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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PASTORS WHO WERE MENTORED
AND THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP

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AND THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP.

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore the value of a mentor in the life and ministry of a pastor who began pastoring with less than thirty (30) regular attendees and surpassed one hundred (100) regular attenders. The following research questions (RQ1-3) were used to guide this study. RQ1.: What perceived effect does the use of a mentor have on a pastor's overall leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees? RQ2.: How did the participating pastors describe the value of having a mentor or coach? RQ3.: What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members? The sample for this study included interviews with seventeen pastors who met these requirements. A phenomenology descriptive study was used for exploring how pastors of Evangelical Christian churches describe the value of a mentor and their church leadership style. Qualitative questionnaires and interviews were used to screen candidates and collect data.

Keywords: Mentor, Coach, Pastor, Pastor's Pastor, Church Leadership Culture, Pastoral Perception of Leadership, Christian Ministry Leadership, Value of Mentor.

Acknowledgements

This process and desire to study the role of mentors was birthed in a time when our local church was in a season of prayer and fasting. Firstly, I give all praise and glory to the Almighty God for His strength and faithfulness. It is because of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that we are able to see His glory so powerfully. Secondly, I acknowledge my precious wife, Sarah, of more than twenty-five years who has been amazingly supportive. Lastly, my children, Gracie, Hannah, and Gideon for this support and encouragement. To my parents, Joseph and Sylvia Horner who taught me by example the Christian faith, principles of hard work, and dedication to family.

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CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERNS

Introduction

For those called to lead as ministers or pastors in the body of Christ, the desire for the spiritual and numerical growth of their congregants serves as an affirming reflection of their call (mission) to forward the purpose and glory of God and the coming of His divine kingdom. Today, in churches across North America, pastors are experiencing vast fluctuations in the number of their attending members. Experts have "proposed several explanations for this trend, disagreeing about whether it is the result of a particular cultural moment or an ongoing process leading to even greater religious decline" (Brauer, 2018).

While some congregations continue to show growth, others can only maintain existing membership levels or have withered and dissolved to the point of near abandonment thus having had to close their doors. Studies show that "decreasing numbers in Christianity, and specifically church membership, has existential implications more so for smaller churches that are not connected to other and/or larger organizations for support" (Royster, 2016).

This research focused on the value of mentorship within the office of pastoring a newer, smaller, or younger church. It traced the progress and any successes that resulted in having a mentor, coach, or pastor's pastor. Keeping in mind that pastors are fallible and prone to limitations and vulnerabilities, they must be honest with their coach, pastor, or mentor. Additionally, for a church to grow, the pastor must be open with his headship and congregation, because if they are "honest about their own weakness and their need for God" then that will result in "congregations as they watch their leaders' need for God and find in their own weakness their own need for God" (Smith & Hansen, 2015, p. 195).

From a secular worldview, some would argue that God is nonexistent, as humanity continues to revel in the glory of its brilliance. However, from the view of the faith-filled Christian believers, despite the increasingly apparent self-indulgent aspirations of humanity, God is very much alive, and His glory cannot be denied, for His kingdom will come, and His Will, shall be done (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2). In *Desiring the Kingdom*, Smith (2019) wrote about "a retooling of our understanding of the human person to push us beyond and under worldview to consider the central, formative role of worship" (p. 32).

Some research has tried to determine why church attendance increases in some churches and declines in others, and other research has attempted to explore congregational growth or decline in the wake of a change in church leadership. However, little to no discussion focused on why the leadership of some pastors causes growth in church membership and attendance, while the leadership of other pastors allows their church to maintain its number of attending members, and still other pastors find themselves trying to shepherd a diminishing flock. Also, it must be noted that the pastor's leadership qualities have a "direct bearing on church growth, sustainment of church members, and any community outreach endeavors he or she aspires to accomplish" (Royster, 2016).

Mentoring can be defined as a relationship between an experienced and knowledgeable mentor and a less experienced mentee, aimed at providing guidance, support, and advice in various aspects of personal and professional development (Bozionelos, 2021). One of the most notable mentors that spent three years training and demonstrating His teaching was, in fact, the central figure of the Bible. Jesus Christ of Nazareth was a human representation of an Almighty God. Jesus said on one occasion, "For I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak" (*Modern English*

Version, 2014, John 12:49). Jesus Christ was introduced in scripture when His birth was announced to shepherds (Luke 2:8-10). At around thirty years old, Jesus met His cousin John (the baptizer) on the banks of the Jordan River, and John was baptizing people unto repentance (Matt 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22). Following His public baptism, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to begin a forty-day fast from food and be tempted by the enemy (Matthew 4:11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13). Following His victory over Lucifer, Jesus began His ministry, and His fame spread quickly (Luke 4:14). Then upon His return to Nazareth, Christ Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and declared His purpose by quoting the Old Testament prophet Isaiah:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Luke 4:18-19).

