

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF CHURCH-BASED BUSINESS LEADER DISCIPLESHIP
PROGRAMS AND THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Robert J. Cross

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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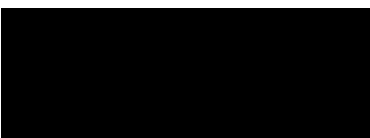
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ABSTRACT

Can ministry and business be integrated within the church so there can be a positive impact in the church and community by business leaders understanding their unique calling in furthering the gospel? This descriptive qualitative multi-case research explored whether business and ministry can be integrated through a church-based business leader discipleship programs that will result in the furthering and sharing of the gospel. Churches with a discipleship program specifically for business leaders in the church and the business leaders who participated in the programs were interviewed to determine if there is a correlation between participating in a discipleship program and sharing and furthering the gospel. The research questions sought to determine the perceived influence of the church-based business leader discipleship program on the business leaders in their calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and sharing the gospel. Data was collected from four business and ministry leaders through personal interviews. The participants also contributed documents and digital sources relating to the research. This research will hopefully be used to help motivate pastors, clergy, theologians, educators, and ministry leaders to see the need to develop and launch a church-based discipleship program, as well as for business leaders to see the benefits of joining a business leadership discipleship program.

Key Words: business, ministry, discipleship, secular-sacred divide, clergy-laity divide, gospel, entrepreneur, B4T, BAM, marketplace, discipleship, business leader

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Dedication

I dedicate this first and foremost to my Savior Jesus, who, without His leading, would have never embarked on this journey, but He gave me the strength to endure to the end. I cannot begin to express my appreciation to my wife and kids, who have sacrificed so much for me to complete this journey. I am so looking forward to seeing where we go from here.

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List of Abbreviations

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Business for Transformation (B4T)

Business as Mission (BAM)

Christian Business Men's Connection (CBMC)

Liberty University (LU)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

The question was asked, “When was the last time you heard a sermon or teaching that had anything to do with business?” The answer “never” was contemptuously the response. Unfortunately, the idea of integrating ministry and business is considered taboo from a ministry perspective. Ministry in one thing, while business is quite another. It is what Baer calls the sacred-secular dichotomy or the clergy-laity split, which means when one is called into ministry, it refers to missionary or pastoral ministry, which equates to a higher calling (2006; 2017). However, the calling into business is just as high of a calling and can be used in ways to reach people just as effectively, and in many different ways, as pastors and missionaries.

The concern is that pastors are not effectively ministering to business leaders, nor do they understand the benefits of recognizing the high calling of business leaders. As a result, many parachurch organizations have been started to minister, disciple, and utilize the giftings of business leaders to reach the lost and further the gospel at home and abroad. Miller (2006) states, “Most marketplace ministries have formed outside the authority, involvement, and impetus of the church” (p. 38). If church leaders and pastors were educated on this topic, it could have a monumental positive impact on the church and its efforts to reach the lost and meet both the spiritual and physical needs of those in the community and world. Chapters one through three of this study includes the background information, which contains the research concerns it will address, the purpose of the research, the relevant literature, the significance of the study, and the methodology used throughout the research. Chapters four and five will provide analysis, conclusions, and applications of the research.

Background to the Problem

There are three main perspectives leading to the lack of ministry and discipleship to business leaders, entrepreneurs, and potential business leaders and the separation of business from ministry. They are the secular/sacred divide or the clergy/laity divide, the fall, and a misunderstanding of success and wealth.

The Divide

The first stems from making the pastorate a profession for only those who believe they are called. Baer (2017) states:

This undivided and inclusive view of Christian living began to wane in the third century and was finally eclipsed in the early fourth century. Post-apostolic leaders emerged and began to take on a more ‘professional’ position within Christianity; this formed the wedge between the masses and a few. (p. 58)

After Constantine merged the church and state, the idea of a professional caste clergy became the norm, and the priesthood of all believers was eliminated from the masses. As a result, business became something less than holy and to be mistrusted (Baer, 2017). Augustine, in his book, *The City of God*, postulated that ordination became a rite of passage for service to Christ. As a result of this, people not ordained in the ministry were there only to be ministered to and to support the church financially (Baer, 2006).

The Fall

The second perspective is that after the fall of Adam and Eve, sin corrupted the universe. This includes business. Sin has become commonplace in the business world. One can read the headlines almost daily and observe something about how the fall has impacted the business world: greed, selfishness, theft, embezzlement, slave labor, and so on.

However, the theology of business started in the Garden even before the fall. In Genesis 1:28 and 2:15, God instructed Adam to work and keep the garden, as well as subdue it. Grudem

(2003) states, “God’s command to subdue the earth implies doing productive work to make the resources of the earth useful for themselves and others” (p. 28). In other words, the very activity God sanctified in the Garden even before the fall was intended to provide for Adam and Eve’s physical needs. Mohler (2015) points out, “According to the creation account, work, industry, and economics are all part of God’s good creation” (p. 10). As a result of this, business is often looked at in a negative manner, which can be one of the reasons why business is not a topic of focus in churches. For this reason, the proper perspective of business needs to become a focal point of discipleship once again.

Throughout Scripture, many examples of business leaders and business principles are presented. Amos and David were shepherds. Consider all the businessmen and women who were used in the building of the Tabernacle and Temple. Lydia was a merchant and a dealer of purple cloth (Acts 16:14). Peter, James, and John were fishermen. Philemon was a business leader. Luke was a physician. The main point to make about this is there is not one Scripture that condemns business in the Bible except when it is used for ungodly purposes.

Any research on business cannot leave out the one who was not only known as an apostle but also as a tentmaker. This, of course, is the apostle Paul. Acts 18:3 points out the occupation of Paul was a tentmaker. Kotter (2015) points out that this meant Paul’s business entailed manufacturing leather and woven goods, as well as buying and selling, from which one can conclude Paul was operating a very profitable business. Paul was most likely a businessman. Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 puts forth the assertion that he has a right to make a living from his missionary endeavors; however, he forgoes that right to be a tentmaker for various reasons, mainly not to have any obstacles in the way of him preaching Christ (Lohr, 2007). This is further reinforced in 1 Timothy 5:18, “For the Scripture says, *‘You shall not*

muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain, and, ‘The laborer *is* worthy of his wages’” (The New King James Bible, 1980/1982, 1 Timothy 5:18). Paul shared many other aspects of business as well.

The Scriptures put forth two primary reasons for business: provision and relationship. Second Thessalonians 3:12 directs the reader to work so they can eat their own bread. Ephesians 4:28 states one should work with one's hands to help others in need. First Corinthians 16:1-2 instructs the people in the church to give to the church. Provision through business helps the individual, others, and the continuing work of the church.

Furthermore, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 emphasizes the importance of work and business when it states, “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” Finally, Paul in Acts 20:33-35, Paul expounded on the fact he never coveted anyone’s silver or gold, and he worked to be an example, which he summed up by stating, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” These Pauline verses show Paul expected the disciples of Jesus to be engaged in work in some capacity, which resulted in monetary compensation and financial gain.

The Misunderstanding

The third perspective is that success and financial wealth are seen as a negative component of business. However, wealth itself is never condemned in the Bible. Many blurt out the infamous verse taken out of context, 1 Timothy 6:10a, “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil.*” This verse is unfairly associated with business leaders, especially successful ones, adding to the divide that exists between business and ministry.

Pastors are called to equip the entire body of Christ (Eph. 4:11:12), which includes business leaders. However, what does a pastor know about business? The reality is most business

leaders do not necessarily need business advice. What they need is a proper biblical perspective on business, which is a business leader's calling is just as important to the mission of God as of the pastor, the pastor has a biblical understanding of profit and money, and how God can use business leaders in the Kingdom of God. Most importantly, business leaders need accountability. What if, however, pastors developed a ministry in the church that was led by a businessperson who could help not only teach the proper perspective of business but also assist members in their congregation in starting a business or give business counsel to business leaders from the church and its leadership? Beckwith (2016) states, "The literature of scholars interested in the subject of the integration of faith in the marketplace provides a vast array of practical insight and theologically informed application to bridge these two worlds in the marketplace" (p. 20). Sherman (2019) points out how the Oikonomia Network is a learning community equipping future pastors to cultivate biblical wisdom when it comes to business. Although the background to the problem has been prevalent against business, the pendulum appears to be swinging in the other direction.

Statement of the Problem

Pastors are not adequately providing Christian education and discipleship in their churches as it relates to business (Baer, 2007, 2017; Knapp, 2012). As a result, business leaders are turning to parachurch organizations to meet their spiritual needs and to fulfill their calling to reach the lost through Business as Missions (BAM), Business for Transformation (B4T), Marketplace Ministry, and other organizations rather than through the church. This results in the church not effectively ministering to the needs of business leaders with biblically based teaching, as well as limiting the church's effectiveness in fulfilling its Great Commission mandate. Furthermore, the majority of parachurch organizations have as their focus underdeveloped

nations. Thus, the emphasis is considered to be on foreign mission fields rather than the local community the church resides in.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative multi-case study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018) of church-based business leader discipleship programs was to determine if there is a reciprocal influence of the programs, as perceived by pastors, church leaders, and business leader participants, with regard to sharing and furthering the gospel across five themes: calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and business involvement. Participants included in this study were those who implemented, led, or participated in a church-based discipleship program for business leaders or potential business leaders. Assessments entailed interviews to identify perceived program influence on business leaders, as evidenced by sharing and furthering the gospel through business leaders and their businesses.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to the business leaders viewing their vocation as a calling that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 2: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders spiritual formation, which has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 3: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to church growth from sharing the gospel?

RQ 4: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders local community involvement that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 5: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had in furthering the gospel through the business leader and their business?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

1. The participants, as evangelical pastors, church leaders, or business leaders of conservative churches, hold that the Great Commission has been given as the basis of their church's mission.
2. The church and business leaders were actively involved in reaching the lost, whether locally or abroad, with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. The participants have implemented a Christian education or discipleship program that directly targets business leaders within their church.
4. The business leaders were or are actively involved in the discipleship program.

Research Delimitations

1. This research was delimited to ministry leaders or pastors who have led or lead a church-based business leader discipleship program and who would have knowledge about business leaders and the outcomes the research is targeting.
2. The research was delimited to business leaders who are business owners, entrepreneurs, or executives who have participated in a church-based business leader discipleship program who would be able to speak directly concerning the research topic.
3. The focus of the study was delimited to the perceptions of ministry and business leaders as it relates to the five research questions being explored in the research.
4. This research is not an evaluation of any of the businesses or the churches represented in the research.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and phrases were used in this study. When used, these terms and phrases will be defined as listed below.

1. *Business as Mission* (BAM): Refers to a for-profit commercial business venture that is Christian led, intentionally devoted to being used as an instrument of God's mission to the world, and is operated in a cross-cultural environment, either domestically or internationally.
2. *Business for Transformation* (B4T): Has as its goal to transform cultures and society through for-profit business ventures.

3. *Business Leader*: Refers to business owners, entrepreneurs, or those who hold prominent positions of influence in business, such as CEOs, CFOs, COOs, or other higher management positions.
4. *Business Leaders Discipleship Program*: Refers to the discipleship program that exists in the church, which is specifically geared towards business leaders, entrepreneurs, or those desiring to go into business to help them in their calling, spiritual formation, community involvement, and in using their business as an avenue to share and further the gospel.
5. *Calling*: Refers to ordinary tasks and roles that people fill in the world where people find themselves as part of God's design for their lives. For this research, it refers specifically to business leaders and entrepreneurs.
6. *Church Leader*: Refers to a person who leads a ministry but is not considered a pastor nor on the pastoral team. This study will be limited to a person leading the discipleship program for business leaders who is not a pastor or considered pastoral staff.
7. *Community Involvement*: Refers to the business leader who uses their business as an avenue to get involved in the community through activities and events to share and further the gospel.
8. *Evangelical*: Holds the basic tenants of the Christian faith, such as the Trinity; God exists in three persons as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Jesus Christ was born from the Virgin Mary, and He died and rose physically for the forgiveness of sins to those who put their trust in Him. Jesus will return bodily at His second coming, and those who put their trust in him will spend eternity in heaven, while those who reject His free gift of salvation will spend eternity separated from God in Hell.
9. *Furtherance of the Gospel*: Refers to any opportunities the business leaders have had to be a witness for Christ in any capacity and environment. An example might be having a Scripture printed on a business brochure.
10. *Marketplace Ministry*: The directing of evangelism and other Christian activities toward the secular marketplace, which is primarily focused on local communities.
11. *Microeconomic Development*: Refers to those seeking to help the world's poorest countries through job creation and giving the ability to earn a viable and sustainable income by providing loans for business start-ups in primarily foreign underdeveloped countries.
12. *Pastor*: Refers to a person who is ordained and either is leading a church or is considered to be pastoral staff.

13. *Sharing the Gospel*: Refers to opportunities for business leaders to share their faith with unbelievers about Jesus Christ and a person's need for salvation through Jesus Christ. In the context of this research, it refers specifically to the opportunities for the business leader to share their faith with fellow employees, clients, or other business associates or contacts.
14. *Spiritual Formation*: The ongoing process of the triune God transforming the believer's life and character toward the life and character of Jesus Christ—accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community (Pettit, 2008, p. 24).
15. *Tentmaker*: Refers prominently to those who find employment in a cross-cultural context for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

Significance of this Study

There is a significant amount of research pointing to the success of BAM, B4T, microeconomic development, and tentmaking as it relates to foreign missionary efforts (Johnson & Rundle, 2006; Lai, 2015). Despite the clear evidence that discipleship specifically for business leaders works, it does not appear that research is paying attention to it. There is a significant gap in research related to the integration of church and business and its perceived influence on business leaders, entrepreneurs, the church, and the local community with respect to furthering the gospel. However, the hope is that this research will help pastors, clergy, and ministry leaders understand the need for and potential of Christian education and discipleship to local business leaders to support local business leaders in understanding their calling to be business leaders is just as important and needed in the church as full-time ministers. Secondly, pastors, clergy, and ministry leaders could use this research to implement ministry to help business leaders engage in BAM, B4T, and marketplace ministry to further the gospel and grow the Kingdom of God in the community where the church is located.

Summary of the Design

This is a descriptive multi-case qualitative research of church-based discipleship programs designed for business leaders that are multi-method in focus in its approach involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Thus, informants for this study included pastors, church leaders, and business leaders who were actively participating in a discipleship program for business leaders in their churches. From this sample, questions were designed to extract the perceived influence of such discipleship and its perceived influence on the business leaders themselves, the influence on the church, the influence on the community, and the influence on the church's missionary endeavors as it relates to sharing the gospel. Instruments used were personal open-ended, non-structured interviews and document and digital retrieval. According to qualitative protocol (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the researcher coded and analyzed the data that produced emerging themes and drew conclusions from the research data.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

When one thinks of business and ministry, they are often categorized as two separate endeavors. However, in God's economy, business is just as important as ministry, and both ventures require the call of God. Businesses run by believers are necessary for many reasons, such as providing jobs, generating profits for the purpose of supporting the church and ministry, alleviating poverty, and so on. Rundle (2009) addresses a problem he refers to as the spiritual-vocational hierarchy. What this means is that ministry calling is believed to be the highest calling one can attain and that only those who are called are to be in full-time vocational ministry (Rundle, 2009; Rundle & Steffen, 2011; Pearcey, 2005). However, according to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:1, Paul urges all believers to live a life worthy of the calling, meaning vocation, they have received. Baer (2006) states, "Applied correctly, this verse speaks to all believers—not just ministers and missionaries—and tells them that God has called them all. God has not called some and left others uncalled" (p. 16). The application of this verse is to understand when it comes to one being called by God, God has called some to full-time vocational ministry and others to full-time Christian business or to work in the marketplace. Furthermore, whether one is called to full-time ministry or full-time business, they both should be regarded as high and holy callings needed to further the gospel effectively.

Duzer (2010) postulates business matters to God. He then points out business is honorable work that carries a two-fold mission for the businessman and businesswoman, which is to provide meaningful and creative work for others and provide goods and services that help others flourish (Duzer, 2010). Many businesspeople do not see their business as their calling to further the Kingdom of God. The thinking of many Christians in business and the marketplace is

their lives are compartmentalized. One compartment is their business, and the other is their ministry, and to intersect them is frowned upon. However, this should not be the case.

The research studied pastors who have a ministry in their church, specifically targeting those reaching out to and discipling business leaders to understand how they operate their ministry and to determine its perceived effectiveness on the business leaders individually, on the church as a whole, and the community impact. The hope of this research is to inform all those in Christian leadership, education, business, and ministry as to the importance of a call to discipleship in vocational contexts. Secondly, pastors, clergy, seminary teachers, theologians, and ministry leaders will use this research to motivate them to teach and implement ministry in churches to help business leaders engage in marketplace ministry to further the gospel and grow the Kingdom of God.

The foundation for this to happen begins with a theological and theoretical understanding of the topic. Both theological and theoretical understandings will show the importance of each as it relates to pastors, clergy, ministry leaders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace.

Theological Framework for the Study

Robert Wuthnow points out the enormity of the problem in a poll he took. Wuthnow (1994) states, “Ninety percent of the respondents reported that they have never heard a sermon relating to faith and employment” (pp. 55–56). Several other biblical researchers and authors speak to the many misconceptions that exist regarding work, business, the marketplace, wealth, profit, success, and other terms associated with such ventures (Duzer, 2010; Grudem, 2003; Nash & McLennan). The result is Christians will rarely hear or learn much about these topics in church.

Theology related to work and business exists in the Bible, although the statistics point to a sad reality that it is not a topic often discussed in the church and from the pulpit.

Furthermore, there has been what is referred to as the sacred/secular divide or the clergy/laity split that has existed throughout much of church history, which means when one is called into full-time ministry, it is seen or considered a higher calling from God than into the business world or marketplace (Pearcey, 2005; Rundle & Steffen, 2011; Baer, 2006). However, the calling into business is just as high of a calling and can be used in ways to reach people just as effectively as those called into fulltime ministry (Stevens, 1999; Johnson, 2009; Pearcey, 2005; Knapp, 2012). To make this argument, one must show there is a biblical, theological basis for business, work, marketplace ministry, profit, wealth, and so on while also refuting and dispelling the misconceptions, especially the sacred/secular divide. If this can be accomplished, this becomes the starting point for introducing more attention to the topic. This will also support arguments that business and ministry can be integrated for the furtherance of the Gospel. Developing a theological basis is imperative to show that this topic has a place in the church today. It is not a topic to be compartmentalized apart from the church.

Creation

The starting point for all Judeo-Christian theology finds its roots in the book of Genesis. The theology of business, work, and marketplace ministry also finds its roots in the book of Genesis and in the creation itself. Bergsma (2018) states, “The Hebrew Bible presents the one creator as a God who Himself works, thus setting an example for humankind who bear His image” (p. 13). One should thus conclude that work and business are divine actions. Doty (2011), who wrote *Eden’s Bridge: The Marketplace in Creation and Mission*, develops this thought extensively as he details how each verse in Genesis 1-2 points to God as a worker and

sets up the Garden of Eve as a place to thrive spiritually and economically. He states, “In the Garden, God created the productive, life-sustaining environment and placed humankind in its midst...Do we marvel that God saw fit that this world was the perfect home for His family to flourish spiritually and economically?” (Doty, 2011, p. 11). One needs to keep in mind that God created and worked all of this before He created the first humans. When one reads the Genesis 1 narrative, they will not see the words “work” or “labor.” Genesis 2:1-3 states:

Thus, the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ² And on the seventh day, God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because, in it, He rested from all His work, which God had created and made.

This verse points to the fact God was in the business of creating, which these verses note as work. This implies creation itself is to be recognized as a work done by God (Doty, 2011; Bergsma, 2018). God establishes the viability and blessing of work and business in His creation account.

God created man on the sixth day, and in Genesis 1:28, God gave the command to Adam and Eve, as well as all humanity, to subdue the earth. The word “subdue” infers there is work to be done. Grudem (2003) states, “God’s command to ‘subdue’ the earth implies doing productive work to make the resources of the earth useful for themselves and others” (p. 28). Genesis 2:8 states, “The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.” However, in Genesis 2:5, God stated there was no man to till or work the ground. Genesis 2:15 states, “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” The first order of business for humanity was to work the Garden of Eden. Doty (2011) states:

The functional roles of humankind as part of the created order are to work (*‘abad*) and to keep (*shamar*), or care for the Garden. These roles are divine appointments and, with the

introduction of Eve, serve as the launch point of the economic (marketplace) foundation. (p. 12)

God set up the Garden to provide sustainability and economic flourishing through the avenue of labor. Moreover, one can see the blessing of work as God came alongside Adam to help him in the business of naming all the animals in the Garden (Gen. 2:19), which shows in the very initial creation that God desires to work alongside humanity to accomplish his mission.

Creation Marred

Much of the negative perception of business stems from what happened in Genesis chapter three and the fall of Adam when he sinned and ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Russell (2010) states, “The idea of work as a curse has been prevalent throughout the centuries, and remnants of this way of thinking are still found in church pews everywhere” (p. 28).

Understandably, this thinking exists because in Genesis 3:17-19 it states:

Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life.
¹⁸Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken.

However, one must understand the work mandate was given before the fall. Wong and Rae (2011) point out, “Work has great value to it because God ordained it before the entrance of sin and evil in the World...God did not condemn human beings to work as a consequence of Adam and Eve’s decision to disobey” (p. 47). Work is not punishment for human sin; rather, work is a part of the original human vocation. Bergsma (2018) understands this as well, pointing out that labor and work did not originate with human disobedience to God. This does not negate that the fall of Adam did not impact work. The Scriptures clearly state work would, from the point of Adam’s sin, be accompanied by negative ramifications, but not to the point where work inherently in and of itself is evil. It is still God-ordained. This is crucial to the argument for

amalgamating ministry and business for the furtherance of the gospel because this is one of the core arguments leading to the sacred/secular divide, which has led to the compartmentalization of ministry and business. Since Genesis lays the foundation that God is a worker and God set up the Garden to be worked, as well as provide sustenance and economic growth before the fall, it should remain a vital part of the church's theological makeup.

Jesus' Perspective on Business

One must not forget before Jesus started his ministry at the age of thirty, he was in the carpentry business. The people knew him as a carpenter (Mt. 15:35; Mk, 6:3). Moreover, Jesus was continually in the marketplace interacting with others who were business owners, entrepreneurs, and workers. Johnson (2004) argues, "As a businessman Himself—a carpenter by trade—Jesus was intimately familiar with the necessities of running a business and making a living" (p. 70). Many of the parables Jesus shared had to do with business, such as the parable of the vineyard (Mt. 20, 21), the parable of the sower (Mt. 13), as well as others. Silviso (2002) shows a list of several parables emphasizing that Jesus was thoroughly familiar with the business and marketplace and its operations referring to such occupations as construction (Mt. 7:24-27), wine making (Lk. 5:37-38), farming (Mk. 4:2-20), investments (Mt. 25:14-30), management criteria (Lk. 12:35-48), and so on.

Jesus, like most of humanity, spent a considerable amount of time in the marketplace.

Johnson (2004) further posits:

It is clear from Scripture that Jesus recognized that the Marketplace is where people actively engage life, where they earn their livings, conduct their daily lives, feed their families, and receive the bread and wine that graces their tables...Everyone on the face of the planet is impacted, directly or indirectly, by the marketplace. (p. 70)

As Jesus went out to seek lost people, He went to where people were most active, which was the marketplace. Of the 52 parables Jesus told, 45 of them were in the context of the workplace

(Papazov, 2019). This shows Jesus was very familiar with the marketplace and how it functioned and operated. Moreover, Jesus understood the marketplace to be a place where people interacted with one another in their everyday lives, either as a participant or as a consumer. Jesus' mission and goal was to redeem people. There is no greater place to achieve this than the marketplace, where people interact daily, and it is why Jesus spent so much time and energy in the marketplace and used the marketplace in the majority of the parables He taught.

Since Jesus spent a considerable amount of time in the marketplace, many of the characters mentioned in the gospels were met in the context of the marketplace. Jesus met Peter, Andrew, James, John, Zacchaeus, Livi, the centurion, the woman at the well, and many others in the marketplace or while operating their businesses (Papazov, 2019). Jesus was willing to join people in the place of their work and career to listen to their stories, hear about their struggles, talk about life, and offer His redeeming solution to their situations. Pavazov (2019) summarizes, "No wonder so many who felt outcasts felt they belonged in Jesus' company" (p. 117).

Literature has been written looking at Jesus from another perspective—Jesus as an entrepreneur, manager, or CEO. This emphasis focuses more on what Jesus started and is still involved with today through the church. Briner (1996) adds:

Just look at what Jesus accomplished. By any measurement standard, the empirical evidence bears witness that the organization founded by Jesus is the most successful of all time. Longevity? Two thousand years and counting. Wealth? Beyond calculation. Numbers? Beyond counting. Loyalty of adherents? Many gave their lives for it. Distribution? Worldwide, in every country. Diversification? Successfully integrated into all kinds of enterprises. Ergo, Jesus Christ reigns supreme as the greatest manager the world has ever known...His life and teaching are packed full of wisdom highly relevant to my world and yours—the world of business. (pp. 11-12)

Although Christian leaders and scholars frown upon Jesus being described in this way and used as a marketing tool in both the business and ministry world, the premise of what Briner posits cannot be denied. Jesus understood business and the marketplace and proved it by how much He

talked about it, interacted with it, and by the existence of the church and its impact on individuals and the world that is still thriving today.

