the Christian faith...and desire to cultivate the same in others.
- A minimum age of 21 years old and three years of ministry is required for the 10 to 15 participants,
- Traditional or communal ministerial activities outside an organized church hierarchy or denominational system will qualify for inclusion.
- Geographical location should be within the Eastern United States.
- Formal and informal ministry formation training will be acceptable.
- A transcendental phenomenological approach (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994) will guide this study.
- Trait, path-goal, adaptive, servant, and authentic reviews will ensue (House, 1971; Greenleaf et al., 2002; Northouse, 2019; George, 2021; Spears, 2021).
- Participant responses to the semi-structured interview questions
- Timeframe allotted for the completion of this research

## *POPULATION AND SAMPLE SUMMARY*

### Population

- Missional Christian ministry leaders within the Eastern United States
- Ministry is outside of an organized church hierarchy or denominational system
- Informed consent and confidentiality process

### Sample

- Purposive sampling to achieve a sample of 10 to 15 participants
- A minimum of three years in ministry
- Organization/ministry is non-denominational, with 250 or fewer followers
- Direct experience with structured or unstructured leadership preparation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018)
- Regular ministerial activities, including a plan to cultivate disciples




## APPENDIX K (Continued)

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## *SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN*

**The Research Problem**

- This research will fill a gap in the studies of the competency readiness experiences had by missional Christian leaders.



**The Research Design & Methodology**

- Qualitative study
- Purposive sampling
- Transcendental phenomenological methodology (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994)
  - Descriptive design comprising primary data collection, bracketing, thematic categorization and data analysis, triangulation and synthesis

## *PROPOSED INSTRUMENTATION*

- Data Collection Instruments:
  - Demographic survey with 20 -25 questions
  - Inductive virtual interview guide including, minimally, two central and 10 additional open-ended questions
  - Researcher, drawing inferences from the data
- Data Collection Method:
  - Participant responses gathered online via MS Forms, with automatic routing to the researcher's email
  - Data exported from MS Forms to MS Excel for data management
  - MS Bookings used to coordinate the interview scheduling
  - Virtual 1:1 meeting via MS Teams, with audiovisual recording

**APPENDIX K (Continued)**  
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## *PROPOSED STATISTICAL MEASURES AND DATA ANALYSIS*

- Data immersion
- Emergent thematic code development and utilization or "open coding" (Rubin & Babbie, 2013, p. 337)
- Whole-Part-Whole data review
  - Analyze overarching themes, then a closer focus on the datum, returning to an overview of the data to synthesize, understand, and interpret the meaning
- Manual and electronic software coding using QualCoder 3.1
- Report findings



## *VALUE OF CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH*

Considerations regarding this study include, but are not limited to:

- Responding to the need for laity development, and future vibrancy of the Church (Barna, 2020)
- Further narrowing the literature for this research problem; establishes a basis for further research (e.g., quantitative analysis)
- Informing those engaged in ministry readiness training, chiefly for missional ministers
- Providing an objective evaluation of missional ministry leaders' readiness
- Identifying vocation developmental gaps among missional ministry leaders
- Equipping incumbent ministry leaders to develop others for leadership