After He left the synagogue, He began healing the sick and calling people to follow Him. Jesus did not call angels, He called men and women to minister to the broken and oppressed. Jesus Christ of Galilee was the consummate leader because He was able to garner influence not only with His closest disciples but also from the throngs that longed and lingered to be close to Him and touch Him. John Maxwell noted that "true leadership… comes only from influence, and that can't be mandated, it must be earned" (Maxwell 1998, p. 14). Jesus directed His disciples to preach repentance in His name and to share the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom. Moreover, of the thousands who followed Jesus throughout His ministry, only the twelve disciples were selected to build His church and carry the truth of His ministry to the world (Matthew 16:18).

The word "church" or *ekklesia* can be translated to mean gathering, assembly, or congregation (Strongs, 2005). For more than three years, Jesus spent time with His disciples mentoring them for their Kingdom assignments. "Mentoring contributes significantly to the professional development" of those charged with carrying out the task and completing their assignment (Tang & Choi, 2005).

The disciples' assignments were threefold: to lead individuals to salvation in Christ Jesus, grow the church by sharing the good news of the Kingdom, and replicate the process by mentoring others. The mentoring process is critical in transferring knowledge and skills from one generation to the next or from a leader to a student. Jesus gave His disciples clear final instructions when He told them to:

> "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: In My Name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Mark 16:15-18).

The ministry of Jesus was transferred from the Teacher to the students. He mentored the twelve disciples (later called apostles) along with hundreds of others. Upon obeying the words of Jesus, the Christ, the disciples went and waited in Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father. It came on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out. When Peter and the other disciples were asked the question, "what shall we do?" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 2:37), Peter replied, "repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 2:38). Peter and the other apostles were preaching and fulfilling what Jesus Christ commanded them to do in the Great Commission.

The students or disciples of Jesus then became teachers and saw a tremendous spiritual awakening as God worked in the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. "The overarching dimension of mentoring, which is commonly accepted by researchers and practitioners across definitions and discussions, is that mentoring is a developmental relationship" (Irby & Garza, 2020, p. 10). Many believed Peter's preaching, and "those who gladly received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 2:41). John Maxwell refers to this type of increase as the "Law of Explosive Growth" (Maxwell, 1998). He wrote that "[l]eaders who develop followers grow their organization only one person at a time, [b]ut leaders who develop leaders multiply their growth" (Maxwell, 1998, p. 208).

One leader who was interviewed as part of this research lauded the time his mentor took with him and the example he provided that eventually propelled him to develop the leadership skills to mentor others. This pastor (Pastor 12), who currently leads two congregation in the Midwest, assisted his mentor for several years and watched how processes and people were developed. In addition to the weekend gathers, his mentor had developed a recovery program for individuals who opted through the court system to participate instead of serving jail time. This recovery program requires the person to live in a specific home, have a regimented schedule, participate in daily devotions, attend weekend worship, and have accountability. Pastor 12 worked alongside his mentor and after several years of managing the process, people, and programs, he asked if he could start a similar program in an adjoining county. After much prayer, contemplation, time with court advocates, and searching for houses to be used in the program, Pastor 12 launched in the new county. Within a couple of years, the new court ordered recovery program under the direction of Pastor 12 was at capacity. Along the way, Pastor 12 consulted with, ask direction from, and received counsel from his mentor to expand the program. From this

program and community outreach, Pastor 12 has launched additional locations in the county, and

he is now mentoring other to succeed him and build out their own recovery programs.

Background to the Problem

Individuals who feel the inner appeal to serve and lead others often seek formal education

along with the help of others to provide a foundation to build their careers and fulfill their

calling. For those persons who answer God's call to enter the ministry and provide spiritual,

emotional, and scriptural support to the body of Christ, an additional tool is needed, and that is

the assistance and oversight of a mentor. The Apostle Peter admonished leaders called into

ministry to "diligently make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will

never stumble" (*Modern English Version*, 2014,1 Peter 1:10).

Researchers can track trends of church attendance throughout a calendar year that parallel

with seasons like winter months, summer breaks, national holidays, springtime, and back-to-

school. More is known about attendance (raw data) than about what makes some churches grow

from a smaller number and reach certain milestones at the behest of church leadership. Research

is developing that shows a positive trend with mentored pastors who endeavor to start a church

or those who elect to lead a smaller congregation and those who are pastoring autonomously. A

study with The Four Square churches found "that church planters who met monthly with a coach

or mentor increased their baptisms by 150 percent and experienced a significant increase in

worship attendance" (Thomas et al., 2012, p. 27).