This begs the question, if Jesus was so interested in and integrated with the marketplace, why do most church leaders avoid the topic of the integration of ministry and business?

Considering Jesus' effectiveness in the marketplace, ministry leaders should be emulating this and doing all they can to be more involved in the marketplace, primarily through business leaders. Although Jesus called a few out from their occupations and marketplace, Jesus appeared to be more interested in people being salt and light in the very place God had planted them for the purpose of people being able to see their good works and glorify the Father (Mt. 5:16).

Tentmaking

One cannot make a theological argument for the integration of ministry and business for the furtherance of the gospel without having an emphasis on what is referred to as tentmaking. By trade, the apostle Paul was a tentmaker, from where the name is derived. The first methodology of Christian mission was tentmaking, for which, in the emerging church, the marketplace was the first tangible nexus between the marketplace and missions (Johnson, 2009). Tentmaking cannot be considered a theological doctrine per se, but the biblical understanding of it is essential to the theology of work and business, as well as one of the main ways God cooperates with man in the redemption of humanity. Although not the most inspirational of words, tentmaking reflects and affirms the sound biblical, historical, and contextual model of ministry and witness in world missions (Buzzard, 1999). Tentmaking was and still is the means for business leaders to carry the gospel to the world. Thus, for the church to neglect the importance of the tentmaker model and methodology is to neglect the primary avenue of the gospel going forth in the world.

Reflecting on Paul as a tentmaker, Kotter (2015) points out that this meant Paul's business entailed manufacturing leather and woven goods, as well as buying and selling, from which one can conclude that Paul was operating a very profitable business. Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 puts forth the assertion that he has a right to make a living from his missionary endeavors; however, he forgoes that right to be a tentmaker for various reasons, mainly not to have any obstacles in the way of him preaching Christ (Lohr, 2007). Johnson (2004) gives a very descriptive definition of a tentmaker:

It quite simply meant making money in your business so that you could afford to do ministry in one place so that a person can minister in another; making money here so that one can preach the gospel out there. (p. 72)

There is much debate as to whether or not Paul temporarily worked at certain points on his missionary journeys or more on a full-time basis. However, when one reads, "he worked 'day and night' so as not to be a burden on the church" (1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Thes. 3:8), it appears Paul worked and ran a business regularly to support himself. Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 4:12, Paul states, "We work hard with our own hands." Paul took tentmaking seriously enough to exert just as much energy and effort into his work as he did his ministry. He did this for two reasons. First, as already mentioned, to not be a financial burden on the church, but also so no one could accuse him of peddling the gospel for profit. Based on Paul's insistence, which no one can dispute, is the reality that Paul preached the gospel for free (1 Cor. 11-12; 11:7-9; 12:14-18) (Johnson, 2009). Working hard and preaching the gospel for free were motivations for Paul to ensure nothing would hinder him from accomplishing his mission to preach the gospel to where he could say, "I am innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26).

The more critical factor to consider regarding tentmaking is whether there is evidence that the gospel was proclaimed and if people came to faith through Paul's business venture. If

this is the case, then this becomes a strong argument for the integration of business and ministry for the furtherance of the gospel and encouraging business leaders to use their business as a platform for sharing the gospel. Acts 18:1-3 gives evidence of this:

After these things, Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation, they were tentmakers.

Although one cannot be definitive as to whether Paul was the one who led Aquila and Priscilla to the Lord, one thing is for certain: it was through their business of tentmaking that they became acquainted. They appear to have spent a considerable amount of time together, and they became more than just business partners but close friends. Fast forward to Acts 18:24-26, and we see the impact Priscilla and Aquila had on Apollos in that Apollos was described as a great help (Acts 18:27) and a powerful apologist for the gospel (Acts 18:18).

Russell (2010) concludes, “From Acts 18, there is no reason to believe Paul considered teaching the Word and working as a tentmaker as mutually exclusive” (p. 97). It appears Paul used his tentmaking business as an avenue not only to support himself but also as a way to share the gospel with others throughout all of his missionary endeavors. Paul mentions several times throughout his epistles, and this is also mentioned in the Book of Acts by Luke, how much he worked and labored. How much did Paul work? Siemens (1998), after a comprehensive look at the Scriptures, concludes, “It appears that Paul supported himself everywhere” (p. 99). Thus, this lends to the argument against the secular/sacred divide that exists and supports the argument that business and ministry can be integrated as one of the main ways to further the gospel and open doors to share the gospel.

The Priesthood of All Believers

The New Testament refers to the priesthood of all believers. This is a critical theological perspective authenticating that every believer is called to ministry and refuting the sacred/secular divide that exists. Stevens (1999) defines this:

When you enter church today, there are two ‘peoples’—laity, who receive the ministry, and ‘clergy’ who give it. But when we enter the world of the New Testament, we find only one people, the true *laos* of God, with leaders among people. (p. 26)

There is no separation between those of the clergy and those who are not; All are looked at as one.

The worldview and theology taught and learned concerning business and work dictate that business and work cannot be integrated with ministry and that they should remain compartmentalized. Unless attention is brought to a more theological biblical perspective, the worldview on the issue will not abate. Pearcey (2005) brings attention to the need to address this problem:

Before we can begin to craft a Christian worldview, we first need to identify barriers that prevent us from applying our faith to areas like work, business, and politics. We need to try to understand why Western Christians lost sight of the comprehensive call God makes on our lives. (p. 73)

If the theology and worldview on the integration of business and ministry can be better informed, then this starts the process of integrating business and ministry for the furtherance of the gospel. Just as with all theology, wrong theology leads to wrong outcomes; right theology leads to right outcomes. Concerning marketplace ministry, the sacred-secular and clergy-laity divide and barriers that exist need to be eradicated based on the proper understanding of the foundational theology of the priesthood of all believers (Johnson, 2009). Since it is foundational to the movement’s theology, nothing short of this will suffice.

There have been breakthroughs relating to the theology of the priesthood of all believers and its impact on the marketplace movement. First, the laity's emphasis on making the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers a reality, and second, rereading Scripture with an understanding of the principles and how they relate to the marketplace (Johnson, 2009). However, Johnson (2009) goes on to point out what he sees as the most significant breakthrough, which is that in the marketplace context, participants are actively seeking to redefine how to live out the gospel and do theology in the marketplace. This shift in theology concerning the priesthood of all believers is crucial to the new understanding business leaders have because it leads to application in the marketplace that empowers business leaders to live for and be a witness for Christ in the marketplace or their place or business.

History of the Sacred/Secular Divide

Greek thought and culture have a lot to do with developing the sacred/secular and clergy/laity divide. Pearcey (2005) states, "Plato was offering a twofold origin for the world. Both Form and Matter are eternal: Form represents reason and rationality, while the eternal and flow of formless Matter is inherently evil and chaotic" (p. 75). From this, the theology of creation became distorted, where it was also divided into two parts: the spiritual (spiritual good) and the material (inferior, bad), representing a dualism (Pearcey, 2005). Thus, the desire to suppress and escape the material world would happen through living an ascetic lifestyle because such disciplines as prayer and meditation were regarded as more valuable than such things as manual labor and work. The Christian vocation was conceived as separate from ordinary life.

Aristotle also influenced the church's thinking as it related to dualism and the clergy/laity split. Knapp (2012) points out:

Members of the early church were familiar with Greco-Roman philosophy and its tendency to bifurcate human beings into mind and body. For Aristotle and his successors,

the body was prone to evil and existed for base, utilitarian functions, while the mind had the potential for reason and the apprehension of truth, beauty, and justice. Thus, the *Vida Contemplativa* (life of contemplation) was elevated above the *Vida Activa* (life of work and physical activity), leading to a social hierarchy where the intellectual elite were supported by craftsmen, merchants, and manual laborers. (pp. 30–31)

Thus, the early Church Fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, believed and promulgated this thinking, placing the sacred occupations above secular ones and Christian vocation over secular vocation.

When Emperor Constantine came into power in AD 312 and merged the church and the state, he appointed bishops as magistrates throughout the empire. Thus, clerics, or clergy, were considered a privileged class. Knapp (2012) asserts that the church leaders were afforded great economic and political influence when the Roman Emperor Constantine embraced the Christian faith, which resulted in the church leader's jobs being seen as above those of the population. Furthermore, Catholic theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, developed their systematic theology in alignment with Platonian and Aristotelian ideas, where the life of the mind represented the height of human fulfillment (Knapp, 2012; Pearcey, 2005; Stevens, 1999). This relegated the clergy to the realm of the sacred, apart from the secular. The clergy-laity divide that deepened from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries relegated laity to the bottom of the clerical ladder (Stevens, 1999).

As Stevens (1999) points out, it was the Reformation starting in AD 1517 that led to a shift back to the priesthood of all believers. One of the major tenants of the Reformation and Martin Luther, and one of Luther's greatest contributions, is the theological position of the priesthood of all believers (George, 1987). The Reformers rejected the pagan Aristotelian concepts that were adopted and determined to get back to the divine revelation as God intended (Pearcey, 2005). The Reformers threw out the two-tiered system of religious professionals versus

lay believers, replacing it with robust teaching on the priesthood of all believers (Pearcey, 2005). Although the theology was corrected, the outworking and practices remain to the present day. Ogden (2003) concludes that although the gulf between the clergy and laity still exists, the Reformers were all in agreement that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers obliterates the caste distinction that exists between laity and clergy. This points to the fact that there is still a lot of work to be done to determine where the theology of the priesthood of all believers and the practice of the priesthood of all believers match up. If the church is going to move from a dichotomized faith to an integrated faith, as well as eradicate the sacred-secular and clergy-laity divide, which includes the divide that exists between calling and vocation, it will be because of pastors rising up and modeling whole-life discipleship in their pastoral practice and teaching (Pavazov, 2019). Although there appears to be a shift in a positive direction away from the clergy/laity and sacred/secular divide, it is still a teaching and practice permeating the church and seminaries.

The clergy/laity and sacred/secular divide also exist among business leaders themselves. Nash and McLennan (2001) point to a survey and study they did, and they concluded that there is very little dialogue among lay people in the business and work world, even though there is a growing interest in the topic. Unless business leaders are willing to come the table amongst themselves to address the issue and come to a better theological understanding, then they should not expect pastors and ministry leaders to be willing to come to the table and have meaningful theological and practical discussions on the topic. The clergy/laity and sacred/secular divide will continue to pose a problem in both the business world, the marketplace, and the church. It will continue to hinder business and ministry leaders from being more effective at fulfilling their mission to reach people with the gospel.

Scriptural Basis

First, Peter 2:5 states, “You also, as living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Then 1 Peter 2:9 states, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Hobbs (1990) sums these verses up when he states, “Reduced to its simplest form, the principle of the priesthood of all believers means that all believers in Christ are priests” (p. 1). Thus, business owners, entrepreneurs, and general workers should consider themselves as priests, not just those who are pastors and clergy. Therefore, based on a believer’s priestly relationship to God, according to the New Testament order, all believers alike are considered priest (Chafer, 1976). Referring to Martin Luther and the Reformation, which brought back the theology of the priesthood of all believers, Pearcey (2005) states, “Running a business or a household was not the least bit inferior to being a priest or nun because all were ways of obeying the Cultural Mandate of participating in God’s work in maintaining and caring for His creation” (p. 81). When one reads what Peter stated, and then what is stated in Revelation 5:10, “And have made us kings and priests to our God And we shall reign on the earth,” all believers need to see themselves as clergy being appointed by God to service, which includes the high calling of a business leader or entrepreneur for the furtherance of the gospel. From a business and marketplace perspective, few businesspeople think of themselves as full-time ministers (Stevens, 1999). The New Testament teaching teaches otherwise. This should be enough to encourage business leaders to see themselves as Christ sees them and consider their role as a business leader as crucial to the furtherance of the gospel as anyone who does ministry as a full-time vocation.

The theological basis related to the creation account should dispel any notion that work is not an ordained, divine institution. Although sin marred many aspects of business and work, the fact that God is a worker and created the earth and humanity for work to be done sets the foundation that business in the modern culture should be considered just as high of a calling as those who do full-time ministry. Furthermore, Jesus did most of His ministry in the marketplace and based many of his parables on a marketplace/business perspective. Paul also did much of his gospel preaching in the context of being a tentmaker, which led to the sharing of the gospel and the furtherance of the gospel. Every biblical teaching on the priesthood of all believers points to the fact that the integration of business and ministry should have a prominent place in the church.

Discipleship

Since the entire topic being addressed lies under the umbrella of discipleship, it is incumbent to define and address it. Matthew 28:19-20 states:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen.

What exactly does Jesus mean by, “make disciples?” Early and Dempsey (2013) provide a very basic definition, “Disciple-making in its purest form is helping people to find Jesus and then helping them to grow and become all they can be for Christ” (p. 16). Being all they can be for Christ would mean both in the church and outside the church, whether it be at home or in the business world and marketplace. The word “go” adds insight into what Jesus meant. Carson (1994) states, “Some have deduced from this that Jesus’ commission is simply to make disciples ‘as we go’ (i.e., wherever we are) and constitutes no basis for going somewhere special in order to serve as missionaries” (p. 595). This does not negate those called to be missionaries in a foreign field, but this verse implies that wherever a believer is, they are commissioned to make

disciples, which would include the workplace and the business world. Wiersbe (2001) adds clarity:

The Greek verb translated *go* is actually not a command but a present participle (going). The only command in the entire Great Commission is ‘make disciples’ (‘teach all nations’). Jesus said, ‘While you are going, make disciples of all the nations.’ No matter where we are, we should be witnesses for Jesus and seek to win others to Him. (p. 107)

When it comes to making disciples, one needs to have the mindset that this is not something that should only happen in the church. It is something that happens wherever one is, which includes one's place of business or in the marketplace (Carson, 1994; Wiersbe, 2001). As stated earlier, since the majority of one's time is spent in the context of business or the marketplace, and the fact that most of what Jesus did and the parables He taught were in the context of the marketplace, one should conclude making disciples, followers of Jesus, should have a prominent role in business and marketplace environments. Instead, the main emphasis of fulfilling the Great Commission that leads to discipleship and making disciples is to invite others to church, and it is the churches and their leader's responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission.

Pertinent to the topic as it relates to business and the marketplace is when Jesus said, “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you (Mt. 28:20).” Jesus’ commands stem from the Old Testament—the Law and the Prophets. Since the creation mandate includes work and business, one can deduce this is part of what it means to teach them all things. Thus, this gives more validation to the notion that more should be taught as it relates to work, business, and the marketplace by both the church and other disciples. Early and Dempsey (2013), referring to Ephesians 4:11-12 and the pastor's job of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, states:

Here, it means that the various officers were appointed in order that everything in the church might be well arranged or put in its proper place; or that the church might be

‘complete.’ This arranging has to do with helping the saints ‘grow up in every way into Him,’ becoming ‘mature’ believers. (p. 41)

Notice the authors state, “Everything in the church might be well arranged.” Here Early and Dempsey unintentionally postulate that the sacred/secular divide still exists in the thinking of the church. Paul is referring to being trained and equipped (discipled), not just for the church but all of life, including those in business and the marketplace.

Theoretical Framework

The Alarming Truth

The idea of amalgamating ministry and business is considered taboo from a ministry perspective. Ministry is seen as one thing, while business is quite another. Wuthnow (1994) notes the enormity of the issue when he states concerning a poll he took, “Ninety percent of the respondents reported they have never heard a sermon relating to faith and employment” (pp. 55–56). Greene (2001) points out:

Fifty percent of the Christians I have polled have never ever heard a sermon on work. Never. Not once. Seventy-five percent have never been taught a biblical view of work or vocation. Contemporary Christians are simply not being equipped for life where they spend two-thirds of their waking time. (p. 5)

It is hard to comprehend over half of the church, and up to ninety percent, have never heard a sermon related to the workplace, or the marketplace, or for business leaders. A survey by Doug Sherman and William Hendricks revealed a similar outcome to Wuthnow. Sherman and Hendricks (1987) state:

In a survey of 2000 people who regularly attend church, 90 percent responded ‘no’ to the question, ‘Have you ever in your life heard a sermon, read a book, listened to a tape/cd, or been to a seminar that applied biblical principles to everyday work issues?’ (p. 16)

The authors conclude, “The church has grown virtually silent on the subject of work” (Sherman & Hendricks, 1987, p. 16).

Greene conducted another survey where he asked respondents how relevant teaching was to particular areas of their lives. The statistics show on a scale of 1-4, 2.57 rated teaching and preaching helpful in personal spiritual issues, 2.12 in the area related to the church, 1.83 in areas related to home life, and 1.68 for issues related to work (Greene, 2001).

Figure 1: Hopefulness Rating by Life Area

Helpfulness Rating by Life Area (0-4 Scale)	
Personal:	2.57
Church:	2.12
Home:	1.83
Work:	1.68

Greene (2001) concludes, “Indeed, the workers say that church communities do not support them to any significant degree at all in their work. Not in the preaching, not in the teaching, not in the worship, not in the pastoral care” (p. 5). This points to a major problem as it is related to leadership and discipleship in the church. Knapp’s (2012) research also confirms the lack of support from the church for business leaders and entrepreneurs. Especially troubling is the deep disappointment of those in church for the failure of pastors and ministry leaders to help and support business leaders and those in the marketplace by failing to help them relate their faith to their work (Knapp, 2012) Knapp (2012) goes onto reveal, “Despite a widely shared belief that faith should inform ethical decisions at work, a mere 18 of 230 respondents had ever consulted a pastor for advice about a work-related matter” (p. 12). Numbers like these should cause embarrassment and shame; however, that is not the case. Knapp’s (2012) research reveals the widely held perception that pastors, ministry leaders, and those in the clergy are disinterested in church member's work lives. The church as a whole is missing the mark on what is considered the most significant mission field—the marketplace with its business leaders, entrepreneurs, and workforce.

Why are pastors and church leaders not embracing business leaders and those in the marketplace to equip them to be more effective in reaching people with the gospel? The proper theological and practical perspective on business needs to be correctly taught, and how being a business owner is a calling is just as instrumental to the furthering of the gospel as the pastor who pastors the church. Beckwith (2016) states:

Pastoral leadership should be training business leaders in ways they can minister in the marketplace effectively, not ignore them or see them as a means to supply money...I would argue that the value of the Christian leader has to begin in the church by having pastors address the value of the people in their congregation and speaking to the issue of business being an invocation and a call to ministry in the world. (p. 20)

This point alone indicates to the need for research to determine whether discipling programs for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those who work in the marketplace have made an impact on the leader, the church, and the community as it relates to the furtherance of the gospel. If pastors, clergy, church leaders, theologians, and educators can be presented with research showing a positive impact is made with business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the workplace, especially as it relates to the furtherance of the gospel, it could be instrumental in the church and its leaders deciding to implement a ministry and discipleship program that has an emphasis on business leaders and entrepreneurs.

The Disparity

The theological perspective touched on some points leading to the disparity related to why there is such a minimal emphasis on the integration of ministry and business. The theological issues manifest themselves in the theoretical (or practical) issues. If there is flawed theology as it relates to creation, the priesthood of all believers, what ministry and calling involves, and the church, it will impact what ministry encompasses and what the church's role is

as it relates to pastors, clergy, ministry leaders, and one's calling, the understanding of which is essential to confront the problem that exists.

For the church and its leaders to embrace and start ministering and discipling business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace to see their role in the furtherance of the gospel, there needs to be a fundamental change to the function of the church leaders and understanding of the calling of believers. Greene (2001) states, “Increasingly, the role of the minister has been to enlist the laity’s support in the ministry of the local church, rather than to equip the laity for their ministry wherever that might be” (p. 9). Ephesians 4:11-12 states, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry.” Baer (2017) points out:

The Greek word for equipping refers to a fisherman mending or repairing his nets so that they can be redeployed in their intended purpose. What beautiful picture of the work of a pastor-teacher-to repair, fix, mend, the people of God so that they can be redeployed by Jesus to go and do what He called them to do. (pp. 53–54).

Ministry goes beyond the church walls; however, with the way many pastors operate their ministry and their discipleship programs, the emphasis is on the function of ministry within the church. This would also include how some ministry leaders perceive the role of business leaders in the church, that it is all about the money. Papazov (2019) notes:

The unspoken message to marketplace leaders has been, ‘You go make the money and give it to us so we can use it for ministry. In exchange, we will provide you with a spiritual haven so you can wash the dirt of doing business off your soul. (p. 134)

Nash and McLennan (2001) presented scathing remarks from interviews conducted with business leaders on how they felt toward the church and its leaders. They present what was shared with them:

‘The clergy are the last people to go to for guidance on business.’ ‘They do not understand the issues.’ ‘They cannot manage themselves; how could they advise others?’ ‘They hate business.’ ‘They are jealous of people with money.’ ‘They want to criticize

business, but they have no problem accepting its money.’ ‘It is not their role to comment on business.’ ‘We do not speak the same language.’ (p. 124)

What a sad predicament. The disparity is wide on both sides. There are mutual misunderstandings. Businesspeople feel they are misunderstood and mischaracterized, and that ministry leaders do not value business leaders and their purpose, while businesspeople find it difficult to understand what Christianity has to say concerning their business and life. A Barna study backs up this assertion. “The Barna study, ‘Christians at Work,’ shows only 26 percent of believers strongly agree when they go to work what they do at their job is serving God or a higher purpose” (Barna, 2019, p. 21). Clearly, business leaders are having a hard time seeing how their faith integrates with work.

The issue is not how a believer can be used in the church but rather how a Christian can be used in the Kingdom. Despite the disparity, a pastor’s ministry is to enable the members of the body of Christ to do their ministries, which includes believers in business and the marketplace. Rather than advancing the Kingdom, churches are more focused on advancing the church and its ministry to where church ministry is the main priority (Stevens, 1999). Kingdom ministry has been almost totally eclipsed by church ministry. The reality is pastors are not essentially called to turn people into servants in their ministry and church but to equip and empower them for whatever ministry God has called them to serve in. The context of Ephesians has to be that which is focused beyond the church because the majority of the church operates outside of the church. If Ephesians was meant only for those who minister within the church, then Paul is only writing to a few select. Shearer (2015) solidifies this when he states:

The Christian has been conditioned to think that ministry is supposed to happen only in church on Sunday, yet of Jesus’ 132 public appearances in the New Testament, 122 were in the marketplace. Of the 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context. Of 40 divine interventions recorded in Acts, 39 occurred in the marketplace. (pp. 12–13)

Is it time for pastors to start reconsidering their approach to what it means to equip the saints for the work of the ministry? If the research can prove that implementing a discipleship program focusing on business leaders and entrepreneurs will help equip those in the marketplace to see themselves as Kingdom builders, then this could have a tremendous effect on the furtherance of the gospel. Moreover, this will help the church in its mission to fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19).

Parachurch Organizations

As a result of a lack of discipleship to business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those who work in the marketplace, parachurch organizations have been launched to fill the gap. Most marketplace ministries have formed outside the authority, involvement, and impetus of the church (Miller, 2006). Therefore, many business leaders and the resources that the church needs are being redirected toward these parachurch organizations (Baer, 2017). Baer (2017) states

In place of the church, dozens of parachurch organizations have risen, focused on ‘marketplace ministry’ or some other phraseology. Their number reflects the felt need for Christian discipleship in the workplace and the fact that the church is not doing much about it. (p. 8)

Research by Johnson (2004) shows that parachurch organizations are effective in meeting the needs of business leaders and entrepreneurs, resulting in business leaders and entrepreneurs understanding their roles in God’s mission to bring the gospel to the marketplace. Johnson (2004) concludes the marketplace is the new missiological arena God is now moving in, and parachurch organizations are on the leading edge of this missiological movement. Business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace will continue to turn to parachurch organizations to meet their spiritual needs if they cannot find those needs met in the church. This trend will continue until pastors and ministry leaders start to think through how to engage and equip businesspeople, professionals, and employees in a meaningful way both in the church and

outside of the church (Baer, 2007). This is not a call to abandon the parachurch organizations and their effectiveness; rather, it is a call for the church not to neglect its calling to equip all the members of the church in their calling, which could be in the business world and marketplace.

BAM and B4T Defined

It is difficult to believe church leaders and pastors see the effectiveness of Business as Mission (BAM) and Business for Transformation (B4T) in reaching people with the gospel abroad, yet do not see the benefits of applying those principles in the local church in reaching people with the gospel. If bringing businesses to foreign countries is opening the door for gospel presentation and reception, then it seems reasonable this practice can be just as effective in the local church in America. Johnson (2009) defines Business as Mission as “A for-profit commercial business venture that is Christian led, intentionally devoted to being used as an instrument of God’s mission (*Missio Dei*) to the world, and is operated in a cross-cultural environment, either domestic or international” (pp. 27–28).