## APPENDIX L

Figure 1: Thematic Map

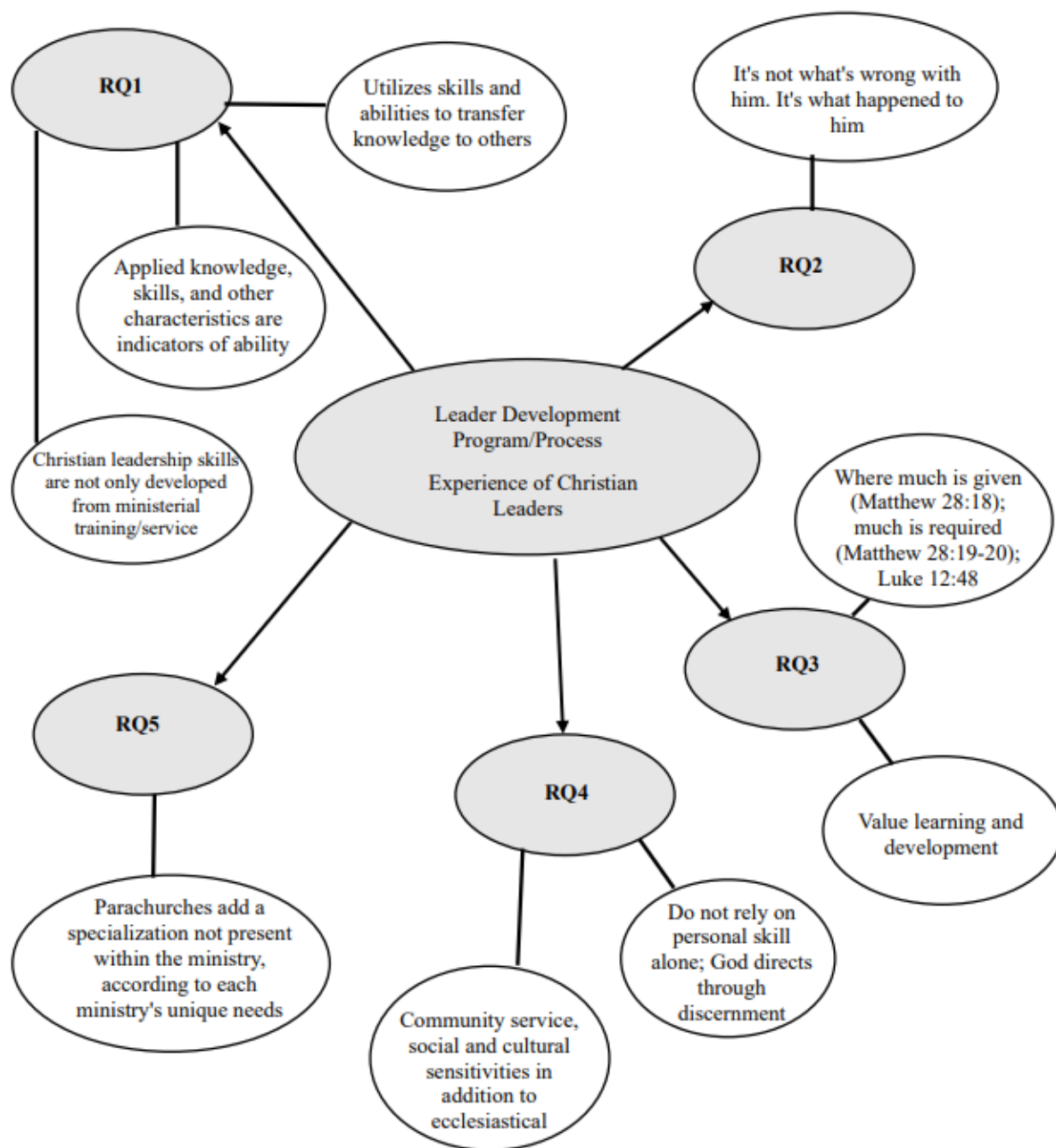


Figure 1. Thematic Map

## APPENDIX M

Table 4: Responses to Demographic Survey Questions 1, 2, 3, 5

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Bracket	Ethnicity	Education
Bruce	Male	55-64	Mixed	Bachelor's degree
Desiree	Female	55-64	African-American	Matriculating
Donald	Male	45-54	White / Caucasian	Bachelor's degree
Fragrance	Female	65-74	African-American	Technical
Freeda	Female	65-74	African-American	Master's degree
Horace	Male	75 or older	African-American	High School
Elayne	Female	75 or older	African-American	Doctorate
Lisette	Female	65-74	Mixed	Master's degree
Tory	Male	65-74	African-American	Bachelor's degree
Worf	Male	55-64	African-American	High School

## APPENDIX N

Table 4: Responses to Demographic Survey Questions 17, 18, 19, 20

How many years have you been a member of your community?	Number years have served in a ministry or leadership capacity	Number years served in a ministry or leadership capacity in your church or ministry?	How many years have you served in a ministry or leadership capacity in your community?
2	11	7	11
3	42	40	30
21	26	21	21
35 or more	20	22	30
69	44	8	25
55	48	25	48
43	26	3	40
7	35	7	21
65	47	28.5	47
28	14	11	11