In a 2007 report by Ed Stetzer (in conjunction with the Leadership Network), findings

were released that studied over 100 factors relating to church sustainability. They determined

that the "odds of survivability increase by 135% when the church planter meets with a group of

church planting peers" (Leadership Network et al., 2007). The study also showed that the

"survivability is significantly higher when the church planter engages in support systems provided by denominations, networks, and/or church-planting churches" (Leadership Network et al., 2007) along with some organizations reporting that their "survival rate has doubled since implementing important systems such as assessment, training, and coaching" (Leadership Network et al., 2007). When a pastor is willing to be coached or mentored, he or she can "accept the fact that there are areas of his life where change is likely to contribute greatly to his success, team's success, and even the success of the organization" (Passmore, 2010, p. 180). This corresponding concept is transferrable and applicable to a local church or congregation.

As a pastor is drawn to see his or her church grow, it is important that the individual genuinely understands the difference between *Church Growth* and *Growth of the Church*. In many respects, "the placement of the word growth makes all the difference in how one thinks about these matters" (Engle et al, 2004, p. 68). In one respect, it is about the growth of faith, maturity, and knowledge for the membership, and, on the other hand, it is about reaching unbelievers and introducing them to the gospel of Jesus Christ. From a biblical context, "a case can be made for the growth of the church as the work of the Spirit", for it is "the Spirit who creates the church to bear witness to the redemptive reign of God in Christ, and it is the Spirit who leads the church into bringing redemption to bear on every dimension of life" (Engle et al, 2004, p. 69).

By and large, pastors can confide in their mentor when seasons of loneliness and living in obscurity surface or interrupt their life. "Obscurity is a word formed from two Latin words: *ob* (over) and *scurus* (covered)" and often those who have these feelings can feel covered up or "dark" (Jones, 2018, p. 57). Weekly, semi-monthly, and monthly conversations can help

overcome these bouts of humanness. Often, reminders of the pastor's "recognition, opportunity, and self-worth" can help foster steps forward within the mentorship process (Jones, 2018, p. 57).

When a minister answers the call to pastor a smaller church, the need for a mentor or pastor opens a mentor / mentee relationship. As this relationship grows, the pastor should see growth in his role. It is the hope of the mentor that these bonds grow stronger, and, therefore, "both mentor and protégé must see the relationship as something that might go beyond a few years of interaction, instructions, and guidance" (Royster, 2016, p. 34). Mullen and Lunsford (2015) found that mentoring has positive effects on both mentors and mentees. They reported that mentors gain a sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction from helping others, while mentees benefit from learning new skills, gaining confidence, and developing new relationships.

Statement of the Problem

It is not definitively known how pastors can lead a church from less than thirty (30) in regular attendance to more than one hundred (100) in attendance regularly. Little is known about the value and role of a coach, pastor, or mentor for a pastor who is leading a smaller congregation and the value of the role of a mentor to encourage a pastor to lead a congregation of more than one hundred regular attendees thus warranting a need for further exploration. Additional research on church planters and pastors of smaller congregations is needed to determine if a coach, pastor, or mentor offers value to the overall church growth.

The research questions steering this research addressed how pastors of congregations with less than thirty attendees can successfully grow a congregation from the time spent with a coach, pastor, or mentor. The questions that influenced this study arose from a gap in the literature pertaining to the value of a mentor for pastors who are leading smaller congregations. More research is needed, despite available data on the general uses of a coach or mentor.

This introduction subsequently raised the following questions:

1. Is there a formula, method, or quality of leadership wherein pastors can lead a church of fewer than 30 attendees and build, maintain, expand, and encourage their congregation and church membership to exceed one hundred attendees (100+) regularly?

2. Does the assistance of a pastor or mentor accelerate, enhance, or benefit the pastor and church's growth?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological descriptive study was to explore how pastors who have grown a congregation of less than thirty regular attendees to more than one hundred attendees described the value of a coach, pastor, or mentor. The correlation between pastors who were mentored or coached was explored to determine the value of the mentor relationship. The significance of this study was to determine the value of a mentor for pastors who were leading a smaller congregation. This study sought to shed light on the value of a pastor or mentor for a pastor who desired to see his church grow in attendance.

Research Questions

The overarching and open-ended research questions (RQs) guided this phenomenological study were based on pastors who were mentored and lead a church congregation of less than thirty regular attender to more than one-hundred congregants. The following research questions guided this phenomenological study:

RQ1. What perceived effect did the use of a mentor have on a pastor's overall leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees?

RQ2. How did the participating pastors describe the value of having a mentor (coach, pastor, or mentor)?

RQ3. What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members?