Business for Transformation is defined by Lai (2015) as “Business strategically placed in unreached areas that are profitable and serving the local community, generally through transformation, and specifically through evangelism, discipleship, and church planting” (p. 27).

Business for Transformation covers the whole facet of trying to reach the unreached through business, however, with the emphasis being on evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

Johnson’s definition contains the word domestic, and Lai’s definition does not exclusively designate Business for Transformation as that which is done abroad. However, the majority of all their success examples are in the context of foreign countries. This is also the case in Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen’s (2011) book, *Great Commission Companies*, where they share several stories of those who started businesses in America but used their businesses, as

well as their business acumen and education, to reach people in foreign countries. The new paradigm in reaching people abroad is through Business as Mission, Business for Transformation, and Great Commission Companies. Are there success stories to be told of how domestic business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace are also successful in reaching people with the gospel through their domestic businesses? If so, then this will validate theoretically that what works for BAM and B4T can be applied domestically and in the local church to help in its mandate to fulfill the Great Commission.

BAM and B4T Principles and Practices

There are many similarities between the principles and practices of BAM and of other American businesses. For example, Russell (2010) states, “Missional entrepreneurs need to be very strategic in the way they approach their task because they have a unique mission with multiple goals” (p. 203). Then he goes on to list vision casting, mission, and vision statements, developing a business strategy, thinking big, starting small, scaling smartly, and having a master plan (Russell, 2010). These principles and practices are very similar to what one would find when starting a business in America.

Furthermore, Johnson (2009), speaking at a forum for BAM, concluded, “The consultation unequivocally concluded that a BAM business is about job creation, value enhancement, wealth generation and product/service distribution at both business and spiritual levels” (p. 33). Once again, outside of adding “spiritual levels,” it is very similar to a typical American-run business. Almost every chapter, from, chapters eight through twenty-four, reads like a business manual. One will find many of the topics Johnson addresses in most of the literature on business, such as corporate prerequisites, core values, the financial bottom line,

pillars of management, strategic analysis, operational functions, organization structure, strategic plans, macroeconomics, and so on.

Concerning B4T, after chapter two of Lai's book, *Business for Transformation*, the rest of the book is dedicated to how to start a business for transformation. Once again, it follows a business manual style, discussing many of the topics that would be addressed in most literature dealing with starting any business.

BAM and B4T are trying to achieve a similar outcome: transformation. This separates them from being typical businesses created to produce products, deliver services, and create wealth and jobs. Lai (2015) states, "B4T is not a financial strategy. Rather, it is a strategy of the people of God using their gifts from God for the glory of God among the unreached" (p. 12). Lai (2015) goes onto say, "B4T workers recognize that business is the context in which most of our relational interactions take place. Therefore, the work that we do is part of our witness" (p. 16). As stated earlier, this all leads to the transformation of people and communities. The same could be said for BAM.

BAM's and B4T's practices and principles could be applied to the local church. It has the same principles and desires, especially in reaching the unchurched and bringing about transformation. The success stories that fill the pages of Johnson's, Lai's, Rundle's, and Steffen's books can happen in the local church through business. Thus, the need for integrating business and ministry in an American context is needed. Johnson and Lai both believe BAM and B4T are the new paradigm and movement being used to fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19) (Lai, 2015; Johnson, 2009). The Local church may wish to consider how it can tap into this new paradigm and movement and make it part of its strategic plan to reach the unreached of its local communities.

Sins Negative Impact on the Perception of Business

One of the major concerns negatively impacting the perception of business and business leaders, which cause the church to shy away from business and business leaders, is its association with such negative (i.e., sinful) things as corruption, greed, wealth, profits, and so on. Work and business have a divine origin. Although sin has marred what was originally perfect, it does not negate the fact God can use business for many excellent reasons, such as reaching people with the gospel, combating poverty, creating jobs, and spiritual formation. Grudem (2003) looks at many of the negative perceptions of business, such as ownership, profit, money, effects on poverty, and so on, and develops the moral goodness of each one by citing Scripture that negates the so-called negative perception. For example, concerning profit, Grudem (2003) cites Proverbs 31:18, “She perceives that her merchandise *is* good.” Grudem (2003) states, “The word translated ‘merchandise’ refers to profit-producing commercial transactions. This ‘excellent wife’ is commended for selling goods for profit” (p. 43). If profit-making were inherently wrong, then the Scriptures would not commend it. Yes, the Bible does state the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10), but that does not make money evil in and of itself. Once again, the proper perspective needs to be taught concerning these topics, which the church and its leaders have thus far mostly avoided. More literature is coming out to confront the misunderstandings of such topics; however, these topics are still absent from the church as they relate to business.

Practical Applications

If the church and its leaders are going to move in the direction of implementing discipleship to business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace, does it have to go beyond teaching Scriptural principles and theology? How can a pastor who has never run a

business or who has minimal marketplace experience practically help a business leader? Both Johnson (2009) and Lai (2015) have extensive sections on how to choose a business venture, how to do business plans, and many other aspects of a business organization. Sherman (2011) devotes several chapters to many practical aspects of business. The reality is many pastors feel inadequate to be able to minister to the needs of business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace because they do not have any experience. What is the solution? Church leaders and pastors must delegate the business discipleship training responsibilities to disciple business leaders and entrepreneurs to those in the church who can train others in these areas.

Moreover, just like in *Business as Mission* and *Business for Transformation*, can the church become a hub for business training? Can the church offer classes or instructions on how to do business plans, how to deal with legal issues, how to finance a business start-up, and so on? Even more significantly, can the church be used to come alongside budding business leaders and entrepreneurs and help them launch Kingdom-minded businesses? Theoretically, why not? The key is to do research and find out who is doing such ministry and to see if it is successful not only in creating jobs and wealth but also to discover if it is having an impact in reaching people with the gospel. Rundle (2009), speaking about Microenterprise Development (MED), states, “MED is about helping businesses prosper in the poorest and least-reached parts of the world. MED focuses on helping local people start small businesses” (p. 762). This begs the question, “Why cannot the local church do this as well?” Local churches can utilize the business leaders and entrepreneurs in the church to accomplish this just as they do abroad.

Related Literature

Literature is abundant as it relates to *Missio Dei*, the Calling of God and business, marketplace ministry, theology of business and work, discipleship, and transformation as it

relates to business and the workplace (Lai, 2015; Rundle, 2009; Sharp, 2022; Loftin & Dimsdale, 2018) Included in the literature would be how individual Christians should conduct themselves at work (Nelson, 2011; Nash & McLennan, 2001; Campbell, 2009; Reynolds & Winters, 2018).

There is also much literature written concerning how the sacred/secular divide and the clergy/laity divide still permeate the church, even though the Reformation brought back the Priesthood of all believers' theology (Pearcey, 2005; Charles, 2023). There is literature and research that points out how effective parachurch organizations, such as BAM and B4T, are being used to bring the gospel to foreign nations, which is leading to the furtherance of the gospel in these nations and bringing about not only personal transformation of people but the transformation of whole communities (Lai, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Rundle, 2006; Steffen & Barnett, 2006). This section of the literature review will explore related topics and their association with the research.

Missio Dei

Mission refers to everything the church does that points toward the Kingdom of God (Moreau et al., 2015). Missionary work is often associated with going to a foreign country to bring the Gospel to an unreached group or to develop the church more fully in these countries. As the definition states, this is primarily associated with what the church does. Moreau et al. (2015) explain, "Missio Dei, Latin for 'the sending of God,' is a relatively new term in evangelical mission circles...God's mission, however, is broader than the church; it is everything God Himself does in establishing His Kingdom on earth" (pp. 70-71). Therefore, the mission of God extends beyond just the church. In the context of the research, this means God is also on mission when it comes to business and the business leader, entrepreneur, and those in the marketplace. Since the majority of people spend the majority of their waking hours in their place

or work, business, or in some other marketplace capacity, it is vital to have the church's witness in the marketplace, where the majority of the harvest can be found (Papazov, 2019). There is an abundance of literature supporting this all-important perspective (Stevens, 1999; Knapp, 2012; Van Engen, 1997; Kraft, 2009). Whether one is scrubbing floors, teaching in schools, trading stocks on the stock market, teaching Sunday school, and so on, it is becoming more common to hear that no matter what one is doing, all Christians are missionaries (Steffen, 2011). Barna (2019) echoes this,

There are men and women who sit in our pews who walk into board meetings, classrooms, warehouses, and offices and interact with clients with a deep sense that God is there, and that God is up to something in the world. They are teachers, lawyers, executives, ditch diggers, non-profit leaders, social workers, and health professionals who have developed a sense that their work is not simply something to endure, but it is the very place they experience God's presence and transforming power. They see their work not as a means to an end—that is, a place to find people to bring to church; they see their work as the location where healing begins, and God's Kingdom comes near. (p. 67)

Mission and Mission Dei must be understood to include everything a believer does, which would include work, play, family, life, and religious life. The application is specifically for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace must apply.

Since the introduction of Missio Dei in 1963 at the World Council of Churches Conference in Mexico City, this term has become the prominent thinking behind the entire topic of missions (Moreau et al., 2015). Subsequently, the basis of Missio Dei is that God is at work in His Kingdom rather than just through the church. Much of the literature as it relates to missions now contains an emphasis on Missio Dei, which also speaks much to how business is now a part of the literature (Swarr & Nordstrom, 1999; Yamamori & Eldred, 200; Volf, 1991). Furthermore, marketplace ministry, which is in the camp of Business as Mission, has an emphasis on local, near-neighbor ministry rather than cross-cultural outreach, and now also is written about when it comes to the theology and application of missions (Johnson & Rundle, 2006). The literature on

Missio Dei as it relates to business, entrepreneurialism, and the marketplace and its importance in the context of the overall topic of missions has pointed the church in the right direction for the integration of business and ministry for the furtherance of the gospel.

The literature points to the rationale that missions now consider and include businesses, entrepreneurs, and marketplace ministry and its importance of furthering the gospel. Businesses and their leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace need not see their business and church life as compartmentalized into separate entities that do not intersect. The literature on missions and Missio Dei now recognize the significance and need for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace to see their place in the mission of God to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Call

Call Defined

One of the reasons the secular/sacred or clergy/laity divide still exists in the church today is related to what is referred to as the calling of God. Is the calling of God only to ministry within the church or to a parachurch organization that supports the church, or does it include a calling that is outside of vocational ministry? The literature, as it relates to one's calling, posits a very telling position feeding into the secular/sacred or clergy/laity divide and adds validity to the need for ongoing research. If research can conclude one's calling can also be in areas outside the church and is shown to be effective in reaching people with the gospel, then this should give pastors, clergy, and ministry leaders motivation to develop discipleship programs emphasizing all spiritual aspects of business.

There are a few different aspects of God's calling that need to be understood before relating it to a calling into other venues, such as business. There is, first, the calling to salvation.

Many verses in the Bible refer to this; however, Romans 8:30 is very clear on the issue, “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Packer (2001) defines calling as “The developed biblical idea of God’s calling is of God summoning men by His Word and laying hold of them by His power to play a part in and enjoy the benefits of His gracious redemptive purpose” (p. 199). Packer (2001) goes on to write that there are two other perspectives as it relates to ones calling: one to functions and offices, such as apostles, pastors, preaching, and high priesthood, and to external circumstances. He then states concerning external circumstances, “This is not quite the sense of occupation or trade, but to their reevaluation of secular employment as a true vocation” (Packer, 2001, p. 200). Packer appears to elevate the calling to an office or ministerial calling as higher than that of secular employment or vocation. One can reevaluate their vocation, but the calling does not contain the sense of occupation or trade; thus, God does not necessarily call someone to an occupation or trade, or in the context of the research, to be business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Pastoral Literature and the Call

Much of the pastoral literature relating to one's calling strictly deals with a calling to pastoral ministry. Spurgeon (1998) states concerning the calling into ministry:

It requires the dedication of a man’s entire life to spiritual work and separation from every secular calling...The first sign of the heavenly calling is an all-absorbing desire for the work. In order to be a true call to ministry, there must be an irresistible, overwhelming craving and raging thirst for telling others what God has done to our own souls...Do not enter the ministry if you can help it. If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way. (pp. 24, 26, 29)

Spurgeon wrote this in 1869. By stating if someone can stay in their occupation and then separate themselves from every secular calling, as well as stating if there is to be a true calling, it

must have these certain attributes, relegates the secular calling to something less than the ministry calling. Should not all believers have an irresistible, overwhelming craving and raging to share with others, whether they are in the ministry or a secular occupation?

Kraft (2011), writing about leaders who last, does not define calling as primarily to full-time ministry; however, he then goes on to talk about how important it is to be able to teach as a leader, stating, “A true leader is gifted and skilled at using words to shepherd, develop, equip, and empower followers and potential leaders” (p. 88). Astonishingly, Kraft (2011) then declares, “If a person’s gift mix is not predominantly in the speaking category, that person should not consider a major leadership role” (p. 89). Kraft, although unintentionally, is eliminating many business leaders and entrepreneurs from leadership, thus relegating what he is saying to mainly those in pastoral ministry. This once again enhances the clergy/laity divide which postulates that the calling to ministry is seen as a higher calling.

When it comes to one’s calling, it is often spoken of in the context of ministry within the church. Bisago (2011) states, “When we think of the call to ministry, we normally think first of a preaching ministry as pastor of a church. Today, however, there are hundreds of opportunities to serve the Lord in full-time ministry other than being a pastor” (p. 42). That sounds promising, but Bisago then goes on to list youth, music, education, counseling, and missions, and then even lists such supportive roles as administrators, prayer leaders, outreach coordinators, and so on. He sums up, “There are a thousand ways to serve the Lord—church architects, church planters, missionary aviation pilots, sports ministries, etc. If you are called by God, somewhere in the world, there is a place for you to use your gifts” (Bisago, 2011, p. 43). Notice what is missing from the list—not one mention of an occupation outside of the church. George (2005), in speaking about the pastoral calling, states, “The man is confident that God has commissioned

him for the task that only the power of God can sustain” (p. 83). This is true for the pastoral ministry, as well as any other ministry which God calls someone, even the ministry of being a business leader, entrepreneur, or to work in the marketplace. Marshall and Walker (2005) argue that just as those who go into full-time ministry are called up to the platform to have hands laid on them for ministry, so should those who go into the world of business to fulfill what they believe is their calling. This will most likely not happen as long as the biblical perspective of the priesthood of all believers continues to get undermined by the sacred/secular and clergy/laity divide that continues to dominate in the church environment. Once again, if there is research concluding that businesses and the marketplace are the new, or rediscovered, paradigm God is working in and through, then it is incumbent on the church and its leaders to embrace this movement for the church to be more effective in reaching the lost with the gospel.

Business Literature and the Call

Theology

There is plenty of literature that speaks to business leaders and entrepreneurs and their calling. However, most of the literature is written for the business leader, entrepreneur, and those in the marketplace, by those who have been in business or are involved in some type of parachurch ministry to business leaders. This is understandable but rather begs the question of why this topic is rarely addressed from the pulpit.

There is a lot of literature dealing with the theology of business and work (Doty, 2011; Wong & Rae, 2011; Loftin & Dimsdale, 2018; Okonkwo, 2012; Stevens, 1999; Volf, 1991). Furthermore, a lot of literature is written delving into the theological standpoint of the priesthood of all believers (Hobbs, 1990; Crane, 1994; Muthiah, 2009; Pearcey, 2005). Theology is not the issue when it comes to proving the validity of whether or not there is a place for the discussion of

business in the church. The more appropriate question to ask is why it is not. As previously mentioned, there are several reasons, whether it is the sacred/secular and clergy/laity divide that still exists in the church, the idea that the calling of a person is directly tied to ministry either in the church or supporting the church, or the negative perceptions associated with business, such as corruption, wealth, profits, and so on that still exists. Therefore, it is incumbent to provide literature and research showing practically that if theology is applied, it will positively impact the church, business leaders, and entrepreneurs, especially as it relates to the furtherance and sharing of the gospel.

Work as it Relates to Calling

Once again, there is a substantial amount of literature related to work. A portion of the literature deals with individuals' personal calling, whether as a business leader, entrepreneur, or working in the marketplace. The other picture given as it relates to work is how one should conduct themselves in their business or the marketplace. Concerning the calling to work, or, more specifically, vocation, Knapp (2012) states:

The word is derived from the Latin *vocare*, which literally means ‘to call.’ God calls each of us into a divine relationship, and we are to respond to this call through the living of our lives, including our lives at work. (p. 89)

There is much misunderstanding of exactly what this means. As spoken of earlier, there is the call to salvation; however, there is also a call to enter into God’s service in both the church and the world. However, because of the distorted view of vocation or one’s career, many seek out a career or vocation as a way to seek financial success, security, access to power and privilege, and a guarantee of leisure and satisfaction (Stevens & Banks, 2005). Therefore, it is the choice of the person what career or vocation they choose. Pastors and those in church leadership have a calling; however, it is easy to see how those who feel “called” to the ministry see themselves in

what they believe is a higher calling and why this thinking still permeates the church. It is not their choice. Stevens and Banks (2005) highlight the issue:

A truncated understanding that Christ's work of salvation as merely relating to the Great Commission has resulted in the tragic loss of dignity to persons working in various so-called secular occupations. Thus, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and homemakers have been tacitly placed in a subordinate rank to pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. The gospel involves us in serving God's purposes in the world through civic, social, political, domestic, and ecclesiastical roles. (p. 37)

When work and one's calling are put in a proper perspective, it changes not only the church's position and thinking but also the individuals who see their business or their job as less of a calling. Instead, they are to see their desire to be in business and the marketplace, which means a Christian is to see themselves called to be a Christian in whatever situation they are in, rather than equating their vocation with occupation—or simply a career or job. Oz Guinness (2003) understands this when he states:

I note several fruits of living vocationally rather than simply yielding to careerism, occupationalism, or professionalism. First, calling enables us to put work in its proper perspective—neither a curse nor an idol but taken into God's grand purpose. It contributes to a deep sense of identity that is formed by whose we are rather than what we do. It balances personal with public discipleship. (p. 254)

Knapp (2012) echoes this thought when he states, "Certainly we should seek God's guidance when considering career choices, but Christians would do well to give much more attention to discerning God's will in their current situations" (p. 91). Believers need to ask themselves whether their lives are the sum of random experiences or whether God's hand and providence brought them to a place where they may serve here and now. The answer is yes; therefore, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace need to see their place of work or occupation as the place God has called them to reach people with the gospel. Considering it is in the venue of business and the marketplace where most of society spends most of their time, it is where the most significant opportunity to reach people lies.

There is a plethora of literature dealing with this topic (Hamon, 2002; Marshall, 2000; Novak, 1996; Ogden, 2003; Silvos, 2002; Okonkwo, 2012; Leider & Shapiro, 2001; Stevens, 2006). Both the leadership of the church and business leaders must have a proper understanding of their mutual calling. With as much written on the subject, the statistics of how little the subject is broached in the churches and from the pulpits mark a sharp disparity. There is much research needed, not just as it relates to how effectively business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace can reach the unchurched with the gospel, but with many other areas of mutual benefit as well.

Practical Applications of Work

Basic Principles

Literature related to work and how to conduct oneself at work is not in short supply. Look up the title of God at work or taking God to work, and one will find there is plenty to choose from. From ethics at work to having a proper attitude when it comes to work, these topics are at the top of the list when it comes to the literature on the subject. Reynolds and Winters (2018) have written concerning keys to ultimate success at work. Marshall and Walker (2005) bring up the idea that if one is in the marketplace, they should consider themselves as a minister. One of the more recent literature developments has been in the area of integrating one's faith and one's work. Hillman (2010) and the title of his book, *Faith and Work: Do They Mix?* ask:

When you go to work on Monday, do you take your faith with you? Whether at the office or managing a household of children, do you experience God in your work? Does God even care about our work? Does God call us to the work we are doing, or is it a matter of personal choice? These are important questions that every Christian should know the answers to. (p. 12)

More recently, Ken Eldred (2019) addresses many of the same questions in his book, *The*

Integrated Life: Experience the Powerful Advantage of Integrating Your Faith and Work. The

list is endless (Diehl, 1991; Banks & Powell, 2000; Krueger, 1994). There is no doubt the literature covers many practical areas of work and business and how to conduct oneself in the marketplace. Shearer (2015) explains why this is so important:

My aim in writing this book is to equip you with a practical strategy for carrying out God's plan for revealing His glory, Jesus Christ, in the business world. As you journey through this book, my hope is that you will gain more clarity about your God-given, personalized ministry assignment in the marketplace. (p. 7)

When one reads this, it would not be out of place to believe this should be the desire for all Christian leaders and pastors. Yet, the research shows there is still a disparity when it comes to hearing this from the pulpit or offering any discipleship material or classes in the church.

Parachurch organizations are the ones taking on this essential topic and providing the necessary equipping. The hope is if the research can prove that the church offering discipleship to business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace will help not only the business leaders but also the church and its mission to reach the lost, there will be more of the practical perspectives communicated and taught within the church.

Transformation

Of all the literature previously mentioned, there is one consistent topic, which is one of the goals of not only the church but also of all the parachurch organizations, transformation. Two facets of transformation are to be considered: personal transformation and either corporate/workplace transformation or the transformation of communities.

Personal Transformation

The basis of transformation stems from Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Individually, all believers are called to be transformed. Businesses and the marketplace are not only places where believers go in and try to bring transformation to everyone else; it is also a place where transformation happens to the individual. Lai (2015) states:

Transformation begins with God working in and through us to impact others for His glory. He will not work through us unless He is already working on us... The workplace is not only a place for outreach, but it is also an instrument for our spiritual growth. (pp.16, 18)

The approach to workplace ministry by many is that the individual is there to help bring transformation to others. However, as Rae (2018) points out, “The predominant understanding of how faith and work relate has been a one-way relationship—that is, one brings one’s faith/values to share in one’s workplace.” (p. 128). Work is thus an integral part of God’s plan for developing maturity in believers and putting believers in a place where they can serve others. Work creates incredible opportunities to learn, witness, and grow.

What are the ways one’s business and workplace can bring about personal transformation? One way is business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace are called to serve those who come to their place of business or desire one’s services. Another way transformation happens is through conflict, such as having to make difficult decisions to lay off an employee or eliminate a toxic employee. It is through adversity that character and intimacy with God are forged (Jam. 1:2-5). However, positively, trustworthiness and honesty should be practiced.

Practicing spiritual disciplines in the workplace is also a part of the individual's spiritual transformation. Nash (1994) points out after she conducted extensive interviews with Christian CEO’s:

Dealing with adversity or ethical dilemmas drove these men and women frequently to prayer. They cited prayer as a critical component that often emerged from these

situations; at times, the conviction that developed from those times of prayer actually provided answers to difficult issues that were on the table at the time. (p. 56)

Associated with this is business leaders growing in their dependence on God when making business decisions asking God to give them wisdom. Considering most of society spends the majority of its time in the workplace, it is understandable a good amount of personal transformation would happen in the workplace context, whether one is a business leader, entrepreneur, or a marketplace worker.

Business and Cultural Transformation.

The majority of literature concerning transformation deals with the transformation of the workplace or the culture. Business as Mission and Business for Transformation both have the transformation of whole cultures as an integral part of their mission. Johnson (2009) states, “BAM realizes that it has within their hands a God-given opportunity not only to transform their company culture, its people and the immediate environs, but quite literally to transform each community in which they do business” (p. 247). Johnson (2009) believes through Business as Mission, they can transform cultures, and he presents actual cases and real-life stories of cultures that have been transformed. Transforming the businesses and institutions in which people work for the common good is a vital part of vocational stewardship (Sherman, 2011). What is meant by transform is the people who work for the organization or live in the culture would have a transformation as it relates to Jesus and in lifestyle. Silvos (2002) notes:

Nowadays, there are multitudes of believers in the marketplace who hold strategic positions in business, education, and politics. They need to know that they are called to play a vital part in the establishment of God’s Kingdom on Earth. Without their active participation and leadership, our cities will not be transformed...God has explicitly called them and anointed them for it. They can bring transformation to their jobs and then to their cities—as it happened in the first century. (p. 13)

The stories of success in other countries and cultures where cultural transformation has occurred have been shared in a lot of the literature related to BAM and B4T (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Rundle, 2006; Rundle & Steffen, 2011b; Swarr & Nordstrom, 1999; Eldred, 2005). However, Johnson (2009) also believes transformation is starting to happen in America, explaining, “There are major Christian-led, ecumenical, city-transformation movements going on throughout the United States and globally. All of them recognize the vital role of business and the power of the marketplace in effecting city transformation” (p. 247). Johnson is not alone in his thinking (Perkins, 1995; Miller, 2006).

Beyond marketplace transformation, some believe that the marketplace is only the beginning of cultural transformation (Balestri, 2022; Mason, 2017; Fraser, 2006; Silvosio, 2007). God is not simply interested in transforming individuals, companies, and the marketplace, but entire nations through bringing the Kingdom of heaven to earth. Silvosio (2007) believes that the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) is not a reference to make disciples of individual people but rather to make disciples of all nations. Silvosio (2007) states concerning the discipling of nations and the Great Commission:

This represents clear, compelling, and inspiring evidence that nations can and will be disciplined—and by ‘disciplined,’ I mean that they will be taught and will practice everything that Jesus taught...The discipling of nations is our primary task on earth. (pp. 41-42)

Balestri (2022) echoes this when he states, “He wants us to ask Him for the nations and to build towards establishing His Kingdom reign within each of the cities (all spheres of human activity within the land) and to the ends of the earth” (p. 50). Silvosio (2007) uses Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” and Acts 5:28, “And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine,” as proof that the disciples did exactly what

Jesus commanded them in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to Jerusalem first, thus, transforming Jerusalem.