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Assumptions and Delimitations

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Research Assumptions

The researcher rightfully assumed that the non-experimental qualitative portion of the phenomenological approach may have response bias from individuals who may have not provided thorough thought or possible distortion of facts within the survey (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). This researcher believes that the online surveys along with the one-on-one interviews will yield the greatest parallels among pastors who have been mentored and will provide insight into the value of a mentor in their lives. There may be a potential bias on the part of the researcher due to his involvement in music ministry and as a lead pastor, however, every effort was made to remain detached to facilitate genuine feedback.

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) noted that assumptions are the "postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research" and are a "basis for formulating research questions or stating hypotheses and for interpreting data resulting from the study" (p.135). The authors concluded that these types of assumptions allow for understanding that point towards the conclusions that will "lend support to the recommendations" (p. 135).

Delimitations of Research Design

This study examined certain aspects of Evangelical Pastors within several Christian denominations including Apostolic World Christian Fellowship, Association of Related Churches, and non-denominational pastors to determine what impact a mentor had on the growth of their local church and the pastor.

This research was delimited to:

1. Pastors who began pastoring a church of fewer than 30 attendees and had grown the congregation to an average main worship service attendance of 100 or more.

2. Pastors of churches who classified themselves as Evangelical Christians in belief systems.

3. The examination of the leadership development ideals and models used by mentored pastors.

4. Information developed through literary review, data gathered from surveys, and results generated from interviews. The findings from the interviews were used to make longitudinal interpretations of the results collected that represented a cross-sectional view of pastors who have successfully grown churches from less than 30 members to exceeding 100 attendees.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions and terms were relevant to this study, provided clarity to this research, and are supported by the literature utilized to create the framework for this research:

1. *Pastor*: This is a person who "desires the office of an overseer" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, 1Timothy 3:1) and who was willing to be "sober, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach; not given to drunkenness, not violent, not greedy for money, but patient, not argumentative, not covetous; and one who manages his own house well" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, 1 Timothy 3:2-4). This person managed the daily activities of a church gathering, community, or congregation regularly. This person may be a full-time, part-time, or bi-vocational pastor (who holds a second job due to a lack of resources to pay a full-time salary). This person is one who pastored a growing group of believers and who saw their role as one of influence and leadership (Maxwell, 1998).

2. *Mentee or Protégé:* While the mentor is considered the more experienced individual in this relationship, the mentee or protégé is generally categorized as a less experienced student or junior to the mentor. The mentor's support to the protégé was the process that sought to have "close interpersonal interactions and

focuses on the protégé's career options and progress" (Opengart & Bierema, 2015, p. 234). Young pastors whose desire and passion it was to make an impact for the Kingdom of God through pastoring and evangelizing their community could benefit immensely from the wisdom of an older pastor who had experienced similar circumstances.

3. *Coach, Mentor, or Pastor's Pastor*: this was a person assigned to oversee and assist a pastor with issues that may arise, general spiritual guidance, and accountability to fulfill the Great Commission. This person most likely met with or had a scheduled conversation with the pastor monthly to gauge the pastor's spiritual and emotional health along with the overall health of the church. Jesus the Christ reminded His disciples that "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 20:28). Many organizations claim to have mentorship programs for young pastors; however, the district roles and regional leaders are often figureheads, and it is the responsibility of the pastor to find his own mentor. By contrast, the pastors in Eastern Canada within the Mennonite Church created a three-year step-by-step program that provided young pastors with "practical experience, training, peer cohorts, and mentoring" (Rogalsky, 2014, p. 21). To foster growth and support, each new Mennonite pastor was assigned a more experienced pastor to assist with work and personal life balance along with more complex issues. The outcome was amazing, and the research showed the pastors stayed longer and expressed increased job satisfaction (Rogalsky, 2014).

4. *Peer and Group Mentors:* Since the introduction of the character "Mentor" in Homer's *Odyssey*, many iterations of coaching and mentoring have evolved which have included one-on-one, group mentoring, and peer mentoring. Peer mentoring generally involves two or more members in a similar group that complement the individual strengths and roles (Allen, 2001). The peer mentor session can be online or in a group setting and tend to be more informal but still maintain an agenda to ensure structured time together. Schools have found similar success with peer or group mentoring of younger teachers by encouraging the mentees to "connect, discussing challenges they face, organizing topic-specific brown bags, and supporting each other" (Irby, et al. 2020, p. 230). The process of pastoral mentor groups and executive organizational leaders within a cohort have employed different models "which are designed to foster leadership development" within the specific leadership role (Pinzer, 2017, p. 3).

5. *Church, Congregation, Gathering (the Body of Christ):* a group of Christian believers who meet regularly (Sunday, small groups, throughout the week) to study the Bible, hear preaching from their pastor, and engage their culture with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If a permanent location is available to meet, then this researcher included it in the research. This research focused mostly on evangelical church attendees desired to see new believers connected and "dechurched" individuals reconnected to a church congregation (Barna Group, 2017).

6. *Bivocational and Covocational:* A bivocational pastor or minister is one who "who works a second job to supplement the salary the church provides" and the hope is that the pastoral position will eventually become full time (*Bivocational and Covocational: Definitions*, 2019). A covocational pastor is one whose "primary vocation is in the marketplace and at the same time is called to start a church". This individual is one whose calling is in the marketplace and where he "never intends to leave." This is a person who may take the role of a "teacher, mechanic, graphic designer or doctor" and has a concurrently plant a church (*Bivocational and Covocational: Definitions*, 2019).

Significance of the Study

In the *Sage Book of Mentoring* (2017), the authors emphasized the importance of establishing trust in the mentor and mentee relationship. Mentees need to feel comfortable sharing their strengths, weaknesses, and concerns with their mentors. This requires mentors to create a safe and non-judgmental space where mentees can be vulnerable and receive honest feedback. God created a safe place in the Garden of Eden where Adam was able to grow, learn, and tend to the needs of the garden (Genesis 2). In Genesis, God gave clear instructions to Adam that extended to his family and the entire family of God. God blessed Adam and Eve and said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Genesis 1:28).

Jesus Christ gave a similar clarion call when He instructed His follower to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Mark 16:15). Matthew's gospel version is similar and explains Jesus' authority to empower His disciples. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matt 28:18-19). In both Adam's and the

disciples' encounter with God, the assumption is growth. What God blesses, He then empowers it to grow, reproduce, and multiply.

On one occasion, Jesus was in a boat and saw a huge gathering of people on the shore, and "He was moved with compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd and He began to teach them many things" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Mark 6:34). God is a God of abundance, and God wants everyone to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and "receive the gift of grace" (Stevens & Morgan, 2005). Men and women who are called to pastor a church must believe that God wants His message to be heard by as many people as possible. One way that God desires to reach the unbeliever with the gospel is by attracting a crowd. Certainly, a church can grow one at a time, but the impact of drawing a crowd has a multiplication effect. Though some may never commit their life to the Lord, teaching or preaching to a crowd gives maximum impact to "introduce people to Jesus and help them take steps toward spiritual maturity" (Stevens & Morgan, 2005, p. 42).

As much as Jesus loved sharing His good news of the Kingdom with crowds, He was also careful to build His close group of disciples. The team of His twelve closest was later extended to a team of seventy (Luke 10). Jesus took great care and "placed a premium on building teams and did so" because what "He founded was largely dependent on the success of teams" (Wilson, 2014, p. 94).

Summary of the Design

This research included surveys to assess the relationship or correlation between a pastor who is pastored, mentored, or coached and the resulting growth, if any, in the churches' attendance. Chapter One built a foundation by offering a framework along with the research questions to be examined and explained further in the subsequent chapters. Additionally, this

phenomenological research study sought to discover the leadership qualities of pastors who have been mentored (coached, pastored, or mentored). The study focused on data obtained from a minimum of fifteen pastor participants who began pastoring a church of fewer than 30 members and experienced the growth of a congregation to exceed one hundred regular attending members. The data points tracked these pastors who have pastored for less than five years, five to ten years, and those who have been pastoring longer than 10 years at the same location and with the same congregation. An additional data point focused on the frequency the pastors met with their mentor and the value attributed to that relationship. The final data points focused on the theory guiding this study, which it is to identify a minimum of fifteen pastors who had an active mentor (coach, pastors, or mentor group). (Tang & Choi, 2005).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Further research was needed to determine how pastors can lead a church from less than thirty (30) in regular attendance to more than one hundred (100) in attendance regularly. There exists little literature about the value and role of a pastor, mentor, or coach for a pastor who is leading a smaller congregation and the importance of the role of a mentor in encouraging a pastor to lead the congregation to more than one hundred regular attendees thus warranting a need for further exploration.

To successfully track the benefits, value, or even the outcome of a mentor and pastor relationship may prove difficult without extensive phenomenological research, which may include interviews with mentors, pastors, congregations, and families. One possible way to track the successful mentor and mentee connection is to ascertain if it relates to church attendance size weekly or year over year. Researchers can loosely predict the ebbs and flows of church attendance within the calendar that coordinates with seasons like winter months, breaks (spring, summer, and fall), Christmas, and Easter holidays, but is there a definite correlation with church attendance that relates to a pastor being mentored?