Further in the book of Acts, when Paul went to Ephesus for two years, the Great Commission is shown to be progressing in its fulfillment. There, it states, “And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” Silvosso (2007) and Balestri (2022) conclude this is proof that the Kingdom of Heaven coming to earth is being carried out because over a million people have heard the gospel.

Whether you agree with Silvosso’s and Balestri’s theology, especially as it relates to the Great Commission or the call to disciple whole nations and to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth, one cannot argue that the main thrust of the Great Commission happened through the marketplace. This is clearly seen through the apostle Paul when he decided to focus his preaching in the marketplace. It was after meeting Aquila and Priscilla, who owned and operated a tentmaking business like Paul (Acts 18:1-3), that the gospel really began to make an impact in not only Corinth but also in Ephesus. Silvosso (2007) points out:

Paul and his team turned their jobs into a ministry vehicle; and the results were initially impressive and eventually astounding...The key for both breakthroughs was Paul’s partnership with marketplace ministers in an association he turned into a spiritual beachhead in the heart of Corinth and Ephesus. (pp. 75, 76)

Although all of this shows that the gospel went forth in a mighty way, to conclude that entire cultures and nations were transformed is a stretch. However, it does show that many individuals were transformed, businesses and their leaders were transformed, several cities were transformed, and the culture was somewhat transformed when Paul centered his ministry in the marketplace and business leaders used their influence to bring the gospel to others in the marketplace.

Transformation is an essential part of Christian doctrine. Since there is validation that transformation is happening through parachurch organizations, as well as through Business as Mission and Business for Transformation abroad, it should become more of an emphasis in the American church. If the church wants to see transformation happen in their local communities, all the evidence points to the marketplace as to where the transformation will occur through business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those working in the marketplace. As stated earlier, this appears to be the direction God is shifting in His work to reach unbelievers. The church needs to join with God to accomplish transformation both personally, in the marketplace, and culturally.

Rationale for Study and the Gap in Literature

Despite all the literature as it relates to these topics, the literature and research have conclusively shown there is a lack of discipleship in the church as it relates to business, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace and how leaders being in these environments constitutes a calling, just as those who are called into full-time vocational ministry. There is essentially no literature or research showing whether churches placing emphasis on preaching, teaching, and discipling business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace leads to the sharing of the gospel and the furtherance of the gospel.

However, if it can be shown that business and ministry can be integrated with the church, which results in the furtherance of the gospel, then research, along with correlating research on the topic, is crucial. The impetus for changing the mindset of pastors and ministry leaders to incorporate a discipleship program specifically for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace must come from research affirming the effectiveness of a business leader discipleship program.

As a secondary point, parachurch organizations like BAM and B4T already help business owners and entrepreneurs get started abroad by offering practical business insight, such as how to start, run, and grow a business, how to develop business strategy, and in some places even offering micro-loans, so can this also be applied to the local church? Can the church go beyond just offering discipleship to offering actual business development? Empirical research can be a great starting point in changing the mindset of the church and its leaders as it relates to joining what many believe is the new paradigm of God moving through business and the marketplace.

The rationale for the study is that there still exists the thinking that business and ministry need to be compartmentalized, and it is not a topic needing to be addressed in the church. Whether it is the theology of business, the practical aspects of work and business, the calling of people to join God's *Missio Dei*, as well as a person's calling to business and the marketplace, theoretically, the church amalgamating with business should happen. Instead, the secular/sacred and clergy/laity divide still exerts its tremendous influence on and in the church and its leadership.

There is an abundance of literature as it relates to the priesthood of all believers, and through BAM and B4T there is an integration of business and ministry that is working, especially as it relates to reaching unbelievers with the gospel. However, missing from all the research and literature is anything relating to the church and business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace and their impact and influence on reaching the lost, thus a gap in the literature. There is no research or literature on the effectiveness of churches that have a discipleship ministry for business leaders and its outcomes, especially as it relates to sharing the gospel.

The secular/sacred and clergy/laity divide lies at the foundation of why the church keeps a distance from business. As a result, those in business compartmentalize their business as separate from the church and are joining parachurch organizations to help get the discipleship they crave and need in their desire to live the Christian life in their calling as business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace. There are churches and their leaders, however, who have responded to the need to break down the divide that exists, to heed the call to equip all the saints for the work of the ministry, which includes business leaders in the marketplace, and have implemented a church-based discipleship program for those leaders.

The research was conducted and presented to discover if church leaders and pastors who emphasize discipleship to business leaders, entrepreneurs, and those in the marketplace and who have a church-based discipleship program, have had an impact on business leaders in sharing and furthering the gospel, thus, filling a need, or gap, in the literature. In other words, will there be a transformation in the business leaders, the churches, the companies they represent, and the community as a whole as a result of sharing the gospel where there is no literature addressing this?

Profile of the Current Study

The descriptive qualitative multi-case research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Cresswell & Cresswell) on churches that have a discipleship program aimed at ministering and discipling business leaders and entrepreneurs, as well as business leaders who are actively involved in a church-based business leader discipleship program, was conducted to discover if there is a positive perceived influence and effectiveness as it relates to sharing and furthering the gospel. The research attempts to fill the gap in understanding this critical but overlooked phenomenon. The qualitative multi-case research explored from both the business leader's perspective and the

ministry leader's perspective whether the business leader discipleship program positively influenced the business leaders in five core areas: one's calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and their business in furthering and sharing the gospel. Each research question sought to determine if the five core areas influenced the business leader to further and share the gospel.

Chapter Three develops the research methodology that was utilized to conduct this research, which includes the collection methods used, instruments and protocols, and how the data was analyzed to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

The researcher started by putting together a sample of ministry and business leaders. Roberts (2010) states, "Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected" (p. 150). The relevant group will be pastors or ministry leaders who have led or presently lead a church-based business leader discipleship group and business leaders who have participated or are currently participating in the business leader discipleship group.

Purposive sampling was the strategy utilized in finding the church and business leaders. Mack et al. (2005) states:

Purposive sampling, one of the most common sampling strategies, groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question---purposive sampling is, therefore, most successful when the data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection. (p. 5)

However, since the researcher was not familiar with anyone who fits the criteria, snowball sampling was utilized to find ministry and business leaders who fit the criteria for the research. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit difficult-to-find populations by contacting

potential informants or one's social network who can refer the researcher to other possible candidates for the research (Mack et al., 2005).

The rationale for choosing a qualitative descriptive multi-case study is that in social and psychological research that explores human behavior in a particular context, interviews are frequently used to gather information from the particular sample group through the participant's answers to the research questions (Check & Schutt, 2012; Singleton & Straits, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sensing; 2011). Personal interviews, thus, were the primary method of data collection. This is a key component of a descriptive multi-case study. The research questions are open-ended, so the participant answering the question can be flexible in their responses. When done like this, Yin (2018) concludes that it allows the participants to construct reality and think about situations rather than just providing the answer to the researcher's specific question (Yin, 2018).

Consistent with Creswell and Creswell (2018), the researcher was the key instrument for developing RQ-relevant questions and obtaining follow-up data through interviews and documents. The interviews were then analyzed to determine interpretations and outcomes. This was done through coding, developing themes, categories, and sub-categories while looking for patterns leading to the interpretation of the data (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

In light of the literature on the topic that speaks of the concerns related to the integration of business and ministry, this qualitative descriptive multi-case study should contribute valuable insight into the phenomenon being researched.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The question was asked, “When was the last time you heard a sermon or teaching that had anything to do with business?” The answer “never” was contemptuously the response. Unfortunately, the idea of integrating ministry and business is considered taboo from a ministry perspective (Baer, 2006). Ministry is one thing, while business is quite another. This stems from the sacred-secular dichotomy or the clergy-laity split, which means when one is called into ministry, it refers to missionary or pastoral ministry, which equates to a higher calling (Pearcey, 2005). However, the calling into business is just as high of a calling and can be used in ways to reach people just as effectively, and in many different ways than pastors and missionaries. The concern is that pastors are not effectively ministering to business leaders, nor do they understand the benefits of recognizing the high calling of business leaders. If the research concludes that pastors, ministry leaders, and clergy who are better educated on this topic and discipling business leaders is making a positive impact in the church and its efforts to reach the lost, then it could be the impetus for ministry leaders to launch a church-based business leader discipleship program. This research aims to determine if there is a positive outcome to integrating business and ministry and reaching the lost by sharing and furthering the gospel. This chapter describes the qualitative research design, the setting, the participants, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection, and analysis.

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Pastors are not adequately providing Christian education and discipleship in their churches related to business, business leaders, and entrepreneurs (Baer, 2006; Grudem, 2003; Greene, 2001; Wuthnow, 1994; Sherman & Hendricks, 1987). This stems from a theological

perspective that compartmentalizes business and church into two different categories, which are not to be amalgamated, which is referred to as the sacred/secular divide (Pearcey, 2005; (Knapp, 2012; Stevens, 1999). However, the Bible teaches a theology of business and sees business and business leaders as a primary avenue for reaching the lost with the gospel (Grudem, 2003; Rundle & Steffen, 2011; Russell, 2010; Doty, 2011; Bergsma, 2018; Loftin & Dimsdale, 2018). Business leaders need to be taught and encouraged that their calling is just as high of a calling as a pastor or missionary and is just as necessary for reaching the lost with the gospel message. Many business leaders are turning to parachurch organizations to have their unique spiritual needs met and to help fulfill their calling to reach the lost through parachurch organizations such as Business as Missions (BAM), Business for Transformation (B4T), Marketplace Ministry, and other organizations rather than through the church (Baer, 2017). This results in the church limiting its effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission mandate. The majority of parachurch organizations focus on underdeveloped nations; thus, the emphasis is considered to be on foreign mission fields rather than the local community where the businesses and their leaders reside (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Rundle, 2006; Lai, 2015). The result is the church is not employing one of the most effective strategies to reach the lost with the gospel, which is through businesses and their leaders.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the research was to conduct a descriptive qualitative multi-case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018) of church-based business leader discipleship programs to determine whether there is a reciprocal influence of the programs, as perceived by pastors, church leaders, and business leader participants, with regard to sharing and furthering the gospel. Participants included in this study are among those who have implemented

or participated in a discipleship program within their church which focused on business leaders or potential business leaders. Assessments entailed interviews to identify perceived program influence on business leaders, as evidenced by sharing and furthering the gospel through business leaders and their businesses. Five thematic categories were explored to determine the program's influence: calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and business involvement in furthering the gospel.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to the business leaders viewing their vocation as a calling that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 2: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders spiritual formation, which has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 3: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to church growth from sharing the gospel?

RQ 4: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders local community involvement that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 5: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had in furthering the gospel through the business leader and their business?

Research Design and Methodology

The research design and methodology that was utilized for this research study was a qualitative descriptive multi-case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Cresswell & Cresswell), which consisted of in-depth, more open-ended, descriptive, semi-structured, exploratory interviews with pastors, clergy, or ministry leaders who have implemented a discipleship program within their church, and with business leaders to ascertain its perceived influence, which is, does it lead to sharing and furthering the gospel? Business leader participants were surveyed and interviewed to determine if there was a perceived influence on the business leader

as well. These case studies were at the heart of the research and provided the basis for the theoretical construct of whether more churches should implement similar discipleship programs within the churches.

The rationale for choosing a qualitative descriptive multi-case study method was that the topic itself is in its embryonic stage (Johnson, 2004), and according to Nassaji (2015), “The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research was more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened” (pg. 129). Furthermore, Roberts (2010) notes one of the purposes of qualitative research is “To uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known” (p. 143). The goal was to get a better understanding to determine whether there is any correlation between a church having a discipleship program directed at business leaders and a direct perceived effectiveness on the business leader sharing the gospel through the avenue of the business.

The pastors who have implemented such a program should be able to answer why they implemented such a program, as well as provide insight into the influence of the program. The business leaders who participated in the discipleship program should be able to add insight as to whether or not the discipleship program is influential. Mack et al. (2005) states,

One advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that the use of open-ended questions and probing gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are: meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, and rich and explanatory in nature. (p. 11)

When conducting qualitative research, this is extremely important. Qualitative research aims to get insight into the human side of an issue—to explore and describe it. Roberts (2010) notes:

Researchers seek a holistic picture—a comprehensive and complete understanding of the phenomenon they are studying. They go into the field and collect data. They make observations, conduct in-depth, open-ended interviews, and look at written documents.

Rather than numbers, the data are words that describe people's knowledge, opinions, perceptions, and feelings, as well as detailed descriptions of people's actions, behaviors, activities, and interpersonal relationships. (p. 143)

The meaning people attach to events and activities in their environment, and the researcher needs to be open to whatever emerges.

These case studies were at the heart of the research, which could provide the basis for the theoretical construct of whether more churches should implement similar discipleship programs within the churches. This methodology also affords the opportunity to conduct open-ended questioning, which will allow a maximum range of discussion and the ability to pursue topics that emerge during the conversations while still adhering to the narrow and specific focus of the research questions. Furthermore, this also allows one to listen to others' interpretations and perspectives, adding additional insight to the phenomenon being researched that might not have been previously considered. The multiple-case study allowed the opportunity to select cases in geographically diverse areas in different regions of the country to increase the external validity over a single case study (Mack et al., 2005).

There is very little research and precedence in this area of research, thus making a qualitative case study a starting point for further and replicable research. Johnson (2004) did a descriptive case study dissertation on the impact of marketplace missiology related to parachurch organizations. This was the only research-based doctoral dissertation that was found dealing with business and ministry. Johnson's (2004) research was a descriptive multiple-case study where he conducted informal, semi-structured interviews where the questions were primarily open-ended concerning the phenomenon he was researching. In his dissertation, he pointed to the fact that if the marketplace ministry movement is to be sustained, it needs to find a connection with the church. This research should help determine if a connection has been made with the church.

Lee (2019) did a multiple-case study embedded design to determine the holistic effectiveness of entrepreneurial church plants. His research was to attain a Doctor of Ministry. His research is limited by focusing only on church plants; however, the dissertation does include many of the elements of a case study that can be helpful. His research focused on the entrepreneurial success of church plants, not by numbers, but by spiritual transformation (Lee, 2019). Entrepreneurial church plants are unique in that the church planter uses his business acumen not only to plant a church but also to engage in business in the marketplace. His focus was on three cases of entrepreneurial church plants and their leaders who launched not only a business venture but the church as well (Lee, 2019). Although Lee's research is tied to the church and its holistic impact, it is not in the realm of determining if individual business leaders in the church have been impacted by the ministry to where they are inspired and equipped to share the gospel as a direct result of getting involved in a discipleship program focused on business leaders.

Setting

Several avenues were explored to find two to four pastors or ministry leaders and two to four business leaders to interview for this case study, primarily through snowball sampling. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) point out that four or five cases should be included in case studies to sufficiently represent the total population.

The first avenue taken in finding pastors who fit the criteria was finding and contacting seminaries or universities that have an emphasis on business leaders who educate and train for Marketplace Ministry, Business as Mission, or Business for Transformation. This was done by conducting a Google search with such phrases as “seminaries that teach BAM” or “seminaries that teach the integration of business and ministry.” When seminaries were identified, the

researcher emailed or called the seminary to contact the professor or dean to see if they could direct the researcher to those who fit the research criteria. This snowball method produced several contacts and potential participants.

The second avenue taken was to reach out via email or phone to parachurch organizations such as CMBC, BAM, Business Professional Network, Convene, and the Association of Marketplace Ministries to see if they can direct the researcher to churches or business leaders who have implemented or participated in a discipleship program to business leaders. Once again, this proved to be an effective way to be introduced to potential candidates for the research. Next, the researcher sought to find business leaders who operate their business as a mission/gospel-centered business to inquire if their church offers a discipleship program for business leaders through an extensive web search. The researcher also conducted an extensive website search looking for churches having a discipleship program for business leaders. Lastly, the researcher emailed several of the authors included in the reference list to find potential participants who fit the criteria for the research, which produced the greatest number of potential candidates for the research.

There were not any territorial or denominational considerations except the pastors be from evangelical, Bible-believing denominational churches or non-denominational evangelical churches.

Participants

Purposive sampling, as defined by (Mack et al., 2005; Roberts, 2010), was used to ensure the participants chosen for this research were pastors or other church leaders who have implemented, led, or presently lead a discipleship program explicitly directed at business leaders who own and operate a business and have participated in a church-based business leaders

discipleship program. All participants were over the age of eighteen. The participants who fit the criteria were able to provide insight into the phenomenon, as well as provide answers to research questions. There were not any territorial or denominational considerations except the pastors be from evangelical, Bible-believing denominational churches or non-denominational evangelical churches.

Role of the Researcher

One of the significant considerations in qualitative research is the role of the researcher. The researcher in qualitative research is an instrument. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) state, “Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants...they tend to not use or rely on questionnaires or instruments by other researchers” (p. 181). Thus, the researcher needs to be aware of the biases one brings to the research. This is especially true since the researcher has had experience and success with the topic matter. The researcher has been a bi-vocational pastor who started several businesses which had as their primary core values and goals to serve people and the community to open doors of opportunity to share gospel. The researcher was very fruitful in fulfilling the goal of sharing the gospel with employees, co-workers, customers, clients, vendors, and community leaders. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) state, “Because qualitative data analysis involves so much decision making—so many judgments—it can be especially vulnerable to a researcher's predispositions, expectations, biases, and values, reflecting the notion of researcher-as-instrument” (p. 301). The way to address this bias is with reflexivity, which means being upfront about one's past experiences with the research problem and how those past experiences may potentially shape the interpretations the researcher comes up with (Cresswell & Cresswell,

2018). Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, these biases can shape interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

To protect research participants and ensure ethical research practices, universities are legally bound to utilize the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research must be submitted for approval to the IRB board before any data is collected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016, p. 106). The researcher is required by the IRB committee to assess the potential risk, such as physical, psychological, social, economic, and legal harm, to participants of the research (Cresswell & Creswell, 2018). Since pastors and business leaders discussed personal aspects of the participants in the discipleship program for ministry and business leaders, pseudonyms were used for the individuals and the names of their businesses. The questions were developed to protect the identity of the business leaders and their institutions or places of business. This follows the IRB approval process as outlined in Appendix A.

Researchers need to protect their research participants, develop trust with them, promote the integrity of research, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions, and cope with new challenging problems (Israel & Hay, 2006). Thus, transparency will be vital. Transparency is reflected in disclosing the purpose of the research with participants and all that the research will entail. Confidentiality and autonomy were ensured for both institutions and participants. Consent forms were signed by all of the participants. The consent form (Appendix B) included the following information: identification of the researcher, identification of the sponsoring institution, the purpose of the study, benefits for those participating, level and type of participant involvement, risks to the participant, the

confidentiality of the participant, and organization, and names of people to contact (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018. p. 92).

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

When it comes to qualitative studies, potential sources of data are limited only by a researcher's open-mindedness and creativity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). This is vital to a descriptive qualitative multi-case study, which seeks to understand human phenomena. Thus, the researcher should not limit the number of sources used in their research. If the source can contribute to addressing the research problem and questions, the researcher will benefit from using them. The researcher should remain flexible in the initial stages of gathering data for the purpose of other areas of data collection that could arise. In many qualitative studies, the information and data collected early in one's research can make an impact on the researcher's future information and data that they gather (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016). For the initial data collection, interviews, documents, and digital media were the primary sources of data collected to be analyzed.

Collection Methods

Following Robert's (2010) and Mack et al. (2005), purposive sampling was the method of producing a sample, which means the sample was pre-selected from relevant groups with a purpose in mind, that being pastors or ministry leaders who have a discipleship ministry in their church and the business leaders who participate in the church-based business leader discipleship program. However, since the researcher did not know of any specific pastors, ministry leaders, or business leaders who have implemented or participated in a church-based discipleship ministry to business leaders, a snowball sample method was employed, which means when the researcher

found someone who fits the criteria for the research, the researcher then asked the person to recommend others who fit the criteria. (Mack et al., 2005; Calhoun, 2018).

Implementing the snowball method, as outlined in the setting section, led to finding potential participants who fit the criteria of the research. When potential participants were discovered, the researcher contacted the participant through email, asking if they would like to be a participant in a doctoral research study. Those who responded affirmatively were emailed back to set up either a phone call or GoToMeeting video call. The initial conversations were to see if the potential contributor met the criteria for the research. When it was concluded that the person met the criteria, a date and time were set up to conduct the interview. The participants were then emailed the research questions and the consent form.

Instruments and Protocols

Multiple sources of data were collected from interviews, digital material, and documentation. This supported the case study research methodology, as previously stated.

Interviews

The primary data collection was through personal interviews and responses to questions to explore human behavior in this particular context (Check & Schutt, 2012; Singleton & Straits, 2017). Interview questions were emailed to participants before the interviews. Interviews were done virtually through GoToMeeting. They were also recorded and unstructured with open-ended questions, using flexible formats, intended to elicit the views and opinions of the participants and reveal how they construct reality and think about the situations. (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) further points out:

Good interviews delve deeply; questions are geared to specific research questions. For case study interviewing, researchers need to function on two levels simultaneously; they need to stay focused on the line of questions necessary to the case and also pose friendly,

open-ended questions in a way that does not evoke a negative reaction, such as defensiveness. (p. 118)

Sub-questions were developed for the purpose of asking and gaining insight into different facets of the central phenomenon; specifically, has the discipleship program led to sharing the gospel? Sub-questions were used so the researcher could gain a good understanding of how each of the central research questions was answered.

Probes were also utilized in the interviews. “Probes are reminders to the researcher of two types: ask for more information, or to ask for an explanation of ideas” (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018, p. 191). Probes typically ask questions like, “Tell me more,” or “Could you explain your response more.” These elicit more information or add more in-depth explanations. The desire is to get the participant to talk more so there is greater understanding gleaned of the research questions and phenomenon.

All interviews were securely recorded, transcribed, and saved in a password-protected folder before emailing the participants to verify the transcripts. All of the participants validated the transcripts following the guidelines in the interview information in Appendix C.

Document and Digital Material

Two websites of the participating churches and participants were analyzed to see if there was any data that could contribute to the research. One website was from a ministry leader whose church has a church-based discipleship program. The second website was from a business leader whose church has a business leader discipleship program. Websites were searched to see if there was any website content highlighting the business leader discipleship program and its effect as it relates to the gospel being presented.

Upon initial interactions with the participants, they were asked if they could provide any documentation that would contribute to the research. Such documentation could include

handbooks, bulletins, brochures, manuals, surveys, and so on from churches and businesses. None of the participants had any written or printed material from the churches or businesses represented in the research. However, one ministry leader provided surveys taken by participants who participated in their church's business leader discipleship program.

Procedures

After mandatory IRB approval was granted, the researcher took the necessary steps to contact the various institutions and people with the research details and the desire for their participation. Once permission was granted, initial interviews and observation dates and times were arranged, and the document and digital material retrieval process was started. Once all interviews, documents, and digital material were collected, the data was analyzed, cross-analyzed, and conclusions were drawn.

Data Analysis

Data from all the sources were collected and analyzed. From these, themes, patterns, and tentative conclusions were identified to see how applied to the research questions. Similarities and dissimilarities were noted and analyzed as well. It is imperative when the researcher conducts his analysis that his research is trustworthy, which also includes credibility, dependability, and confirmability. It was analyzed to ensure it was directly answering the research problem and questions presented.

Analysis Methods

The data needs to be analyzed before one can interpret the data and determine its trustworthiness and credibility. For qualitative research, analysis begins with a systematic method to convert the data into forms that are easy to organize into hierarchical relationships, matrices, and other arrays (Yin, 2018). This starts with taking all the information collected in the

interviews and transcribing them, all the memos that were written, all the documents collected, website data, and other research that was collected and winnowing down the data to use only that which applies to the research problem and its interpretation. It is what Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) define as, “In qualitative research, the impact of this process is to aggregate data into a small number of themes” (p. 192). This is what is referred to as coding, which is identifying themes, as well as subcategories or subthemes, looking for patterns, and then integrating and summarizing the data for readers (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

With this understanding, the researcher transcribed all the recorded interviews into Microsoft Word. The transcripts were saved in a password-secured file on the researcher's personal computer, which was also password-secured.

For each case, the data was sorted into categories and coded. The codes were those that naturally derived from the data. The researcher used the Atlas.ti software to help input the transcribed documents, break down the transcripts into quotations, and then assign codes and categories to the corresponding documents. These printouts helped develop themes as the researcher could see how often codes corresponded to the number of quotations, as the software kept count of how many codes were created and where they came from in the transcripts for each case. This was instrumental in helping to develop the themes that emerged from the data, as well as seeing patterns develop.

The researcher organized the data by bracketing chunks and writing a word representing a category in the margins. These segments were then categorized and labeled with terms based on the language of the participants. Descriptions of these codes were then generated, which were then organized into themes, categories, and subcategories to display multiple perspectives from the participants (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

From the topics and themes, columns were developed to highlight major, unique, and minor themes. Once this was done, the researcher abbreviated the topics into codes, finding the most descriptive wording and turning them into categories. Related topics were then grouped together. Once the codes and themes were assembled, the data material belonging to each category was inputted into a Word document for easy reading and made ready to perform preliminary analysis (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

The next step after coding was to analyze and interpret the data (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Sensing, 2011; Roberts, 2010). Each theme was analyzed and interpreted using the participant's quotes to add validity. Tables were developed to show the themes and categories that represented each research question, and tentative conclusions were drawn from both cases: the ministry leaders and business leaders. A cross-analysis table was also developed to show that the data was interpreted in light of the research problems focusing on the perceptions and experiences of the participants who attempted to understand not one but multiple realities (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Personal views of the findings were discussed, comparisons to the literature were elaborated upon, the lessons learned were enumerated, and possible future research that could be conducted was suggested (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018)

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is a function of Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, and Transferability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018; Sensing, 2011). Researchers rely on varied sources for information that produces trustworthiness. Such elements as words, ideas, recollections, and experiences of participants, along with their settings, contribute to trustworthiness (Sensing, 2011). Trustworthiness is based on credible research

measures, triangulation of multiple sources, confirmable evidence, and rich details with which to determine the transferability of conclusions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016).

Credibility

For this research, the researcher sought to establish credibility by interviewing credible participants from two different perspectives, one from the business leadership perspective and the other from the ministry leader perspective. Two websites were analyzed; one was from the church-based business leader discipleship program that the business leader attended, while the other was from the church where the ministry leader oversees the business leader discipleship program. One of the ministry leaders submitted a survey which their church-based business leaders discipleship program does with all of its participants, measuring the influence and effectiveness of the business leader discipleship program.

The researcher ensured credibility through triangulation, where three (or more) independent sources all point to the same set of events, facts, or interpretations to build coherent justification for themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Yin, 2018). From the analysis of the two cases, the websites that were analyzed, and the survey from of the participating ministry leaders submitted to the researcher, themes and categories were collectively drawn out. The researcher then reduced the information received into streams, key quotes, and themes to describe what the participants experienced in the context of their leadership role or participation in the discipleship program by the business leader.

Credibility was further established by presenting the same question to all of the participants involved in the research. Once transcripts were completed, they were sent to the participants so that each participant could review and verify what they shared, as well as make any clarifying statements or additional points to the information shared.

Concerning reflexivity or the awareness that the researcher's values, background, and previous experience with the phenomenon can affect the research process (Cope, 2014), the researcher addressed his past experiences of having owned and operated a business that was used as a platform to share and further the gospel. The researcher's conscious or unconscious research bias was curtailed by abiding with the research methodology.

Dependability

Guba and Lincoln (1990) suggest researchers leave an "audit trail" so the pathway of decisions made in the data analysis can be checked by another researcher. The audit trail consists of the actual data generated by the participants who were interviewed. Such information included time spent in the interviews, how the interview questions were constructed and presented, video recordings, transcripts of the video recordings, how many websites were visited, and what information was downloaded and used in the research that contributed to the analysis. The audit trail includes information on how the data was analyzed. Notes that were taken were kept. The development of codes and themes was explained as part of the audit trail. All the coding was inputted into a Word document for each participant's interview. Another individual can then review the audit trail to determine if the same research conclusions can be ascertained.

Confirmability

Confirmability is very similar to dependability (Houghton et al., 2013). Thus, throughout the research, meticulous notes, an audit trail, and a chain of evidence, including email interactions, websites visited, phone calls or video calls, recorded interviews, and transcripts were kept, establishing confirmability.

Adding to confirmability, after the researcher determined the phenomenon to be researched and the methodology to be used, a descriptive multi-case study, the researcher made

sure to use participants who either were actively involved in the phenomenon or at one time led or participated in the phenomenon. All the ministry leaders and business leaders shared their personal experiences with either leading the business discipleship group or participating in the business leader discipleship group.

Confirmability needs to provide a rationale for the researcher's interpretations (Houghton et al., 2013), which were derived from the researcher's data and notes. The researcher used direct quotes from the participants, website information, as well as codes, categories, and themes to draw conclusions that the data presented was based on the experiences of the participants and how they experienced it. Once again, by following the methodology, reflexivity was kept to a minimum.

Lastly, as stated earlier, since there is virtually no research on the phenomenon being studied, there was no other qualitative research to try to replicate.

Transferability

Transferability infers that the findings of the research can be applied in other contexts, or the same conclusions can be made if the study is replicated (Byrne, 2001; Houghton et al., 2013). The research questions were written in a way that the study and application can be applied in similar settings, such as other churches, business leaders, and parachurch organizations. Thickly detailed descriptions were utilized for audiences to identify similarities between the research setting and other contexts (Sensing, 2011). Although transferability was not proven conclusively, those seeking to get a greater understanding of the phenomenon or to add to the research conducted will benefit from the research conducted.

Chapter Summary

The problem has been presented to show there is very little doctoral research that delves into whether discipleship directed toward business leaders generates opportunities to share the gospel. The research questions developed are designed to determine the perceived influence and effectiveness of integrating business and ministry as it relates to furthering and sharing the gospel. A multi-case approach was taken as this was determined to be the best approach in determining if there is any perceived influence and effectiveness as it relates to the integration of business and ministry and the furtherance of the gospel. All aspects of the methodology, including the participants, the setting, the data collection, and the analysis, have been developed to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The previous chapters have described the research problem, a review of relevant, precedent literature, which included a limited amount of research and analysis on the topic, and the methodological design of the research. Chapter four presents the sources and procedure of data collection for the research, as well as the relevant data and analysis for each of the research questions. The next (final) chapter summarizes those results in the context of literature and makes recommendations for further research.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

The researcher started his research utilizing snowball sampling (Oregon State University, 2010) to identify potential subjects. This began by conducting an extensive website search to find seminaries offering any classes on the integration of business and ministry to see if the professors or deans could direct the researcher to churches that offered a discipleship program to business leaders. When the researcher found potential matches, the researcher emailed the professors or deans, explaining the purpose of reaching out to them. The researcher contacted several professors who directed the researcher to potential participants.

Several attempts were made to find via website searches business leaders who owned or operated a business with a Kingdom perspective. After several attempts, it was concluded this would be an ineffective way to find the sampling needed for the research. The researcher then contacted several of the authors mentioned in the literature review to find potential candidates. The researcher contacted approximately ten authors. Each author was more than willing to give several references of those they knew to be involved in Business as Mission, Convene, and Made to Flourish, and several other business/ministry leaders of various parachurch organizations. After several hundred phone calls and emails that lasted for several months, the researcher was

finally able to secure four ministry leaders and four business leaders who fit the criteria to be interviewed.

Four ministry leaders who lead a ministry within the church that specifically targets business leaders within the church, as well as four business leaders who have participated in a church-based discipleship ministry for business leaders, were used in this descriptive multiple-case study. A tentative analysis of each group was conducted. This was followed by a cross-analysis of the two groups, comparing the findings in order to draw conclusions.

Two relative websites were used in the research. One website was from the church where the ministry leader oversees the business leader discipleship program, while the second website was from the church where one of the business leaders participated in the business leader discipleship program.

Data compilation began with a careful transcription of interview recordings, and the transcriptions were organized into two groups: one for ministry leaders and the other for business leaders. The transcribed printed interviews were then coded. Once coding was completed, the data was inputted into a program, Atlas.ti, to help develop data tables and assist with developing themes as defined by Sensing (2011) and Cresswell and Cresswell (2018). The software was also helpful in developing broader categories and themes, as well as to “identify and explain patterns” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 235).

No predetermined codes were used by the researcher, but codes were allowed to emerge during the data analysis (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Natural meanings were allowed to emerge from the participants’ perspectives (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). Furthermore, coding was analyzed for each research question so that themes could be derived from the research questions themselves.

Demographic and Sample Data

The researcher contacted the participants referred by others previously through snowball sampling. The participants were contacted by phone or email, asking if they would be interested in participating in a doctoral research study. After initial conversations to see if those interested fit the criteria, emails were sent to the participants who fit the criteria, including the consent forms and the research questions and sub-questions. Dates and times were selected to conduct the interviews. All the interviews were done through video conferencing.

All of the participants who were interviewed reside in cities or towns in the United States. All eight of the participants live in different states. Four participants were interviewed for case one (business leaders), and four interviews were conducted for case two (ministry leaders). The interviewees, under pseudonyms to protect confidentiality, are described below.

Case One Interview Participants

Case one participants consist of four business leaders, owners, or entrepreneurs who have been, or are presently involved in, a church-based ministry specifically targeting business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Nathan

Nathan is a business owner of an investment firm in Florida. He has been attending his church for several years and regularly attends the church's Heaven in Business group, a ministry that encourages marketplace ministry for business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Matt

Matt spent several years as a youth, college, and assistant pastor in Colorado. He moved back to his hometown in California because of his calling to start a marketing and advertisement business there. He got involved in an incubator group of business leaders in his church that he

meets with regularly to help him bring a Kingdom mindset to his business. Thus, Matt brings an informal ministry mindset to the research.

Doug

Doug was involved in the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship ministry for several years. He was also involved in his church as a worship leader. As a business owner, Doug was interested in how to use his business as a platform to share Christ with others. Doug's church had a discipleship ministry for business leaders and entrepreneurs that he started to attend regularly. He has been to several weekend retreats his church hosts for business leaders and entrepreneurs to grow in their understanding of their calling as business leaders.

Bart

Bart owns a large company in Indianapolis, IN. He started the business when he was 19. He was not a believer; however, after he surrendered his life to Jesus, he had a desire to learn how to use his business as a platform to share his faith. The church he attended encouraged him to get involved in Heaven as Business ministry, which he did. Doug's involvement with this ministry includes speaking at conferences for business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Case Two Interview Participants

Case two participants consist of four interviews of pastors or ministry leaders who are serving or have served in a local church with a ministry geared towards business leaders and entrepreneurs. All of the ministry leader participants have a business background, either owning and operating a business or being in an executive role for a business or organization.

Barry

Barry pastors a church plant in Florida. He is also a marketing manager for a large corporation. He is the only pastor/ministry leader in this research who is bi-vocational. His

church has a ministry for business leaders and entrepreneurs called visionaries. The vision of visionaries is, “We exist to equip, encourage, and enable the dreams of one another and to serve the needs of people in the community, at work, and around the world. Our community consists of Executives, Creatives, Artists, Entrepreneurs, Students, and Professionals from all industries and careers” (“Liberty Church,” 2023).

Dennis

Dennis has been a business leader for over 25 years. He has also been a pastor for approximately 20 years. He serves as a board member for several parachurch organizations associated with BAM. He started to minister to business leaders and entrepreneurs in his church, which grew exponentially to where the senior pastor made him the pastor/leader of this new ministry to business leaders and entrepreneurs. Dennis served in this capacity for 13 years.

Tim

Tim served as a full-time teaching elder for many years at his church in Georgia. He was also a business leader for many years, to the point where he stepped away from ministry to pursue his business aspirations. However, Tim still felt a call to ministry and came upon the realization he could integrate the two. Thus, Tim started a ministry in his church to minister to the business leaders and entrepreneurs in his church. Feeling his calling went beyond the individual church, Tim became a leader in a parachurch organization for business leaders called Convene, where he has been the leader for several years.

Geno

Geno started his career in the corporate world. Based on his vast business experience, his church asked him to come on full-time to oversee the church's ministry to business leaders in the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, area. The primary objective of the ministry to business leaders and

entrepreneurs is to help business leaders and business owners within their community. The ministry has over 1,100 participants.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data analysis for this study utilized thematic analysis, which is “A method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts (Caulfield, 2022). The data was closely examined to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that repeatedly came up. Caulfield (2022) continues, “Thematic analysis is a good approach to research when you are trying to find out something about a person's view, opinions, knowledge, experience, or values from a set of qualitative data” (p. 105). Repeated concepts found in the coded data were used to develop broader categories and themes. Themes were then assigned to the corresponding research questions for each case illustrated by tables.

Case One Data Analysis and Findings

Before each interview was conducted, the researcher had a pre-interview discussion via video conference (GoToMeeting) with each business leader. During these discussions, each business leader shared their enthusiasm concerning the topic of the research, their background as it relates to the topic, and their desire to be a participant in the research. After these initial conversations, the researcher sent over the research questions, and a date was arranged to conduct the research interview. From the interviews with the business leaders, eleven themes emerged from the data and are described as follows, as well as shown in Table 1.

Business Calling

All four business leaders emphatically consider their occupation in the marketplace as a calling and believe God has placed them there for a purpose. Doug stated, “Yes, I do believe that where I am is a calling. There is no doubt to it.” Although Bart noted he “Does not particularly

consider it a calling,” he further states, “I see more of the business being the calling, and what I do in that is what Jesus told us to do, which is make disciples.” Business leaders refer to having a Kingdom mindset that frames their calling. Matt states, “I think understanding that you are Kingdom-minded...you are all kings and priests wherever you go.” He further declares, “Vocational ministry is a calling; Marketplace is a calling.”

All four business leaders believe a clergy/laity divide exists, impacting how one views their calling in the marketplace. Doug states, “Yes, it exists entirely in the mind of the clergy and the college professors who teach them.” He goes on to point out, “That is why so many parachurch organizations exist.” Matt further notes, “The biggest separation between that is when you start to think Sunday and Monday are separate.” This is why many believe the calling to be a pastor is a higher calling than a business leader; however, none of the business leaders believe this should exist.

The website referenced by the business leader who attended the church’s business leader discipleship program speaks to the issue of one’s calling, the clergy/laity divide, and the sacred/secular divide, stating, “A banker can be just as called as a preacher, a craftsman can impact as many lives as an evangelist, a builder can encourage, equip, and empower people for noble purposes.”

Place of Influence

This theme was predominant in the area of the business leader's calling, as well as for research question four concerning the business leader's community involvement and research question five related to sharing the gospel. As it relates to the business leader’s calling, all business leaders believe they have been placed in the marketplace to be influential. Nathan points out, “Hey, this is a field specifically where I am in the marketplace, and God has given me

a position and influence there.” Lifestyle evangelism was mentioned by business leaders and the influence it garnishes with those in the marketplace, whether that be employees, vendors, or clients. Doug shared a story of a person he encountered who was in a cult. In building a relationship with this person, his influence on this person contributed to her salvation process. Doug states, “To move her from a place where a Christian is an enemy to where a Christian is a friend, in my mind, was pretty profound.” Exposure to the truth and the gospel’s influence led to salvation.

As it relates to the business leader's community involvement, being involved in the community is a powerful way to have influence. Nathan, who funds a foster care transition organization, states, “Hey, with our business, let us bring you under our wing, let us teach you what it looks like to be employed, let us give you a path to run on.” This leads to many conversations about the gospel when participants ask, “Why are you doing this?” Matt shared how his company participated with other Christian business leaders to buy the police department gym equipment. Several of the officers questioned that there must be a catch. When the officers realized there was no catch, it opened up opportunities to share the motivation behind such a generous gift. The influence these acts of kindness and generosity had on not only the police officers, but also other community leaders as well was substantial in building relationships and sharing the gospel.

Discipleship

As it relates to one’s calling, business leaders have had a transformation of mindset through discipleship. However, surprisingly, business leaders point to parachurch organizations and the community of business leaders who have contributed more to their understanding that the marketplace is their calling. “I think disciples are being produced as good, if not better, outside

the church in the business community than they are being done inside,” states Bart. Matt also points out that his discipleship and understanding of his role in the marketplace did not come from any sermons he has heard but from his involvement with Heaven in Business and connecting with the business community.

Spiritual Disciplines

All four business leaders point to the Bible as the main source of their spiritual formation. Dan points out that inductive Bible study was powerful and fundamental for him. Matt stated pointedly, “Stay in the Word.” However, being in a church discipleship group has helped foster other spiritual disciplines as well, such as prayer, worship, stewardship, and so on.

Transformation

Another particular aspect business leaders pointed out was how they grew in their understanding that they needed to stay close to God and that God was with them in the marketplace. Relationship with God was vital to their transformation. Nathan notes, “He has chosen to partner with us, and the same is true with business. He wants to be a part of every aspect of our life.” Dan states:

When it comes to disciplines and daily Scriptures, quiet times, and things like that, the emphasis with Him is more towards presence, realizing that God is with us, and he is engaged with us, that business is an activity that is a spiritual activity, and trying to understand that manifestation.

Behavioral transformation, mainly learning and participating in spiritual disciplines, has contributed to transformation and has helped the participants in sharing the gospel, as Matt points out, “It has helped me in sharing the gospel because of the transformation.”

Being More Like Jesus

Being more like Jesus was a theme that emerged from the interviews. Matt states, “I am not the same person, and because I am more like Jesus, I also can share more and get to enjoy the

fruits of the Spirit and the fruits of life more because of Jesus.” Since Jesus shared the gospel, business leaders feel the compulsion to imitate Him. Nathan concluded, “Again, it is being connected and feeling the Father’s heart for those people.” The Father’s heart is for those who do not have a relationship with God. Being like Jesus is having the same heart for the lost.

Perspectives of Church Growth

The perspective of business leaders as it relates to church growth is that it is not that important, nor the proper perspective to have. Doug, in response to the question about church growth, states, “Church growth is not on the radar. Just not interested in church growth.” The participants emphasized meeting needs, having conversations, and influencing others for Christ. Developing community is a priority for business leaders. Nathan talks about the importance of having conversations, “If you are looking for opportunities...you cannot help but have conversations with people.” When Matt was asked about whether or not any of his employees or clients had joined the church, Matt responded, “No.” However, he pointed out that he continues to plant seeds, and “We continue to share our faith and share the gospel,” which is the perspective the business leaders hold.

Church Growth

This is not to say church growth has not happened, as each of the participants stated affirmatively that they believe church growth has happened as a result of their sharing the gospel. All of the business leaders also expressed that church growth has not necessarily contributed to their individual church’s growth but to church growth overall. Bart notes:

But a number of people here in our business currently, and also people who have been here and then gone away, as well as vendors that we have shared the gospel with, have come to faith and are now actively participating in a church.

Nathan spoke about business workshops his church puts on for local businesspeople. The salvation process started as a conversation, which led to the person being invited to attend the workshop. After the workshop, the person was then invited to attend the church, which he did. This points to the salvation process that started with a conversation about the gospel and ended with the person becoming a believer and contributing to church growth.

Community Engagement

This theme is derived from the business leader's actual involvement in the community with organizations. Some of the involvement was through the church's community involvement; however, there was also personal individual involvement in the community. Participation in the church's community outreach programs to the homeless, for example, was referenced by one of the business leaders.

Two of the participant business leaders shared how they would go to businesses, and they would ask if anyone had any prayer needs. Nathan shared how he and his business are personally funding a foster care organization helping kids transition out of foster care to help them learn basic life skills and leadership development. Matt shared how he brought together several business leaders to put on a banquet for all the leaders in his community, as well as provide lunches for the local police community.

Brand/Messaging

This theme stemmed from one of the sub-questions from research question five concerning whether the companies represented by the participants had any printed or digital marketing material that in some way reflected the gospel. Three of the four business leaders do not have any printed or digital material reflecting they are Christians or a Christian-owned business. The concern as to why stems from the belief that if they had that language in their

marketing material, it would only appeal to other Christians, which would, in turn, go against the very principle of being in the marketplace to have influence and the opportunity to share the gospel. Bart had Christian logos and language in his marketing material; however, Bart pointed out, “When I started my second business, I took it all off because I realized that the people I wanted to reach, I was actually probably closing the door by having my big fish on there.”

Doug stated the reason he does not have any marketing material reflecting his Christian beliefs is “The language of the church makes no sense to the language of business.” The one who does have logos on the company vehicles is not overtly Christian. It is a three-letter acronym that is out there to elicit a question as to what it stands for, which, when asked, allows the business leader to share his faith.

This does not mean business leaders do not reflect their Christian faith in their branding and messaging. Their branding and messaging are reflected in a more covert than overt way. Nathan states, “That is something where it is not very in your face, but we are clear as far as who we are...it just looks different, overt versus covert.” Matt points out the need to have the company's values in line with Christian values and reflect the character of Christ. Matt states:

So, as my brand, my reputation, my graphics, the graphic parts of my brand, the words I use in any of my media or anything that represents my company or me, the products I offer, the way I offer them, the promises I make, it all has to be integrous and represent the character of Christ and the way He is described.

Moreover, if there was ever a negative transaction, character issues, shoddy work, or shady products, one's negative perspective of Christians could be radically impacted and become a deterrent to sharing the gospel.

Sharing the Gospel

This theme was a natural result of the research topic. Business leaders believe they are called to the marketplace to be influential, have conversations, build relationships, and earn the right to share the gospel. Doug notes:

What happens is that business relationships provide a framework for personal relationships, and then those personal relationships are the platform from which those discussions occur. My experience is that it is one of the most common natural things that happen ever that you end up talking to people about Christ and following Christ all the time. You cannot help it.

Nathan stated, “I would even say, in the business community or the marketplace, whether it is a teacher, a police officer, a social worker, or someone in business, there is actually more opportunity to share and spread their faith.” The business leaders repeatedly communicated they were in the marketplace to share about Christ. They have been disciplined to believe that. They have shared their faith with co-workers, vendors, and clients. The conversations often stem from questions about how they run their business or why they do what they do.

Table 1:

Emergent Themes and Categories for Case One

Case 1-Business Leaders	
Themes	Categories
RQ-1 Calling	
Business Calling	Make Disciples Kingdom Mindset Marketplace Clergy vs. Laity Impact
Place of Influence	Exposed to Truth Lifestyle Evangelism Sharing the Gospel Salvation Process Relationships
Discipleship	Community of Business Leaders Business Parachurch Organizations

	Transformation of Mindset Benefits Teaching Business Leaders
RQ-2 Spiritual Formation	
Spiritual Disciplines	Bible Influence Other Disciplines
Transformation	Discipleship From Pastors Relational Discipleship Behavioral Transformation
Being Like Jesus	Surrendered Life God With Us Sharing the Gospel
RQ-3 Church Growth	
Perspectives On Church Growth	Not About Church Growth Meeting Needs Conversations Influence
Church Growth	Participation in Church Visiting Church Salvation Process
RQ-4 Community Involvement	
Community Engagement	Business Political Arena Foster Care Homeless
Place of Influence	Conversations Sharing the Gospel Open Doors Provide Resources
RQ-5 Business Leader and Business	
Brand/Messaging	Negative Perspectives Closing Doors Alienate
Influence	Light In the Dark Pray/Share Transformation

Tentative Conclusions from Case One

The research study's purpose was to discover if there was a perceived correlation between a business leader's involvement in a church-based ministry specifically designed for business leaders that impacts the business leader's view of their calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and ultimately if it has influenced the business leader to

share the gospel. Case one is business leaders sharing their perspectives on the topic and the tentative conclusions they have drawn from their participation in the church-based business leader discipleship program.

RQ 1-Calling. All of the business leaders expressed affirmatively that their involvement in the ministry for business leaders significantly impacted their views as it relates to their calling in the marketplace and as business leaders. When the researcher was developing the codes, the researcher noted at least 37 instances of impact on the business leader as it relates to their calling that derived from their ministry involvement. Discipleship from their involvement in the ministry produced a transformation of mindset relating to one's calling, which ultimately produced confidence in sharing the gospel.

The business leader's perspective on the clergy/laity divide was clarified to where the business leaders realized their business was their full-time ministry, their place of influence, and the place where they were placed by God to share the gospel and make disciples. The business leaders also expressed their confidence that their calling to the marketplace was just as high of a calling as that of a pastor, which also built their confidence in sharing the gospel. The church website with the business leader discipleship program supports that they exist to help business leaders understand their high calling. The website speaks to the influence the church wants to exert on the business leader to empower the business leader in the community to share and further the gospel.

Each of the business leaders was asked directly (sub-question 5) if their involvement in the business ministry has led to furthering the gospel through their business. All of the business leaders answered in the affirmative, with one stating, "Yes, absolutely," while another stated, "Nothing ever had an impact like that program did for me."

RQ 2-Spiritual Formation. The themes related to research question two were asked to determine if involvement in the business leader discipleship program influenced their spiritual formation, ultimately leading to sharing and furthering the gospel. Here again, it can be concluded that the business leader discipleship program had a tremendous impact on the business leaders, which helped to propel the business leader to share the gospel.

There were 14 points of direct impact on the business leader's spiritual formation that helped to bring behavioral transformation, such as having surrendered life and being more like Jesus. Being more like Jesus was a major factor in the business leader's desire to share the gospel. As the business leaders grew in their understanding of Jesus and their understanding of spiritual disciplines, so did their desire to use their workplace platform to share the gospel. When one of the business leaders was asked if his involvement in the discipleship program had influenced him to share the gospel, his response was, "I think so. I think that is real. It is a very real awakening."