The research questions steering this research addressed how pastors of congregations with less than thirty attendees can successfully grow a congregation from time spent with a coach, pastor, or mentor. The questions influencing this study arise from a gap in the literature on the value of a mentor for pastors leading smaller congregations. Additional research was needed, despite available data on the general uses of a coach or mentor.

This introduction subsequently raised the following questions:

1. Do pastors require quality mentorship to grow the church in relation to church

   membership?

2. Does the assistance of a coach, pastor, or mentor accelerate, enhance, or benefit

   the pastor and church's growth?

Research Questions

The following overarching research questions guided this phenomenological study, and

the research questions were:

RQ1. What perceived effect did the use of a mentor have on a pastor's overall leadership
and congregational growth of regular attendees?

RQ2. How did the participating pastors describe the value of having a mentor (coach,
pastor, or mentor)?

RQ3. What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of
fewer than thirty members?

Purpose Statement

This phenomenological study explored how pastors who have grown a congregation of

less than thirty regular attendees to more than one hundred attendees described the value of a

coach, pastor, or mentor. This interaction between pastors who were mentored or coached was

explored to determine the value of the mentor and pastor relationship. The purpose of this study

was to determine the value of a mentor for pastors who are leading a smaller congregation. This

study sought to shed light on the value of a coach, pastor, or mentor for a pastor who desired to

see their church grow in attendance.

The purpose of this literature review aimed to provide the reader with an overview of

comparable studies relating to the overall research. The process of developing a comprehensive

review was extraordinarily rewarding. The writings and research noted herein and hereafter showcase and accent the overall framework for this research.

According to Comiskey, churches ought to network with one another to provide aid, receive warmth and kindness, and develop connections that members can rely on and respect. He further suggested that the health of relationships can be evaluated through nurturing, proclaiming, and bearing testimony. The church leadership educates its members by fostering their personal and interpersonal development (Comiskey, 2022). God desires improvement and innovation from His people so that their connections may flourish. The pastors and leaders are responsible for equipping the congregation with the tools needed for discipleship and spiritual development.

Little is known about the value and role of a coach, pastor, or mentor for a pastor who is leading a smaller congregation and the value of the role of a mentor to encourage a pastor to lead a congregation of more than one hundred regular attendees thus warranting a need for further exploration. Advice and instruction, knowledge sharing, lending a hand, and acting as a parent are examples of mentor responsibilities (Barlow, 2019). According to Rogalsky (2014), a mentee who has a mentor is more likely to be promoted, earn more money, move up the corporate ladder more quickly, develop a stronger sense of professional identity and superior skills, experience greater job satisfaction, gain respect and acceptance from coworkers, feel less stress on the job, and learn how to coach others. Internal satisfaction and fulfillment, greater creativity and professional integration, personal and professional rejuvenation, loyalty, nurturing talent, and the thrill of molding the lives of the future generation are just a few of the advantages he listed as a result of mentoring.

Theological Framework for the Study

Individuals who accept the church pastoral role carry the burden of their family and congregation along with their personal health and spiritual salvation (Sielaff et al., 2021). According to Sielaff et al. (2021), these responsibilities require the personal courage and humility of the pastor to seek assistance from someone whom was senior in age or experience and accept their counsel for the unforeseen issue that would undoubtedly arise in their position. Leading others required the pastor also to be led by someone else. The Apostle Paul understood this when he mentored a local pastor named Timothy, whom he had chosen "to oversee a church" (Naicker, 2004, p.19). He referred to him in writing as "my true son in the faith" (*New International Version,* 2011*,* 1 Timothy 1:2). The term *mentor* is not explicitly found in biblical scriptures. However, the concept and idea of training the next generation, prophet, king, disciple, or pastor, can be found in both the New and Old Testaments.

The Apostle Paul understood the significance of mentorship, and although Paul (Saul) was from Tarshish, he was fortunate to have moved to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel I (Acts 22:3). This Gamaliel I became known as Gamaliel the Elder. Paul's mentor was both a qualified mentor and renowned as an expert in religious law (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906). Gamaliel's influence was seen by his peers as he pondered the influence of the Christian sect. Gamaliel appears also as a prominent member of the Sanhedrin in the account given in Acts (Acts 5:35-40), where he was known as a "Pharisee" and a "teacher of the law" deeming him as one who was honored by the people. Gamaliel was there made to speak in favor of the disciples of Jesus, who were threatened with death (Act 5:33-39). Gamaliel who mentored Paul spoke and directed the Elders of Jerusalem that they should stay away from the followers of Jesus, "and leave them alone, because if this intention or this activity is of men, it will come to nothing. But if it is of

God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest perhaps you be found even fighting against God" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 5:38-39).