The one spiritual discipline that has been the most impactful on business leaders has been the influence of the Bible, followed by prayer. When the business leaders expressed what this meant to them, they concluded that God was with them in the marketplace. Matt concluded, "It has helped me in sharing the gospel because of the transformation...I also can share the gospel more because my journey on sharing the gospel has become more...my ability to share the gospel has deepened also." This type of thinking was developed through the business leader's involvement in the church-based discipleship program.

RQ 3-Church Growth. Question three developed two themes. One was concerned with the perception of church growth, while the other was about actual church growth. The idea that sharing the gospel was not about church growth was adamantly expressed. The business leaders

were more concerned with building relationships, meeting needs, having meaningful conversations, and having an influence on others, which would ultimately open opportunities to share the gospel.

However, the business leaders did conclude that church growth occurred due to their involvement in the business leader discipleship ministry. The business leaders shared how some employees, co-workers, vendors, and clients have participated in workshops that led to them being asked to attend a service, which they did. There were stories shared showing how God used the business leader in a person's journey to become a believer and ultimately attend a community of believers or a church. The business leaders affirmed that church growth happened because of their involvement in the business leadership discipleship group, mainly by them coming to a greater awareness of their calling and purpose as business leaders, which contributed to an increase in confidence to share the gospel.

RQ 4-Community Involvement. Research question four sought to determine if the business leader discipleship program influenced the business leader to get involved in the community, which resulted in opportunities to share the gospel. There was an overwhelmingly positive impact in the area of community engagement with businesses, foster care organizations, the homeless community, as well as with community leaders and organizations like local fire and police departments. The motive behind such involvement was so the business leader could be in a place of influence that would open doors to conversations about why the business leaders were doing what they were doing.

As a result of attending the business leader discipleship program regularly, Bart shared how he took teams from his business to visit other businesses in the community to pray for them and see what needs they might have. From this, Bart shares that there were times when people

would give their lives to Christ as a result of this. One business owner called Bart and shared with him, “Hey, I had three guys give their lives to Christ. They are coming to church this weekend, and they are getting baptized.” This points out that community involvement also contributes to church growth.

Nathan describes a transformation of mindset resulting from being connected to his business leader discipleship group, which inspired him to be more involved in community engagement. He points out, “Liberty has been very influential in transitioning some of my mindsets of not just being in your city but being for your city.” He further states:

I realized God positioned me here and placed me in this area, and those are His kids, and He has a heart for them, and so because God cares about what is going on, I should care about what is going on has been transformational.

When the business leaders were asked specifically if their involvement in the business leader discipleship group influenced them to get involved in the community and directly led to sharing the gospel, they all responded indubitably; thus, the tentative conclusion is patently evident.

RQ 5-Business and Business Leader. Research question five was designed to elicit a positive or negative answer as to whether or not the business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship group influenced the business leader themselves directly to share the gospel either personally or through the business.

The themes drawn from the research include brand/messaging and influence. Concerning the company's branding and messaging, and whether they had business material reflecting their faith in Christ and the gospel, the business leaders collectively conclude that having overt Christian language or logos will have more of a negative impact when it comes to sharing the gospel. They further believe having overt Christian language and logos in their branding and messaging will undermine their purpose of God's calling to the marketplace to influence others

with the gospel, as one business leader stated it would alienate non-believers and close the door to sharing the gospel with them.

Furthermore, the business leaders believe having overtly Christian language is a language non-believers cannot understand or relate to, thus, again, undermining the business leaders calling to influence the marketplace with the gospel.

This does not mean business leaders do not covertly have the message of the gospel in their messaging and branding. They have it in the values they espouse, the workmanship that they do, and the character they live by with hopes that the way they conduct their business will influence others to build relationships, ask questions, allow the business leader to be a light in the dark, and to see communities transformed.

The business leaders were asked succinctly if they have shared the gospel with their employees or clients of the business, and if they have personally shared the gospel with others because of their engagement with the business discipleship group, there was no hesitation in declaring in the affirmative from all the business leader participants.

Summary of Findings from Research Questions. When it comes to business leader's participation in a church-based business leader discipleship program and whether it results in sharing and furthering the gospel, there is overwhelming evidence that there is a tremendous correlation between the two. The discipleship program positively influences business leaders in the area of their calling, spiritual formation, church growth, and community involvement, which all have led to the sharing and furthering of the gospel.

Table 2:*Perceived Connections Between Themes and Sharing the Gospel in Case One*

Case 1-Business Leaders	
Themes	Sharing the Gospel
RQ-1 Calling	
Business Calling	Bringing the Kingdom to the Marketplace Understanding Calling Builds Confidence to Share Sunday Not More Sacred Than Monday
Place of Influence	Building Relationships Leads to Sharing the Gospel Lifestyle Leads to Open Doors to Share Part of the Salvation Process by Sharing
Discipleship	Discipleship From Program Discipleship Form Other Business Leaders Transformation of Mindset Builds Confidence to Share
RQ-2 Spiritual Formation	
Spiritual Disciplines	Biblical Knowledge Increases the Desire to Share Other Spiritual Disciplines Fostered Desire to Share
Transformation	Pastoral and Relational Discipleship Strengthened Resolve to Share Behavioral Transformation Reinforcement
Being Like Jesus	God With Us Encourages Surrendered Life Propels Sharing
RQ-3 Church Growth	
Perspectives On Church Growth	Church Growth Not a Motivating Factor Meeting Needs, Prompting Conversations Place of Influence Opens Opportunities to Share
Church Growth	Sharing the Gospel Leads to Invitations to Church Sharing Is Part of the Salvation Process
RQ-4 Community Involvement	
Community Engagement	Engagement in Various Community Activities for Gospel Engagement
Place of Influence	Providing Resources to Community Opens Doors to Gospel Conversations
RQ-5 Business Leader and Business	
Brand/Messaging	Covert Messaging More Effective Than Overt
Influence	Called to Be a Light in the Dark Community Transformation as a Calling

Case Two Data Analyses and Findings

Before each interview was conducted, the researcher had a pre-interview discussion via video conference (GoToMeeting) with each ministry leader. During these discussions, each ministry leader shared their ministry perspective concerning the research topic, their background as it relates to the topic, and their desire to participate in the research. After these initial conversations, the researcher sent over the research questions, and a date was arranged to conduct the research interview. From the interviews with the ministry leaders, eight themes emerged from the data and are described as follows, as shown in Table 3.

Transformation of Mindset. The ministry leaders collectively believe a business leader's calling to the marketplace is a calling placed on the business leader by God. However, they believe business leaders did not have this mindset when they started their business. They postulate that this transformation of mindset happened as a result of their involvement in the business leader discipleship program. Dennis points out:

I feel like the people we have taken through the discipleship program to help them understand how their faith integrates with their work have really focused tremendously on doing all the things we talked about...they certainly began thinking of their work as part of the role God had for them in the Kingdom, and that it was a very key part of their whole integrated faith of everything that they did.

Concerning business leader's involvement in the discipleship program, Geno postulates:

We get them involved with the promise of helping them grow their business, and how we help them grow their business is we connect their business to their faith and help them with an understanding that God has called them to be in business, that God has a purpose in their business.

Ministry leaders overwhelmingly credit the business leader's change of perspective as it relates to their calling on their participation in the church-based discipleship program.

Surprisingly, the ministry leaders also point to the poor job the church has done when it comes to the church helping business leaders understand their calling. One leader stated, "I do

not think our churches do a good job of helping business leaders understand what it is,” while another ministry leader said, “Yeah, I think a lot of this has actually come, unfortunately, from the church...I feel like it is the church that has actually propagated quite a bit” in speaking about the clergy/laity divide. The clergy/laity divide, or the pastor has a higher calling than a business leader, was a perspective the ministry leaders attribute to what the church unintentionally communicates because of their push to get people involved in the ministry at the church. One leader pointed out he was raised by being taught the greatest thing you can do is serve in the church. Dennis states:

I have talked to a number of pastors who have only been pastors in their entire careers, and I think they still feel that was a little bit, that a pastor, a vocational pastor, is a special calling, and it is, but that it is a bit higher calling than people in the marketplace.

However, the business leaders, through their participation in the church-based discipleship program, have had their perspectives changed. Concerning the clergy/laity divide and the higher calling viewpoint, Geno states:

I would say that most do whenever they first come to our program; most would see that divide as happening from a practical standpoint during their week. So, their week is very divided into their business, their family, and then their possible church involvement on the weekends. And so, they would describe that as very distinct that what I do as a business owner is very distinct from me being involved at the church, which is very distinct from being involved with the family, even subconsciously that is the way that they view it. They would also describe that there is a divide because they may feel that they should connect those two things: their church and their business. But most of them either do not know how or think they cannot due to the current political climate, socioeconomic climate, et cetera. And so, most are unaware. The people who are aware either do not know how or feel like they cannot.

Barry further points to the transformation of mindset stemming from the business leader’s discipleship as it relates to one’s calling:

I believe most people believe, yes, that it is. If I am called to the marketplace, somehow, that is less than if I am called to be a pastor. By the time they have journeyed alongside us for a while, they begin to realize, ‘Wait, my marketplace, my role is my call, and that is just as equal as Barry’s role in pastoring the church.’

Three of the ministry leaders specifically have developed their curriculum for business leaders to help the business leaders understand there is no divide, and everything is sacred.

The website of the church where the business leader oversees the business leader discipleship program aligns with this thinking. The website states, “The lessons we help you understand that your work is ‘sacred’ and a holy calling from God. It will also help you discover ways to integrate your faith at work.” The purpose of the business leader discipleship program is to help business owners come to the realization of their high and holy calling to the marketplace.

Place of Influence. This theme emerged from research questions one, three, and four. For all three research questions, the influence was bi-directional, meaning that as the ministry leaders influenced the business leaders through their involvement in the business leader discipleship program, they were influenced in the marketplace to influence others, especially regarding sharing the gospel. As it relates to research question one, being in a place of influence opened up opportunities for questions to be asked about the gospel, growing in confidence in sharing the gospel, and being able to naturally share the gospel stemming from the business leader's involvement in the church-based discipleship program.

Tim spoke of the influence a business leader has when they are working out their calling in their business, that it creates an attractiveness to Jesus. The result of this is “We teach business leaders how to live out their calling in the marketplace, that evangelism would come naturally because people would be attracted...attract people to Jesus and evangelism is a byproduct.”

Dennis corroborates this when he says:

One of the things we have done with our people is that we talked about these principles, we have coached them on looking for opportunities, and when the opportunity arises, we begin asking questions that help people to really want to know the truth...I feel like that question thing has been one of the key things that we discovered that was kind of a

breakthrough for us and a breakthrough for our participants in sharing the gospel, so it felt very natural.

As the business leaders grew in their understanding of their calling and their understanding of their place of influence in the marketplace, so did their confidence in wanting to share the gospel.

Barry postulates:

Because people have grown in their business leadership, they want to share about what Christ has done, like how God has influenced them in the marketplace, how they are pressed into their growth in God, and how that affected work. They will naturally come to you and be like, 'Hey, I want to share,' and what naturally starts to happen is you have more confidence that you are equipped and called to the marketplace, and that is your primary ministry, and you want to get people to Jesus.

One of the key points concerning influence is how the discipleship program for business leaders bolstered the business leader's confidence, which occurred when sharing the gospel became very natural.

Concerning research question three and church growth, influence was a factor contributing to church growth. Denny gave an example of a non-believer coming to church and inviting other non-believers to church before becoming believers. He points out it started through somebody who happened to be a believer from our church and involved in the business leader discipleship program who began sharing their life with them as if they were in the marketplace. Tom also shared a couple of stories about believers' influence on individuals. In one case, a woman called the business leader 10 years after she left the business because of how the business leaders ran his business. As a result, the business leader took advantage of the opportunity and was able to share why he ran the business the way he did. This led to sharing the gospel with the woman, resulting in the woman becoming a believer, getting baptized, and joining a church, which points to the salvation process that started because of the business leader's positive influence on the woman.

Geno also points out business leaders have invited non-believing business leaders to come to the church-based discipleship program, and they eventually commit to Jesus and join the church. He also noted business leaders from other churches would come to his church's business leader group, then take what they have learned and influence others to go to that business leader's church, which results in other churches growing as well.

This theme emerged from research question four as all four ministry leaders were resolute in how the business leader's engagement with the discipleship group led the business leaders to want more influence in the community. The people the business leaders know, the relationships they have built, and the connections they have made through their involvement in the community spurred the business leaders to look for ways they could have more significant influence and impact. Geno states:

We have several business owners who have gotten involved not only in the Chamber of Commerce but also politically involved and running for different offices, school boards, and administrative positions. This has come as a direct result of some of our curriculum... We focus on how to run your business, how to have influence in your business and on your employees, and then we talk about expanding to the community.

Barry also spoke of those who have run for political offices because of their participation in the church-based discipleship program; they come to a place of not only wanting to make a difference in the marketplace but in the community as well. He has seen business leaders enlightened that their voices are needed in the city council or school board, and they need what God has equipped them to do.

Even Denny brought up how business leaders who are involved in the discipleship group led some of them to run for political office:

We have a number of business leaders who have gotten involved in serving in public life to try to have influence there, whether it is the city council, a state senator, or some other role that can have more influence. But it is taking the same principles of having influence

in the marketplace and saying, 'I would love to have the same kind of influence in the political arena.'

Tim concludes, "When business leaders get a bigger picture of their calling, they understand that calling is seamless to church, work, and play that they are supposed to use that influence to cause more flourishing in the community." The business leaders come to an understanding of how God has positioned them to be influential in the community, and the more time they spend in the discipleship program being influenced by the ministry leaders, the more desire increases. Geno corroborates with this, stating, "We focus on how to run your business. How to have influence in your business, on your employees, on your employee's families, then we talk about expanding to the community." The bi-directional influence of the ministry leaders on the business leaders leads to the business leader's desire for more influence in the community.

Discipleship. This theme emerged from research questions one and two. Regarding question one and the business leader's calling, the ministry leaders believe that through the church-based business leaders discipleship program, the business leaders have grown in understanding their calling and how that plays out in the marketplace. Denny points to this when he states:

As we went through the discipleship program with our business leaders, one of the things we addressed was this whole sacred/secular divide and that it is just not true. It is something that is actually prohibiting or at least limiting the scope of influence of our people that are in the marketplace...we specifically were teaching in this curriculum to help business leaders understand that there is no divide and that everything is sacred.

There is no reason to believe that the calling into the marketplace as a business leader is any less of a calling to be a pastor.

Although all the ministry leaders think there is an equal calling, Geno emphatically states, "We have actually found that pastors are intimidated by businesspeople." Geno and Barry point to the need for pastors and ministry leaders to learn from each other. Pastors need to spend

time with business leaders to learn how they think, how they operate, the struggles they deal with, and so on. Geno states, “Pastors typically are afraid of business owners coming into the church, evaluating their systems and processes, because they know that there are some holes, gaps, and organizational things that they could be doing better.”

On the other hand, business leaders often feel intimidated by pastors because they feel they are on another spiritual level and pastors have more spiritual knowledge. As a result, business leaders often feel guilty if they are not as involved in the church or as spiritually knowledgeable as the pastors. Geno points out that the purpose of their ministry to business leaders is to help them grow spiritually so they do not feel that divide, and to connect the business leaders and ministry leaders, so they are not intimidated by each other.

Two ministry leaders identified leadership training for business leaders through events, conferences, and groups has been instrumental in the discipleship process. Barry states, “I think the greatest thing you can do as a pastor is build your business leaders up so they can lead in the marketplace.” Barry holds that being discipled in leadership is paramount to the business leader's influence in the marketplace and results in a higher desire to share the gospel.

Three ministry leaders revealed they have heard or even taught sermons directly intended for business leaders. However, Denny reported that in 22 years of ministry, he had heard only 20-25 sermons specifically targeting business leaders. Tim stated he had never listened to a sermon on the topic. Geno and Barry said they had both heard and taught sermons aimed at business leaders.

More importantly, the ministry leaders, when speaking about sermons, also pointed out how ministry leaders fail to connect with business leaders. Tim brought up an occasion where someone in his discipleship group said, “I have been in this business for 20 years, and I have

never had a pastor come into my business. Concerning pastors, Tim sheds light on why there is such a lack of teaching from the pulpit:

The pastor's world is the church. When they try to relate to you as a person sitting in the pew, they will try to connect with you the things that you share in common. Those things are going to be your family, your hobbies, and your church experience. They do not know what you do. If you work outside the church, it is just a black hole. So, they never talk about your work.

Discipleship is rooted in the business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship group rather than being a church member who occasionally hears a sermon prepared for business leaders.

The discipleship theme that comes to light from research question two and spiritual formation stems from connecting business principles with the Scriptures, the behavioral transformation it produces, and the confidence it builds in the business leader to share the gospel. Denny talks about how business leaders hear from God through His Word and the transformation that it produces, especially as it relates to sharing the Gospel. He states:

They are hearing from God. They are seeing people who do not know Jesus. They see the world around them so differently, and it just changes their heart. It softens their heart, tunes them to the needs around them, and compels them to share the same joy and love they have with others around them.

Geno shared how their curriculum specifically ties business principles with Scripture. For example, Geno points out concerning strategic planning, "We go directly to the Bible and go okay from a business perspective; what does the Bible say about strategic planning? Okay, well, God had a strategic plan, right?" Geno then shows them how God had a strategic plan in Exodus for getting the people out of Egypt, and he then teaches the business leaders the importance of having a strategic plan for their business. He furthermore elaborates:

A core element of the Bible discusses business, and all of our lessons relate to that. Business leaders begin to understand that by reading the Bible, they will understand how

to do business better. So, it draws them into the Bible, and the Lord can develop them, not just from the business perspective, but His Word also forms them spiritually.

Another point of reference of business leader principles emanating from the Scriptures was delegation, especially when Moses appointed 70 leaders to spread the burden of leadership and establish the leaders in Acts chapter six to care for the widows.

Geno then sums up his point by stating that the purpose of their business leader discipleship course is to change thinking because if they can change how business leaders think, the result is changed behavior. Barry additionally believes the transformation he has seen through the discipleship program has been a confidence transformation that comes through a greater understanding of the Scripture and calling that plays out in their confidence when sharing the gospel.

The business leader discipleship program Geno oversees was the only program that tracked the influence and effectiveness of the business leader discipleship program by giving assessments to the participants. Geno states, “One of the questions that we ask ourselves when we started the ministry was how do we track and measure spiritual growth? If our goal is discipleship, how do we track and measure?” Once a year, the participants in the business leader discipleship program take the survey. The survey has a scale of 1-10, and the business leaders are asked to rate where they were when they started the program to where they were the day they took the survey. There are 100 questions in the survey addressing several different facets of the discipleship program and how the discipleship program impacted the business leader both spiritually and in the business.

Spiritual Disciplines. Ministry leaders pointed out several spiritual disciplines developed and nurtured by the business leader's participation in the discipleship ministry. Bible reading and prayer were the two main disciplines alluded to. Barry lays out precisely how he puts a

discipleship plan together for the business leaders so there is spiritual and business growth. He states:

Within the context of discipleship, the big thing about seeing people grow is that we are willing to invest in that side of it. We are willing to say, 'Hey, here is a journal, and here is a Bible reading plan that involves reading a chapter of the Bible, and here is what you could do with this in your vocational calling.'

Denny simply shared that Bible reading and prayer are the two critical spiritual disciplines to practice. Geno elaborates, "I believe that prayer as a result of our model and what we believe prayer would increase substantially from a person who has gone through our program."

Moreover, Geno also shares the impact on the spiritual discipline of prayer, as well as Bible reading:

Because our curriculum is so packed, heavy, and full of Scripture, it directly addresses what the Bible has to say. Business leaders are drawn to their Bibles much more. So, between prayer and reading Scripture, those two disciplines have increased substantially from the business leaders who have gone through the program.

Barry spoke of the number of testimonies he has heard about business leaders incorporating prayer in the business leader's personal life. This has transferred into the marketplace, where business leaders pray with and for employees, customers, and company vendors.

Bible reading and prayer were not the only spiritual disciplines alluded to. Denny expressed he noticed how business leaders' stewardship was impacted, which resulted in more giving by the business leaders when they realized the giving was an act of worship. Denny states, "It was the need that they perceived after they had been taught this through discipleship."

Fellowship is another discipline mentioned by the ministry leaders that is important. Like-minded business leaders share with other business leaders some of the things they are learning, experiencing, and struggling with, which has opened many opportunities for business leaders to encourage one another and share insight into how other business leaders handle

various situations from a biblical perspective. Denny points out, “A discipleship program is an ongoing discussion, and it is kind of a meeting around the kitchen table to try and figure it out. I think that is where the significant impact really occurred.” Business leaders fellowshiping with one another, hanging out with one another, and having business discussions with one another make a significant difference in the life of the business leader.

The survey sent to the researcher asked several questions related to spiritual disciplines. The participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the business leader discipleship program concerning spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, prayer, and stewardship. The small sample that was sent shows the discipleship program was influential and effective in assisting business leaders' development of spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation, which then helped the business leader further and share the gospel.

Perspective of Church Growth. Ministry leaders shared several perspectives on church growth. The ministry leaders affirm church growth is a natural by-product of the business leader's involvement in the church-based discipleship group. Barry believes that as he invests in the business leader's life, the return on that investment is exponential church growth. He further postulates the net result would be bigger and healthier churches if he trains his business leaders to be better leaders. In other words, church growth would occur due to the business leader's increased leadership.

Denny believes through the business leader discipleship program, business leaders develop confidence in sharing the gospel in the marketplace, and as a result, invitations to church would be given. Extending invitations to church, he contends, causes church growth. Moreover, Denny asserts when business leaders are more comfortable sharing their faith, they will go out

into the marketplace and their place of business to look for opportunities for sharing the gospel and to invite those they share with to church, which results in church growth.

Geno holds another perspective concerning church growth. The business leader discipleship ministry he oversees encourages business leaders to have Bible studies at their workplace. Business leaders that have started doing this have shared stories of having tremendous success. Those who have attended and experienced transformation and spiritual development from the workplace Bible study have moved from participating in the workplace Bible study to joining the church.

Community Engagement. Ministry leaders presented all types of ways their church and business leaders were engaged in the community. They listed how the churches were involved in homeless ministry, state fairs, food banks, and various other community engagements. Geno shared how the church hosts specific events that only ask those involved in the church-based business leader discipleship group to attend. For example, the church put together a hospital visitation during COVID for the business leaders of the church to pray and share the gospel with those in the hospital. The church set up a booth at the state fair to promote its business discipleship program, which led to many opportunities to share the gospel.

Barry shared how his church has partnered with an organization called Feed St. Pete, which helps people with food insecurities. Although this was not set up expressly for the business leader discipleship group, what Barry saw develop was business leaders participating in the discipleship program connected with other business leaders and owners. From this engagement between the business leaders, many business leaders who were not connected to the church started to get more involved in the ministry, ultimately leading to opportunities to share the gospel.

From the individual business leader's involvement in the community, ministry leaders shared they know several business leaders who participate in the Chamber of Commerce and other business groups. They see the business leader's involvement in these business groups as a direct outcome of their participation in the business leader discipleship program.

However, the most significant impact of the discipleship group that leads to having a place of substantial influence in the community is individual business leaders deciding to run for public office. Business leaders attribute their involvement in the discipleship group to spurring the desire to be in a place where they now feel better equipped to have a broader voice and platform to share the gospel. Barry points out what business leaders have shared with him. "They need what God has equipped me to do to bring to the area...it needs to be heard within the public sphere," he says, speaking of public office and the need to share the gospel in that arena.

Denny shared how one lady participating in their business leader discipleship program decided to run for mayor. As mayor, she then utilizes her political clout to help get the church involved in several other community events. Denny attributes the mayor's involvement in the business discipleship program to having the perspective she does. Denny notes, "It is because of her being discipled and going out and doing that (running for public office), which has resulted in having a multiplier effect," meaning she is using her sphere of influence to impact the community in a more significant way, especially as it relates to sharing her faith.

Geno unequivocally holds that several of those who participated in the business leader discipleship program have gotten involved in the Chamber of Commerce, and then also got politically involved in running for various political offices. Geno posits, "That has come as a direct result of our curriculum. Our material encourages people to look at the land God has called them to from a community involvement perspective." Ministry leaders point to the business

leader's participation in the business discipleship program, which has led to greater community involvement with the intention of sharing the gospel.

Messaging/Branding. This theme stemmed from the ministry leaders' positive and negative perspectives regarding having any media reflecting the business leader's Christian faith. All but one of the ministry leaders maintained that one's company branding and messaging should align with the company's values, which should reflect their Christian faith. Denny states, "Business leaders feel it is more important for them to express their faith by the values they have." Barry asserts, "What is your business's mission statement, and does it reflect your faith values?" Barry goes on to say, "We have had a lot of conversations about marketing, and does it reflect the business, but also who you are and what has changed in you." Tim collaborates this view, stating, "Some of the companies are fully publicly gospel orientated...Other companies' faith is right up on their core values." The ministry leaders maintain that whatever decision is made in how you want to present your brand, it must be done prayerfully, and God moves people in different ways regarding how business leaders want their company presentation to be.

Even though three of the ministry leaders leave it up to the business leader's discretion about how they want to market and brand their company and are not opposed to having overtly Christian symbolism and graphics reflecting the business leader's faith, all of the ministry leaders bring up the possible negative ramifications of doing so. The curriculum of Geno's business leader discipleship program advises business leaders to reduce their Christian branding not to reflect their faith. The reason he gives is because he has seen companies have as their vision statement something like this: "Our vision is to Glorify God." Geno argues, "As an unbelieving contractor, as somebody looking in that does not make any sense to me, I do not really understand that, and it is not meaningful."

Moreover, the negative impact could be even more significant because the branding could lead to undermining the goal of wanting to reach people with the gospel. Denny unapologetically states:

When business leaders wear their faith on their sleeve by having a Christian symbol or a Scripture on the wall, do they realize that many unbelievers will probably not be very attractive to them? I feel that it has caused people to change how they word everything and think about everything so that they hopefully draw unbelievers to Jesus rather than not thinking about that or pushing them away.

Geno vehemently opposes having any Christian symbolism or language in a business leader's branding because it only appeals to Christians, and "It is not a great reflection of your company to other people who are not Christians."

Tim sarcastically states, "If you walk into a contractor's office and he has a Bible on the desk, get a check." The reason behind this thinking is he has heard of several overtly Christian companies that have done shoddy work and even stolen from customers. Tim believes you have to earn the right to share the gospel, not because you have a Christian logo, Christian language, or a Christian-based company name, but by how a business leader conducts his business, which is more of a reflection of Christ. Denny seconds this when he shares a story of a company that was overtly Christian in their branding, but whenever they did something wrong or unethical, Denny noted, "It just gave a black eye to the whole Christian community." Ministry leaders are concerned about these negative ramifications in undercutting the opportunity to share the gospel or misrepresenting the gospel by not living out the business leader's Christian values in the marketplace.

Sharing the Gospel. Ministry leaders expressed the importance of everything the business leader does through the business should be to share the gospel in the marketplace. To get to this point, ministry leaders believe the business leader's discipleship through the business

leader discipleship program is crucial to getting business leaders to understand and incorporate it in everything they do. Denny points out, “Business leaders have been taught and empowered to look for those cues and look for those opportunities and then ask questions that lead people to ask them questions about the truth,” which opens the door to sharing the gospel. Barry spoke of how he presses hard into business leaders to understand the need to share the gospel. He posits:

That drives me to push even harder into this, to push more business leaders to really realize that place, that space that they are going to on Monday, that is your place to minister to people, that is your place to share the gospel with people.

The business leader discipleship programs that the ministry leaders conduct highlight that sharing the gospel is the essential outcome that needs to take place.

Another point the ministry leaders prioritize is to earn the right to share the gospel through conversations, asking questions, and sharing your story. Geno talks about building relationships through conversations, which hopefully spurs questions being asked. Geno states, “That is part of our culture; it is natural for people to ask questions.” Often, this leads the business leaders to share their stories about how God opened the door for the business leader, what God has accomplished through the business, the company's purpose, and so on. Geno argues concerning sharing your story, “That is the number one way to share the gospel.” Tim further acknowledges, “When business leaders fully live out of their calling to lead their business for God, people notice and ask questions.” Once they ask, it is an open door to share their story, their experiences, and the gospel.

Regarding the assessment that was shared, Geno states, “We have business leaders that have gone from a 6 to a 10; we have others that have gone from 3 to 7. This is specifically witnessing to other people.” Geno rattled off several other statistics the assessment showed

relating to how many in the business leader discipleship group have grown in their sharing the gospel with others.

Table 3:

Emergent Themes and Categories for Case Two

Case 2-Ministry Leaders	
Themes	Categories
RQ-1 Calling	
Transformation of Mindset	Business Ministry Calling Spiritually Equal Integration of Faith at Work Clergy vs. Laity Marketplace as Mission Field Sacred/Spiritual Divide
Place of Influence	Naturally Sharing the Gospel Asking Questions Growing in Confidence
Discipleship	Pastoral/Business Leader Reciprocal Discipleship Business and Spiritual Development Groups, Events, Conferences Leadership Training
RQ-2 Spiritual Formation	
Spiritual Disciplines	Prayer Bible Influence Stewardship
Discipleship	Connecting Business Principles with Scripture Behavioral Transformation Confidence Building
RQ-3 Church Growth	
Perspectives on Church Growth	Through Discipleship Confidence Building Investing in People Workplace Bible Studies Inviting People
Influence	Changed Lives Salvation Process In the Marketplace Attractional
RQ-4 Community Involvement	
Community Engagement	Chamber of Commerce State Fairs Hospitals Food Banks

	Political Arena
Place of Influence	Knowing People Relationships Calling Church Growth Connections
RQ-5 Business Leader and Business	
Sharing the Gospel	In the Marketplace Discipleship Conversations Asking Questions Relationships Earn the Right to Share the Gospel/Attractional. Share Your Story
Brand/Messaging	Negative Impact Appeals Only to Christians Values

Tentative Conclusions from Case Two

The research study's purpose was to discover if there was a perceived correlation between a business leader's involvement in a church-based ministry that is specifically designed for business leaders, which impacts the business leader's view of their calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and ultimately if it has influenced the business leader to share the gospel. Case two is ministry leaders sharing their perspectives on the topic and the tentative conclusions they have drawn from their leadership of the church-based business leader discipleship program.

RQ 1-Calling. The ministry leaders overwhelmingly believe the business leaders' participation in the church-based business leader discipleship program impacted the business leaders' understanding of their calling. On completing the coding for this research question, approximately 60 points of impact were derived from the interviews with ministry leaders. Most notable was the transformation of mindset related to the business leaders calling in the marketplace. As the business leaders grew in understanding their calling, that the calling to the

marketplace is just as important as the calling of a pastor to the ministry, and that there is no clergy/laity divide, so did the business leader's confidence in sharing the gospel. Ministry leaders associated the parallel growth in the business leader's calling with their ability to share the gospel naturally.

Ministry leaders correlated the business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship program to a greater comprehension that the marketplace is where God has placed them, and it is their mission field. The business leaders were disciplined to realize they were placed in the marketplace to be a positive influence by developing relationships, having conversations, and asking questions that would lead to the opportunity to share the gospel.

Each ministry leader was asked if they believed the business leader's participation in the discipleship program led to the business leaders sharing the gospel, and they all affirmed "Absolutely." The assessment sent to the researcher confirms the effectiveness of the business leadership program, at least for that individual discipleship program. It is also noted that the website did not offer any indication of the influence and effectiveness of the discipleship program.

RQ 2 Spiritual Formation. The themes from research question two pointed to the positive connection between the business leader's engagement with the discipleship program and the business leader's spiritual formation. Here, the ministry leaders identify approximately 31 points of impact the business leader discipleship program had on the business leader, ultimately leading to sharing and furthering the gospel. The most significant impact stemmed from the business leader's expanding ability to connect business principles with Scripture that the ministry leaders continually pointed to in the program. When biblical principles and business connections

were made, it resulted in behavioral transformation and confidence in sharing the gospel in the marketplace or place of business.

Other spiritual disciplines that positively affected the business leader's growth and desire to share the gospel were prayer and stewardship. The ministry leaders spoke of how many business leaders who participate in the business leader discipleship program have a change of thinking concerning these spiritual disciplines. When this change of thinking occurs, the business leader's confidence increases to where they are much bolder to want to pray with employees, clients, and other business associates, and by doing this, the opportunity to share the gospel will follow.

There is also an increase in stewardship, where business leaders are using their financial blessings to bless others as an act of worship, but also because they have come to understand that this is a way that could open doors to share the gospel. A desire to meet the physical needs of others, as the ministry leaders taught them, served as a gateway for the business leader to share the gospel.

The survey asked specific questions concerning spiritual disciplines, such as “Do you pray every day,” “Do you read your Bible daily,” and “Has your giving increased?” Based on the small sample, one could argue the discipleship program has impacted the business leaders and has not only brought about spiritual formation but also caused the business leader to share the gospel. There was no correlation found on the website as it relates to a business leader sharing the gospel, except it is an outcome they desire the program to achieve.

Again, all four ministry leaders believe strongly that the business leader's involvement in the discipleship program resulted in the spiritual formation and transformation of the business

leaders. This spiritual formation and transformation results in business leaders being emboldened to share the gospel.

RQ 3-Church Growth. Two themes emerged from research question three: perspectives of church growth and influence. Ministry leaders contend because they influence business leaders through the business leader discipleship program, it leads to sharing the gospel and inviting non-believers to either church or the business discipleship program. Being in a place and position of influence allows business leaders to be a part of the salvation process as they share the gospel in the marketplace. When this happens, it contributes to church growth.

The ministry leaders affirm the business leader discipleship program encourages the business leaders to share the gospel and invite others to church. Denny shows the direct correlation when he states, “The discipleship made the business leader feel more comfortable with going out and looking for those opportunities to share, then through sharing, made them feel more comfortable inviting people to church, which caused the church to grow.” Barry spoke of the need for ministry leaders to invest in business leaders, and as they do, the return on the investment is exponential church growth. Geno shared how he encourages business leaders to have Bible studies in the workplace, concluding that this has resulted in church growth. The ministry leader's perspective is church growth is a by-product of the ministry leader's participation in the business leader's discipleship program.

RQ 4-Community Involvement. Research question four sought to determine if the business leader's involvement in the business leader discipleship program influenced business leaders to get involved in the community, which led to opportunities to share the gospel. Community engagement and place of influence were the emerging themes from the interviews. The ministry leaders pointed out approximately 36 instances of impact as resulted from the

business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship program. The ministry leaders pointed out several ways the business leaders engaged the community due to their participation in the discipleship program, such as the Chamber of Commerce, homeless outreach, food banks, hospital visits, and state fairs. Involvement in the community was through the church's engagement in the community and the individual business leader's engagement.

Business leaders cultivated a stronger desire to be in place of more significant influence by participating in the business leader discipleship program. Ministry leaders expressed how their influence on the business leaders led to a stronger desire to engage more in the community. There was more of an aspiration to seek opportunities where the business leaders could be in a position to inflict the most significant amount of influence they could have in the community. Thus, all of the ministry leaders alluded to the political arena that several business leaders pursued so they could be in a place of greater influence and have a voice. The business leader's passion for sharing the gospel guided them to pursue these types of opportunities where the business leader could know more people, make connections with more people, and develop relationships with more people so they could have the chance to share the gospel. When ministry leaders were asked if they believed the business leader discipleship program influenced the business leader in a way that led the business leader to share the gospel, they unequivocally acknowledged the correlation.

RQ 5-Business and Business Leader. The emergent themes from research question five revolved around the branding and messaging of the businesses the business leaders were involved in and sharing the gospel.

The ministry leader's perspective concerning whether a business leader should include Christian graphics, symbols, or language was left to the Lord's leading in the business leader's

life. The ministry leaders shared that the messaging and branding of the company should reflect the company's values, and those should be aligned with the gospel rather than being overtly Christian in nature. However, the ministry leaders expressed the negative ramifications of having Christian symbols, graphics, and language in their business marketing footprint. First, non-believers do not understand Christian terminology and could be turned off from hearing the gospel. Second, having overtly Christian symbolism and language could undermine the business leader's purpose of wanting his business to be a platform for sharing the gospel because having this type of language appeals only to Christians. Third, as mentioned by Denny, if the symbolism and language of the business reflect the faith of the believing business leader and there is a perceived discrepancy as it relates to ethics or workmanship, it could reflect negatively on all Christians.

The ministry leaders focus on the business leader earning the right to share the gospel in the marketplace by having conversations, asking questions, and building relationships. Essentially, what they teach the business leader is to share their story. As business leaders share their stories, they are disciplined to incorporate how and what God has done in their life and business, leading to conversations about God and sharing the gospel.

One of the questions in the assessment is, "I witness to others regularly. (Mark 16:15)." In the sample given, there were about 60 participants included. Of these 60 participants, the majority of them showed they grew in witnessing to others.

When asked if the ministry leaders believed the business leader's involvement in the discipleship program led to sharing the gospel, all four leaders emphatically stated "Yes" or "Absolutely."

Summary of Findings from Research Questions. Ministry leaders believe they have exerted a tremendous amount of influence on the business leaders who are participating in the church-based business leader discipleship program concerning their calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and in sharing the gospel. In response to the influence of the ministry leaders, the business leaders are thus being tremendously influenced in the five areas researched, which is causing the business leaders to be more influential in the marketplace. The result of this, which all of the ministry leaders assert, is business leaders are making an impact through the business leader's newfound ability and confidence to share the gospel.

Table 3:

Perceived Connections Between Themes and Sharing the Gospel in Case Two

Case 2-Ministry Leaders	
Themes	Sharing the Gospel
RQ-1 Calling	
Transformation of Mindset	The Marketplace Is the Mission Field Understanding of Calling Leads to Share the Gospel
Place of Influence	Attractiveness Leads to Naturally Sharing the Gospel Position of Influence Leads to Sharing the Gospel Influence Produces Confidence to Share the Gospel
Discipleship	Growth in Leadership Leads to Sharing the Gospel Business and Spiritual Growth Leads to Sharing the Gospel Participation in Discipleship Program Leads to Sharing the Gospel
RQ-2 Spiritual Formation	
Spiritual Disciplines	Biblical Knowledge Increases the Desire to Share Other Spiritual Disciplines Fostered Desire to Share
Discipleship	Connecting Business Principles with Scripture Change Thinking to Change Behavior to Build Confidence
RQ-3 Church Growth	
Perspectives On Church Growth	Ministry Leader Invest in Business Leaders Leads to Sharing the Gospel Discipleship Leads to Sharing the Gospel Inviting People to Church Business-Based Bible Studies

Influence	Sharing Is Part of the Salvation Process Attractional Lifestyle Opens Doors
RQ-4 Community Involvement	
Community Engagement	Engagement in Various Community Activities for Gospel Engagement
Place of Influence	Desiring Greater Influence Knowing People, Building Relationships, Making Connections
RQ-5 Business Leader and Business	
Brand/Messaging	Values Over Symbols and Language Leads to Opportunities.
Influence	Share Your Story Earning the Right to Share Conversation and Asking Questions

Cross-Case Analysis

The two cases were analyzed to determine the similarities and dissimilarities for each research question related to calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and the business leader sharing the gospel. Each research question sought to determine if the business leader's participation in the church-based business leader discipleship program influenced the business leader in the five areas described to determine if this influenced the business leader to share the gospel. The comparative analysis is described in Table five.

Table 4:

Cross-case Analysis for Research Questions

Cross-Case Analysis	
Case 1 Themes and Categories	Case 2 Themes and Categories
RQ-1 Calling	
Business Calling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Disciples • Kingdom Mindset • Clergy vs. Laity • Impact 	Transformation of Mindset <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Ministry Calling • Spiritually Equal • Integration of Work and Faith • Clergy vs. Laity • Marketplace as Mission Field • Sacred/Secular Divide
Place of Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed to Truth 	Place of Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturally Sharing the Gospel

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle Evangelism • Sharing the Gospel • Salvation Process • Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking Questions • Growing in Confidence
Discipleship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community of Business Leaders • Business Parachurch Organizations • Transformation of Mindset • Benefits Teaching Business Leaders 	Discipleship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral/Business Leader Reciprocal Discipleship • Business and Spiritual Development • Groups, Events, Conferences • Leadership Training
RQ-2 Spiritual Formation	
Spiritual Disciplines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible Influence • Other Disciplines 	Spiritual Disciplines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible Influence • Prayer • Stewardship
Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipleship From Pastors • Relational Discipleship • Behavioral Transformation 	Discipleship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting Business Principles with Scripture • Behavioral Transformation • Confidence Building
Being Like Jesus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrendered Life • God With Us • Sharing the Gospel 	
RQ-3 Church Growth	
Perspectives On Church Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not About Church Growth • Meeting Needs • Conversations • Influence 	Perspectives On Church Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Discipleship • Confidence Building • Investing in Business Leaders • Workplace Bible Studies • Inviting People
Church Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Church • Visiting Church • Salvation Process 	Place of Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed Lives • Salvation Process • In the Marketplace • Attractional
RQ-4 Community Involvement	
Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Political Arena • Foster Care • Homeless 	Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • State Fairs • Hospitals • Food Banks • Political Arena
Place of Influence	Place of Influence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations • Sharing the Gospel • Open Doors • Provide Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing People • Relationships • Calling • Church Growth • Connections
RQ-5 Business Leader and Business	
Brand/Messaging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative Perspectives • Closing Doors 	Brand/Messaging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values • Negative Impact • Appeals Only to Christians
Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light in the Dark • Pray/Share • Transformation 	Sharing the Gospel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Story • In the Marketplace • Discipleship • Conversations • Asking Questions • Relationships • Earn the Right to Share the Gospel/Attractional

RQ-1-Calling. Two similar themes emerged concerning a business leader's calling: *Place of Influence and Discipleship*. Business ministry calling also occurred as a category that emerged from the *Transformation of Mindset* theme from case two. Transformation of mindset also emerged as a category from case one under the theme of *Discipleship*. The category of clergy vs. laity emerged from case one under the theme of *Business Calling* and from case two under *Transformation of Mindset*. From case one, under the theme of *Discipleship*, the category of transformation of mindset also emerged. The theme *Place of Influence* shared similar categories: sharing the gospel and evangelism, which are the same. Most of the categories from this theme emphasize outcomes.

All of the business leaders and ministry leaders reject the clergy/laity divide and the sacred/secular divide; however, they all acknowledge it exists. The same is true concerning whether a calling to be a pastor is a higher calling than a business leader.

Dissimilarities occur from the theme of *Discipleship*. The emphasis from case one business leaders stems from a different perspective than case two's ministry leaders. Business leaders focus on the learning side of discipleship, whereas the ministry leader's emphasis is from the teaching perspective.

RQ 2-Spiritual Formation. The themes *Spiritual Disciplines*, *Transformation*, and *Being Like Jesus* emerged from the data from case one. *Spiritual Disciplines* and *Discipleship* are themes that surfaced from the data from case two. On the theme of *Spiritual Disciplines*, both business leaders and ministry leaders point out the significance of the Bible as it relates to a business leader's spiritual formation. There were also similarities related to other spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and stewardship.

Case one's second theme was *Transformation*, while case two's second theme was *Discipleship*. However, two categories from the theme of *Transformation* included discipleship, while from the theme of *Discipleship*, behavioral transformation emerged as a category.

Unique to case one was the theme *Being Like Jesus*. This unexpected outcome from the data expressed the business leader's perspective that does not equate to a spiritual discipline leading to spiritual formation; however, it materialized as something essential to the business leaders.

RQ 3-Church Growth. The Business leaders and ministry leaders gave many perspectives concerning church growth; thus, both cases have the theme *Perspectives of Church Growth*. Although they have the same theme, no similar categories emerge from the cross-analysis of the data. The data clearly shows business leaders and ministry leaders have two different perspectives regarding church growth. The conflicting perspectives will be elaborated upon in the conclusion section of the dissertation.

Two differing themes were drawn from the data concerning church growth. One is *Church Growth*, and the other is *Place of Influence*. However, cases one and two have a common category: the salvation process. Although there were two different themes when the data was analyzed, the outcomes of the categories will point to the business leaders' and ministry leaders' agreement concerning church growth and influence.

RQ 4-Community Involvement. The data from the ministry leaders and business leaders produced the same themes: *Community Engagement* and *Place of Influence*. Both cases categories are similar in that they all point to community engagement in some way, such as homeless outreach, foster care, and hospital visits. Data surprisingly pointed to the emergence of the category of the political arena business leaders involved themselves in. The business and ministry leaders elaborated extensively on business leaders deciding to get involved in the political arena to have a more prominent voice and be in a place of more significant influence. This outcome was surprising because this was alluded to, nor was this a topic that came up in any previous dialogue.

Concerning the *Place of Influence* theme, business and ministry leaders share common categories pointing to the business leader's interactions with people in the marketplace or workplace. There were no dissimilarities between the two cases concerning research question four.

RQ 5-Business Leader and Business. This question sought to be a summation of the four previous questions to ask the business leaders and ministry leaders whether they perceived the business leader's involvement in the church-based business leader discipleship group led the business leader to further the gospel or share the gospel. The sub-questions also attempted to ascertain if the business leader's participation in the discipleship group influenced the business

leader's marketing and branding, which would potentially lead the business leader to share the gospel. The theme of *Brand/Messaging* emerged from both cases. Furthermore, the categories for both cases were very similar. The categories produced two similar potentially adverse outcomes; however, the ministry leaders emphasized the positive attribute of values differing from the business leaders.

Also differing was that the business leaders were more focused on the theme of *Influence*, while the ministry leaders emphasized the theme of *Sharing the Gospel*. There were no similar categories, but business leaders and ministry leaders again pointed to the same outcomes through different perspectives.

Evaluation of Research Design

Within this case study, credibility was sought by interviewing multiple business leaders and ministry leaders who have led or participated in a church-based business leader discipleship program. Reflexively, Swinton and Mowat (2006) define this as “The process of critical self-reflection carried out by the researcher throughout the research process that enables the researcher to monitor and respond to the researcher's contribution to the proceedings” (p. 59). In other words, the researcher needs to be aware of their emotions, biases, and experiences to remain as objective as they can be in analyzing and interpreting the data. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) point out, “Another aspect of reflecting on the role of the researcher is to be aware of the connections between the researcher and the participants that may unduly influence the researcher’s interpretation” (p. 184). Because of the researcher's experience with starting and owning several Kingdom-minded businesses and who used his business as a platform to share the gospel, and as a ministry leader, the researcher took every precaution to look at and interpret the data in a way that would not influence the interpretations.

Reflexively from the participants, the researcher found both business leaders and ministry leaders to sound genuine in their responses to the questions. Furthermore, the interviewees appeared to be enthusiastic and excited to be a part of this research.

Though the interviews were voluntary, it would be reasonable to conclude that only those with a positive experience with the church-based business leader discipleship program would participate in the research, thereby increasing the chance of positive bias and reducing the level of credibility.

One weakness that emerged from the data stemmed from the overlap of themes. This derives from both business leaders and ministry leaders having the same interview questions looking to discover the perceived influence and outcomes. For example, *Place of Influence* and *Discipleship* were predominant themes that emerged from research questions one, two, four, and five. Thus, an improvement or change in the design to prevent the amount of overlap that occurred would be to tweak the questions for the business and ministry leaders focusing more on the business or ministry perspective. For example, an area that could have been explored is what outcomes the ministry and ministry leaders were trying to achieve, and whether any of the five core perspectives would have been included in those outcomes. This could also be applied to the business leaders to see what their motive was for joining the business leader discipleship program, then, to examine whether the outcomes and motives correlated in any way, especially as it relates to the five research questions.

Lastly, the research could have been improved and more insight added if the researcher could have visited or attended one or two of the business leader discipleship programs. However, because of COVID, the discipleship programs were not in session during the time the research was conducted.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This research was conducted to determine whether business leaders who have participated or are participating in a church-based discipleship program were influenced in five core areas that led to the business leaders sharing the furthering of the gospel. The research questions focused on the business leader's calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and their business, and if there was a perceived influence in those five areas that led to the business leader sharing the gospel. The conclusions, implications, and applications that were drawn from the research purpose and questions will be presented in this chapter. Lastly, the research limitations and further research will be presented.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to conduct a descriptive qualitative multi-case study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018) of church-based business leader discipleship programs to determine if there is a reciprocal influence of the programs, as perceived by pastors, church leaders, and business leader participants, regarding sharing and furthering the gospel.

Research Questions

Five thematic categories were explored to determine the program's influence: calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and business involvement in furthering the gospel. The Definition of Terms is provided to provide further information regarding the terminology used in the research.

RQ 1: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to the business leaders viewing their vocation as a calling that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 2: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders spiritual formation, which has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 3: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to church growth from sharing the gospel?

RQ 4: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders local community involvement that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 5: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had in furthering the gospel through the business leader and their business?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

This study revealed significant perceived connections between business leaders' participation in the church-based business leader discipleship program that has led business leaders to share and further the gospel. As defined by this study, sharing the Gospel refers to opportunities for business leaders to share their faith with unbelievers about Jesus Christ and a person's need for salvation through Jesus Christ. In the context of this research, it refers specifically to the opportunities for the business leader to share their faith either with fellow employees, clients, or other business associates or contacts. Furtherance of the Gospel refers to any opportunities the business leaders have had to be a witness for Christ in any capacity and any environment. Collectively, the church-based business leader discipleship program was found to influence business leaders to share and further the gospel in all five areas categorized in the research questions: calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and through the business and its leader. The conclusions to the research questions are addressed as follows.

Conclusions to RQ1-Calling

The first research question considered whether a business leader's participation in a church-based business leadership discipleship program garnished an increased understanding of their calling, influencing the business leader to share and further the gospel. Sub-categories

related to one's calling were also considered, such as the clergy/laity divide and sacred/secular divide, whether the calling to be a pastor is a higher calling than that of a business leader, and whether sermons have influenced the business leader.