Purpose of the Church Gatherings

The purpose of people of like Christian faith who gather together is often called *church*. The word *church* or *ekklesia* can be translated to mean gathering, assembly, or congregation (Strongs, 2005). This was first mentioned when Christ Jesus was traveling with His disciples near the region of Caesarea Philippi, and it was there that He asked His followers what others were saying about Him. The followers said that people thought he was "John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 16:14). Simon Peter spoke up and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 16:16). It was upon that clear and poignant statement from Simon Peter that Jesus said, "on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 16:18).

The *church* or *ekklesia* began with Christ Jesus and His followers. As the crowds grew and His influence spread throughout Judea, Christ Jesus kept His circle close with Simon Peter, James and John. In addition, He had His twelve disciples along with several women who contributed to His ministry. After His crucifixion and resurrection, Christ Jesus appeared to His disciples on several occasions. Jesus ministered and showed Himself alive for forty days before ascending into Heaven. Before leaving, He said to His followers that they would receive "power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 1:8). This power from the Holy Spirit allowed them to see the church grow and attract more followers.

Hanson notated in *Theology Today* a clear picture and purpose of the role of the church.

The church's purpose is not its own. The church is present in the world on behalf of the God by whose grace it has been called into existence. Thus, at the heart of the church's act of self-definition is a basic theological question: What is the nature of God's presence in the world? When one considers the whole sweep of Scripture, the answer seems clear: God's presence is creative and redemptive in nature. Where there is chaos, whether in the natural or social realm, God is present to create harmony. Where there is bondage God is active to redeem the enslaved. Where there are walls dividing humans into privileged and deprived classes, God seeks to remove oppressive divisions through judgment and release. Where there is brokenness, loneliness, and sickness, God is present to heal. (Hanson, 1985).

Later in the writings of the Apostle Paul to the churches, he explicitly identified the church as the "body of Christ". When he wrote to the church in Rome, he said that "just as we have many parts in one body, and not all parts have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and all are parts of one another" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Romans 12:4-5).

In a 2014 commentary by Pastor Charles Swindoll, he noted that:

The church is a family, not a business. It is not a sign of a good parent to have continuously well-behaved children. Healthy kids behave appropriately for their age, and sometimes teenagers lose control. One may inquire: Does the man maintain a tranquil, orderly home environment? Does he have lofty standards for his kids that foster a feeling of respect for themselves? Do they respect him and treat him with respect? Do you think his children will grow up to be good young people, or do you think they will get into trouble if nothing is done? (Swindoll, 2014, as cited in Groce, 2023)

Hanson concluded that the church is "not some curious or pitiable relic of the past …, but is an agent of reconciliation and healing basing its identity on its sense of being present where God is present in the world, and for the same purpose" (Hanson, 1985).

Role of the Pastor

The term *pastor* was not used in the New Testament until the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus and noted that God gave "some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of

the body of Christ" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Romans 12:4-5). Groce (2023) noted that a pastor is "charged with being the community face of his house of worship" and also "serves as a household manager". The primary role of the early church pastor was to protect and watch over the congregation, teach and preach the teachings of Jesus Christ, and, finally, lead and direct the Christ-followers as a father would lead his family (Malphurs, 2003).

Pastors are called to lead their congregations and individuals who are put in areas of serving others, and they must exhibit Godly character. In truth, character is the "sum total of a person's distinct qualities, both good and bad" (Malphurs, 2003, p.14). In his book *Being Leaders*, Malphurs detail eight aspects of a Christian leader, and in each category, he explains the significance of each.

He first noted that a Christian leader must be a *Christian*. However innocuous this may sound; it is a misnomer to assume that all pastors or Christian leaders are devout Christians. The Apostle Paul wrote that the leaders in Corinth should "follow me as I follow Christ" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, 1 Corinthians 11:1). Additionally, this means that they must be authentic in their Christian faith, and that they have been "born again in the sense that they've experienced a spiritual birth in addition to their natural birth" (Malphurs, 2003, p. 11).

The second characteristic of a pastor or church leader is to have a *heart of a servant*. Malphurs (2003) highlights four aspects of a servant: humble as a manner of leadership, service as an essence of leadership, putting others first as a recipient of leadership, and love as a motive for leadership. These four characteristics were defined in the life of Christ Jesus, and He exemplified them on multiple occasions during His earthly ministry. The actions Christ Jesus demonstrated were that "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, John 13:1).

The third characteristic of a pastor or church leader is *credibility* and *trustworthiness*. Malphurs (2003) noted that credibility is crucial to leadership because the absence of it creates distrust between elders, board members, and church congregants. Equally, trust must be at the heart and core to ensure credibility, because people will find it difficult to follow without trust. Leaders lead and others follow, and as they follow, they watch everything the leader does both publicly and privately. Leaders carry a heavier mantle of trust and credibility by the essence of their role.