Both business leaders and ministry leaders conclude a business leader's place in the marketplace is a calling from God. They conclude the business world is their mission field, and God has placed them there to use their business as a platform to be influential and share the gospel within that context. The data revealed business and ministry leaders see the marketplace as a place of influence through lifestyle evangelism, exposing people to the truth, building relationships, asking questions, and participating in the salvation process. Ministry leaders believe that as business leaders grow in their understanding of their calling, confidence builds to be able to make an impact through those influences listed.

None of the business leaders or ministry leaders hold to the belief that the calling of a pastor is a higher calling than that of a business leader, and they are equally called to be in either their place of ministry or their business. Each business leader and ministry leader was asked directly if they believed the church-based business leader discipleship program influenced the business leader in their understanding of their calling and if this influenced the business leaders to share the gospel, which they all answered in the affirmative.

However, two conclusions of concern were pointed out by both business leaders and ministry leaders. First, when it comes to the calling of a business leader, although the discipleship program contributed to a greater understanding of the topic, both business leaders and ministry leaders point to the Church as the blame for the misconceptions of the calling of business leaders. The misconceptions stem from the clergy/laity divide and the sacred/secular divide that has been a problem for the church and business leaders for centuries and still exist

today. The misconceptions align with what was described in the literature review by Ogden (2003), “The Reformers all agree that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers obliterates the caste distinction between clergy and laity. There is no qualitative difference between the two. Yet the gulf between clergy and laity remains” (p. 91). Though this is the case, none of the business leaders or ministry leaders believe there should be a clergy/laity or sacred/secular divide; however, they all acknowledge it exists. They attribute their better understanding of this to their involvement in the business leader discipleship program.

Second, the business leaders concluded that although the business leader discipleship program influenced them in their understanding of their calling and in their desire and ability to share the gospel, they noted that parachurch organizations and the community of other business leaders were just as influential, if not more, in coming to their understanding of their calling to the marketplace. This affirms what was stated earlier by Baer (2017):

In place of the church, dozens of parachurch organizations have risen up that focused on ‘marketplace ministry’ or some other phraseology. Their number reflects the felt need for Christian discipleship in the workplace and the fact that the church is not doing much about it. (p. 8)

The ministry leaders believe they have a responsibility to address this divide in the church and to disciple business leaders, so they understand their calling and have been given a sacred platform to share and further the gospel. Thus, the ministry leaders have a more significant focus on discipleship, the business leader's business and spiritual development, and leadership training.

Business leaders stated collectively that they have either never heard a sermon or very rarely hear sermons specifically for business leaders and their calling. A poll taken by Wuthnow (1994), which was quoted earlier, notes the enormity of the issue when he states, “Ninety percent of the respondents reported they have never heard a sermon relating to faith and employment” (pp. 55–56). Sherman and Hendricks (1987) state:

In a survey of 2000 people who regularly attend church, 90 percent responded ‘no’ to the question, ‘Have you ever in your life heard a sermon, read a book, listened to a tape/CD, or been to a seminar that applied biblical principles to everyday work issues?’ (p. 16)

The authors conclude, “The church has grown virtually silent on the subject of work” (Sherman & Hendricks, 1987, p. 16). The business leader's perceptions align with previous research on the topic, and one can conclude it is still a pressing issue in the church.

A few reasons, or perceptions, have been inferred by the business leaders as to the cause of the lack of sermons aimed at business leaders. First, business leaders feel pastors do not understand them, nor can they relate to them—they share no common ground. Secondly, there is mutual intimidation between business and ministry leaders because they lack knowledge and understanding of each other's callings. It appears when these walls of intimidation are broken down through mutual reciprocal discipleship, meaning pastors and business leaders are learning from each other, business and ministry leaders can work together to help motivate and facilitate the sharing and furthering of the gospel in the marketplace.

However, all the ministry leaders shared that they have taught sermons specifically for business leaders and their calling. This is understandable and should be expected because of the ministry leaders’ understanding of the clergy/laity and sacred/secular divide, the equal calling of a business leader and pastor, and the business leader’s calling. Furthermore, because of the ministry leaders’ interest and involvement in the business leader discipleship program, one can surmise they would teach sermons on the topic. However, it needs to be noted that the ministry leaders believe the ongoing discipleship of business leaders, not preaching sermons, is more effective in business leaders understanding their calling, which ultimately leads them to naturally share the gospel more.

Another conclusion emerging from the data is that the business leaders pointed to approximately 37 points of positive impact related to the business leader's calling stemming from the business leader's participation in the discipleship program. In contrast, ministry leaders noted approximately 60 points of impact related to the business leader's calling that emanated from the data. When it comes to the business leader's calling that translates to them sharing the gospel, the ministry leaders' perception is they are making a more considerable impact than the business leaders give them credit for. Remember, the business leaders pointed out that they have grown in understanding their calling from parachurch organizations and the community of other Christian leaders. This does not take away from the effectiveness of the business leader discipleship program as it relates to the business leader's calling and sharing the gospel; instead, it suggests the church and its leaders need to be more attuned to the needs of business leaders.

The data points to a strong correlation between a business leader's calling and the perceived influence of the business leader discipleship program on the business leader's sharing and furthering the gospel.

Conclusions to RQ 2-Spiritual Formation

Research question two sought to determine the perceived impact of the business leader discipleship program and the business leader's spiritual formation, specifically if it influenced the business leader to share and further the gospel. The data affirms that as the business leaders grew in their knowledge of and practiced such spiritual disciplines as Bible reading, prayer, stewardship, and being more like Jesus, a transformation of mindset and behavior resulted in the business leader's sharing and furthering the gospel. This was also affirmed in the assessment given to the researcher that participants in that specific business leader discipleship program grew in their spiritual disciplines and formation.

The predominant spiritual discipline business and ministry leaders referred to as having the most significant impact on the business leader's spiritual formation and transformation was the biblical influence. Especially important was how both business and ministry leaders determined that connecting business principles with Scripture contributed to the business leader growing in confidence when it comes to sharing and furthering the gospel.

Stemming from the business leaders growing in their knowledge of the Bible and being disciplined by the ministry leaders to connect business principles to Scripture, business leaders realized a weighty truth that significantly impacted the business leaders and contributed more to building their confidence in sharing the gospel. The truth discovered was that God was with the business leader in the marketplace. Additionally, as they studied the life of Jesus, they saw that He was concerned with living the surrendered life, and Jesus was always sharing about who He was and His purpose. Thus, business leaders concluded that if they were to be like Jesus, they needed to share the gospel in the way that Jesus did. When asked if their participation in the business leader discipleship program contributed to the business leader's spiritual formation, business and ministry leaders emphatically concluded that it did.

Related to the business leader's spiritual formation was the interest of the ministry leaders in helping the business leaders grow their business as well. Although the business leaders expressed the feeling that most ministry leaders and pastors do not understand, relate, or know the language of business leaders, the ministry leaders who participated in the research believe that by helping the business leader grow spiritually (spiritual formation) and in their leadership, that the outcome will benefit both the business leader and business. Both business ministry websites expressed that their purpose is to not only help the business leaders spiritually but to help grow their businesses, too. One of the website's opening sentences is, "Practical tools to

partner with God at work, build a better business, and engage the city.” The other website states its purpose: “To help them become top-tier businesspeople and run successful businesses and accelerate the growth of your business, life, and faith.” This research did not examine if any of the businesses prospered due to the discipleship program; however, it did show that the business leaders thrived in furthering and sharing the gospel.

Thus, they conclude that this will foster opportunities to share the gospel, mainly as the biblical principles are associated with the Scriptures, and they put into practice those principles.

Conclusions to RQ 3-Church Growth

The focus of research question three was the numerical growth from business leaders sharing the gospel due to the business leader's participation in the church-based business leader discipleship program. The question sought to determine if the perceived influence of the business leader discipleship program led to actual church growth from the business leader's sharing the gospel. Although all the participants concluded church growth occurred due to the business discipleship program and its influence on the business leaders, the business and ministry leaders arrived at their conclusions from vastly different perspectives.

Business leaders were staunch in their belief that sharing the gospel was not about church growth. The business leaders were critical of having the gospel sound like a sales pitch. Instead, the business leaders emphasized meeting needs, having conversations that would open the door to spiritual discussions, and being in a place of influence that would positively impact non-believers meriting the business leader with the privilege to share the gospel. Business leaders see themselves as a part of the salvation process, which could lead to a non-believer being invited to church, experiencing salvation, and participating in church. The business leaders acknowledge

church growth does occur and attribute being influenced by the business leader discipleship program as to why that is.

The ministry leaders all perceive that business leaders are influenced to share the gospel via the church-based business leader discipleship program, which produces numerical church growth. The difference in perspective is the ministry leaders are focused on church growth and believe their investment in business leaders through the discipleship program will result in church growth. The ministry leaders expressed the desire to disciple the business leaders, which will result in the business leaders having the confidence to engage non-believers in the marketplace to share the gospel and invite them to church or the business discipleship program. Furthermore, the ministry leaders also conclude being in a place of influence in the marketplace is crucial for business leaders because of the attractional influence they can have on non-believers, which also aligns with the business leaders. Ministry leaders see the business leaders in the marketplace as a part of the salvation process that ultimately leads to church growth.

Business and ministry leaders perceive the business leader discipleship program as impacting the business leaders. Although there is a difference in perspective, both groups conclude that the business leader discipleship program has been instrumental in causing business leaders to meet needs, have conversations, share the gospel, and invite those they engage in the marketplace to church. As a result, numerical church growth occurs.

Conclusions to RQ 4-Community Involvement

Research question four sought to determine if there was a perceived correlation between business leaders' participation in the business leader discipleship program that spurred business leaders to get involved in the community and if that involvement led to opportunities for the business leader to share the gospel. The data compellingly concludes there is a strong correlation.

Business and ministry leaders shared several organizations they were involved in, such as the Chamber of Commerce, foster care, homeless outreach, state fairs, hospital visits, food banks, and the police department. When asked if the desire to get involved with these various outreaches and organizations stemmed from their participation in the discipleship program, the business leaders specifically contributed their involvement to the business leader discipleship program.

One unexpected facet that emerged from the data was the perceived influence of the business leader group as it relates to business leaders getting involved in the political arena. Eight out of the nine participants mentioned how several business leaders chose to run for political offices, such as the school board, city or town council, mayor, and senator. The one factor that was pointed out to explain this phenomenon was that the business leaders wanted to be in a more significant place of influence for the opportunity to know people, build relationships, provide resources, and open doors to opportunities to have a voice for sharing the gospel. Being in the greatest place of influence was a topic that kept being referred to as the deciding factor for business leaders wanting to be involved in the political realm. The desire for this emanated from what the ministry leaders taught in the business leader discipleship program.

One unforeseen conclusion was how the business leaders referred more to personal involvement in the community. In contrast, the ministry leaders referred more to the business leader's participation in the community through the church. Nothing was indicated as to why this is; it was just an observation that the data exposed. For example, one business leader spoke of their involvement in a foster care program the business leaders funded. Another business leader told of their participation in a homeless outreach they started. Lastly, one business leader got several other Christian business leaders together to provide gym equipment for the police

department, as well as provide lunches and put on a yearly appreciation dinner. The business leaders point to their participation in the business leader discipleship program as the reason they were influenced to do these various community outreaches. They concluded that they were interested in more open doors and opportunities to share and further the gospel.

Conclusions to RQ 5-Business

The motivation behind this question was whether the business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship program influenced the business leader to share the gospel in the context of his business with employees, clients, customers, and vendors, and did it have any influence on the business's marketing and branding. Furthermore, question five also served as a summarizing question to determine if the discipleship program influenced and led the business leader to share the gospel. The discipleship program did influence the business leaders to share and further the gospel through the business.

The data points out how business leaders were influenced to share the gospel in the business and marketplace, which revolved around being a light in the dark, praying, and the business leader's personal transformation. Business leaders often refer to the reality that they believe they are called to be business leaders and are called to the marketplace to have conversations, ask questions, develop relationships, and earn the right to share the gospel with those God has placed in the business leaders' sphere of influence. Business leaders continually spoke about sharing their stories of how God has impacted their lives and business as a way to share and further the gospel. Ministry leaders shared that this is an emphasis of the business leader discipleship program, while business leaders point to the influence this teaching has had on them to sharing the gospel. The assessment also strongly affirms that business leaders

involved in a discipleship program are influenced to share the gospel, and the church-based business discipleship program effectively accomplishes this outcome.

However, no perceived influence from the discipleship program led the business leaders to change their marketing and branding to be overtly Christian or to point to the business leader's faith. In fact, there was unanimous agreement that overtly Christian marketing and branding negatively impacted sharing and furthering the gospel. Business and ministry leaders conclude that having overtly Christian messaging closes doors and undermines the very purpose of the business leader's calling to the marketplace to be in a place of influence for God and to share the gospel. Additionally, they conclude that overtly Christian messaging appeals only to believers, and the language of Christians is only understandable to believers.

The business leader discipleship program emphasizes that what is vital to business marketing and branding is the values of the business leader, and these values need to reflect their faith. If business leaders do substandard work, cheat their customers, and mistreat their employees, this will negatively impact their influence and greatly hinder their ability to share and further the gospel.

A summarizing conclusion the data revealed was when the business leaders understood their calling, it positively impacted the other areas the research explored. When the business leaders had a transformation of mindset concerning their calling in that they are called to the marketplace to be in a place of influence and to share the gospel, that this calling is just as important and equal to the calling of a pastor, it positively impacted the business leaders in how they perceived their spiritual formation, their influence resulting in church growth, their community involvement, and overall desire to share the gospel. Business and ministry leaders consistently referred to the business leaders calling throughout the interviews as it related to the

other research questions and sub-questions. The correlation between the business leader's calling and its impact on the business leader's spiritual formation, perceptions of church growth, and community involvement stem from the business leader's perception and understanding of their calling, which inspires the business leaders to share the gospel.

Implications and Applications of the Research

Research was needed because there is a significant gap in research related to the integration of churches and business and its perceived influence on business leaders, the church, the local community, and in sharing and furthering the gospel. The positive outcomes in this research imply that it is time for ministry leaders to move forward with offering a business leader discipleship program in local churches.

There is a significant amount of research pointing to the success of parachurch organizations, such as BAM, B4T, microeconomic development, and tentmaking as it relates to foreign missionary efforts (Johnson & Rundle, 2006; Lai, 2015). Research has shown through parachurch organizations, that business leaders are making a significant impact in spreading the gospel in countries worldwide.

Theoretically, if this is the case, then one could suppose that the local church can also have success in furthering and sharing the gospel through business leaders in the marketplace if they are trained and disciplined. The research implies that business leaders participating in a church-based discipleship program are influenced to further and share the gospel in the local context of the marketplace. The effectiveness of the church-based business leader discipleship program in the five categories explored is a call for more ministry leaders to implement a business leader discipleship program in their local churches. Not that business leader parachurch organizations are inherently wrong or a threat to the local church; however, implementing a

church-based discipleship program responds to the two issues presented. First, business leaders would know that ministry leaders are there to meet their spiritual needs, and their calling to be business leaders is recognized as such. Second, business leaders would not feel the need to go and join a business leader parachurch organization to have their spiritual needs met, which, as noted in the statement of the problem (p. 18), results in the church limiting its effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission mandate to go and make disciples (Mt. 28:19-20).

Regarding other implications and applications, the research addressed several of the issues hindering the church from implementing ministry to business leaders. The main culprit to the lack of ministry to business leaders in the church stems from the clergy/laity or sacred/secular divide that permeates the church and has led to the belief that the calling of a pastor is a higher calling than that of a business leader. As a result, business and ministry are compartmentalized into two separate entities that have no correlation with one another.

According to the study's findings, when business leaders learn there is no divide and their calling to be a business leader is just as high and holy of a calling as a pastor, it impacts their influence in the marketplace, resulting in the business leader furthering and sharing the gospel more. Thus, ministry leaders and business leaders need to be educated on the proper biblical theological understanding of work, the priesthood of all believers, and the role of the business leader in the marketplace.

In line with the last point, business and ministry leaders need to come to the realization that ministry is not that which is done in the church and that business does not equate to ministry. Greene (2001) states, "Increasingly, the role of the minister has been to enlist the laity's support in the ministry of the local church, rather than to equip the laity for their ministry wherever that might be" (p. 9). Instead of ministry leaders consistently trying to recruit people into the ministry

at the church, ministry leaders need to understand their calling to leadership is to equip all the saints for the ministry (Eph. 4:11-12). Ministry for business leaders means they need to be equipped to be effective in the marketplace to live out their Christian faith and fulfill their calling.

As stated in the introduction, business leaders are not looking for business advice necessarily. Instead, business leaders are looking for a proper biblical perspective on business, for acknowledgement that their calling is just as crucial to the mission of God as that of a pastor, for the proper understanding of money and stewardship, and for an understanding of how God can use business leaders in the Kingdom of God (See *The Misunderstanding*, p. 30). Knapp (2012) goes on to share, “Our research discovered a widely held perception of the clergy as disinterested in church members' work lives” (p. 25). The research pointed out that there is an intimidation factor between pastors and business leaders for various reasons. Therefore, the research implies that business and ministry leaders need to have reciprocal learning from each other to get a better understanding of the needs and concerns of each other in order to meet the spiritual needs of business leaders. If leaders are disinterested in church members' work lives, the implication and application is that ministry leaders need to become interested in church members' work lives. If this can happen, the study intimates that ministry leaders can be integral in equipping business leaders for ministry in the marketplace. The research shows that this leads to the business leader being more influential and sharing the gospel.

Several of the participants identified that they never have, or rarely have heard, a sermon that was developed and taught for business leaders. Sermons can have some positive effects. The research indicates that a more concerted ongoing discipleship program is the most effective way to meet the needs and equip business leaders to be effective in the marketplace to further and

share the gospel. This was especially seen in the business leader's spiritual formation. As the business leaders grew in their knowledge of the Scriptures and many other spiritual disciplines, they connected biblical principles to their business and calling. The outcome of this was that they understood their purpose in the marketplace, and it opened doors for the business leaders to naturally further and share the gospel. Again, this implies ministry leaders should seriously consider starting a church-based business leader discipleship program, having seen the spiritual impact it makes on the business leader.

Although church growth was not indicated as a problem related to the issue of the research, the research showed church growth was a result of the business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship program. With recent research and literature showing the church's decline in America (Pew Research Center, 2019), sharing the gospel should be paramount to reverse this trend. The marketplace, where the majority of people spend their time and energy, should be considered the primary place of influence for business leaders. The research shows the local church needs to consider how it can tap into this new paradigm and movement, marketplace ministry, and make it part of its strategic plan to reach the unreached of its local communities. One way can be through a church-based business leader discipleship program.

Although, again, not seen as a specific problem that was addressed in the study, business leaders' community involvement was seen by the research to be spurred on by the business leader's participation in the business leader discipleship program. The research shows a strong correlation between participation in the discipleship group and business leaders getting involved in the community in many such ways as homeless ministry, foster care organizations, food banks, the political arena, and so on for the sole purpose of being a greater influencer in sharing

the gospel. The implication is ministry leaders should seek for ways to get the local church involved in the community or come alongside business leaders who are involved in the community, which can lead to sharing the gospel. The research implied that church-based business leadership discipleship effectively influences business leaders to involve themselves in the community to further and share the gospel.

In general, church-based business leader discipleship programs have been shown by the research to be effective in influencing business leaders in their calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and in furthering and sharing the gospel.

Research Limitations

Within the sample, four interviews were conducted with ministry leaders who led or presently lead a church-based business discipleship program, and four interviews were done with business leaders who participated in a discipleship program. More insight could have been gained if more ministry and business leaders could have been found to participate in the research. Another limitation was the opportunity for the researcher to visit and observe the church-based business leader discipleship program because of the COVID pandemic. If the researcher could have attended, this could have afforded the opportunity to speak to more business leaders concerning the research questions and to get more insight into the discipleship program's effectiveness in sharing the gospel.

All of the participants indicated a very positive outcome from their participation in the discipleship program. Another limitation was that none of the participants in the discipleship program indicated in any way that the program impacted them negatively or did not impact them at all.

Lastly, only one ministry leader provided an assessment of the effectiveness of their church-based business leader discipleship program. If more ministry leaders offered assessments to their participants, they could have been used in the research to help determine and validate assumptions and conclusions.

Further Research

The study raised questions that should be explored concerning the effectiveness of a church-based business leader discipleship program. The following list provides suggestions for further research related to the topic.

- Research could be explored to determine if and how a business leader's participation in the discipleship program benefited the business in business growth, productivity, and financial flourishing.
- Evaluate whether a business leader's participation in a business leader parachurch organization has more of a positive or negative impact on the church.
- Beyond business owners, investigate church-based business discipleship programs to see if they have inspired entrepreneurs and future business leaders to launch Kingdom-driven businesses and for what purpose.
- Explore whether ministry leaders recognize business leaders and the marketplace as the most effective avenue for the future of evangelism and reaching people with the gospel.
- Discover whether the mindset has shifted away from the church as the base for the gospel being shared.
- Explore whether ministry leaders see marketplace ministry and business leaders as effective ministers in the marketplace.
- Investigate if business leaders are effective in their involvement in the community, which results in reaching people with the gospel.
- Determine what percentage of new people who join the church come from a marketplace influence compared to other influences, such as friends, advertisements, social media, community events, and church outreach.
- Evaluate the effect a strong group of business leaders can have on a church, such as regular substantial giving, mentor relationships, and increased community and missionary involvement.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 5, 2021

Robert Cross
Gary Bredfeldt

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-253 A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF CHURCH-BASED BUSINESS LEADER DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS AND THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

Dear Robert Cross, Gary Bredfeldt:

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

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

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

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

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

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any

modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF CHURCH-BASED BUSINESS LEADER DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS AND THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

Principal Investigator: Robert Cross, Doctor of Education Student at Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be above the age of eighteen. The participants that will compose this research will be pastor's or other church leaders who have implemented or lead discipleship program explicitly directed at business leaders who own and operate a business, business leaders who are in top leadership positions at businesses (CEOs CFOs, COOs), entrepreneurs, or those interested in becoming business leaders or entrepreneurs. It will also consist of CEOs CFOs, COOs, and entrepreneurs who have participated in these discipleship programs. All Participants will be over the age of eighteen. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of the study is to conduct a descriptive qualitative multi-case study of church-based business leader discipleship programs to determine if there is reciprocal influence of the programs, as perceived by pastors, church leaders, and business leader participants, with regards to sharing and furthering the gospel. Five thematic categories will be explored to determine program influence: calling, spiritual formation, church growth, community involvement, and business involvement in furthering the gospel.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. To participate in a one on one virtual interview that could last up to two to three hours. The interview will be recorded and transcribed for analysis.
2. If there is any documentation that could be provided, such as brochures, digital material, manuals, and so on, it is requested that the participant either mail the material or scan and email the material following 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.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

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

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- There are no perceived limits to confidentiality.

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

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study [is Robert Cross. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Gary Bredfeldt, at [REDACTED].

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

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

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 of 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 video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX C: SUB-QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

RQ 1: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to the business leaders viewing their vocation as a calling that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 1 Sub-Questions:

1. How do you define calling?
2. Do you believe that being a business leader is a calling?
3. Do you believe there is a secular/sacred and clergy/laity divide? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe that the calling to be a pastor is a higher calling than that of a business leader? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever heard a sermon or teaching for business leaders? How has that influenced you as it relates to your calling?
6. Do you believe that there has been influence on the business leader and their calling directly from the participation in the discipleship program that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 2: What perceived influence, if any, has the discipleship program had on the business leaders' spiritual formation, which has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 2 Sub-Questions:

1. In what areas has the participation in the church's discipleship program influenced the business leader's spiritual formation as it relates prayer, Bible reading, fellowship, stewardship, and so on?
2. If the business leader has been influenced by participation in the business discipleship program as it relates to sharing the gospel, what spiritual discipline contributed most to influencing you to sharing the gospel?
3. How has the participation in the discipleship program influenced you concerning spiritual transformation which has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 3: What perceived influence, if any, has this discipleship program had on the business leaders as it relates to church growth from sharing the gospel?

RQ 3 Sub-Questions:

1. How do you think your business has been used to contribute to numerical church growth?

2. In what ways has the business leader or business either directly or indirectly led to church numerical growth through sharing the gospel?

RQ 4: What perceived influence, if any, has this discipleship program had that has led to local community involvement that has led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 4 Sub-Questions:

1. Has the business leader been involved in any community events? If so, in what way? If not, why?
2. Has the business leaders or businesses been directly or indirectly involved in community events?
3. Has the discipleship program helped or been influential in getting involved in community events?
4. In what ways has the business leader's involvement in the community led to sharing the gospel?

RQ 5: What perceived influence, if any, has this discipleship program had in furthering the gospel through the business leader and their business?

RQ 5 Sub-Questions:

1. Has the discipleship program influenced the business leader to share the gospel with either employees or clients of the business?
2. Does the business have any business material (printed, websites, social media) that reflects the business leader's faith?
3. Has participation in the church's business discipleship program influenced the business leader to express their faith in their printed material and digital platforms?
4. How many times has the business leader been able to share the gospel in the last twelve months that has been influenced by participation in the business discipleship program?