The fourth characteristic of a pastor or church leader that Malphurs (2003) notates is *capability*. Born leaders are said to be given special gifts at birth and carry those through the stages of their life, however, Godly leaders believe their gifts and calling are from God. The Apostle Paul wrote that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, irretractable, and can never be withdrawn (Romans 11:29). The choices to use these gifts wisely may likely determine the extent to which the leader is able to succeed and influence others. Malphurs (2003) noted that some gifts are naturally acquired and others are spiritual in nature. The natural gifts are given by God for His service; however, He also bestows similar gifts on non-believers. The spiritual gifts for leading others are given to accomplish the work of the Kingdom of God and equip other believers to discover their purpose and callings.

The fifth characteristic of a pastor or church leader is the ability to *influence* by persuasion, encouragement, and a Godly example (Malphurs, 2003, p. 62). Persuasion is listed first because without the ability to demonstrate the need for change with reasoning through relationship channels, there remains an absence of transformation. Persuasion with encouragement might be similar to forcing someone to change against their personal will. Finally, a Godly example is similar to children who watch a parent or older sibling to learn and

pattern their life. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and charged him to be an example for other believers in his speech, life, love, and a pure heart (1 Timothy 4:12).

The sixth characteristic of a pastor or church leader is the ability to be a *followed leader*. Peter Drucker (1986) wrote that one glaring characteristic that is common for all leaders is that they have followers. Followers in a church context are those individuals who share the vision of the pastor or leader and work together to accomplish it. Malphurs (2003) noted that some followers have a willing attitude to sacrifice their own vision to see the great good fulfilled. He concluded that followers want to know deep down that their life mattered and their involvement contributed to making a difference for their Savior.

The seventh characteristic of a pastor or church leader is the ability to be a *situational leader*. Pastors or leaders who are gifted in one area may lack the ability to contribute to another due to their leadership limitations. Malphurs (2003) noted that leaders must have a general knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. Several elements of the leader's composition are crucial to their ability to lead in different situations, and these may include: doctrinal beliefs, core values in the ministry, leadership style, general capabilities, knowledge of philosophy and theology, and the ideal circumstances surrounding their ministry (Malphurs, 2003). Some pastors may find situational leadership difficult due to their refusal to adjust, however Malphurs (2003) concluded that the "greater the discrepancy, the more difficult it will be for the leader to change and adjust to the situation" (p. 103).

The eighth and final characteristic of a pastor or church leader is the ability to be a *directional leader*. Malphurs (2003) pointed out that directional leaders have the ability to ask people direction questions to point them in the right direction. This is a side seat of *persuasive leader* who works to assist the follower in finding their way because followers do not like to be

like aimless wanderers. This is true for the leaders themselves who have a mentor to assist them in directing those who follow them. Having a personal mission statement and a ministry mission statement helps provide clear direction for the leader and the followers to see the vision become a reality. When a pastor or church leader is able to state clearly or paint a picture of the vision, it forms a path of potential for those who choose to follow it.

Biblical Mentoring

The mentorship process requires a change of mindset for both the pastor and the mentor that will include flexibility of both leaders' schedules and a willingness to work with the other's personality type. Once the value of the mentorship relationship is realized, the pastor may begin to understand that a "strong coalition is always needed – one with the right composition, level of trust, and shared objective" (Kotter, 1996, p. 52). Both pastors of larger and smaller churches need the oversight, wisdom, and encouragement that comes from an experienced current or retired person in a pastor or apostolic role. As the relationship between the two leaders grows, the church pastor should begin to see growth, and "both mentor and protégé must see the relationship as something that might go beyond a few years of interaction, instructions, and guidance" (Royster, 2016, p. 34).

Examples of relationships between a teacher and student, rabbi and disciples along with a mentor and mentee can be found throughout the Old Testament and New Testament. Biblical mentoring can be defined as "a triadic relationship between mentor, mentee, and the Holy Spirit, where the mentee can discover the already present action of God, intimacy with God, ultimate identity as a child of God, and a unique voice for kingdom responsibility" (Anderson & Reese, 1999, p. 12).

The mentor-mentee relationship is characterized by empathy, empowerment, and mutual dependence, and the Bible showcases the transformative power of interpersonal connections. In many ways, partnerships are crucial in a person's development and self-discovery. Relational mentorship, as defined by Maxwell (1998), is a two-way learning and development opportunity within a professional relationship. There is no one fixed function for a mentoring relationship. Relationships vary in quality, which is reflected in how they evolve. Christians use mentoring relationships to introduce others to Christ, instruct them in the ways of faith, and equip them to serve God with their whole beings. The Great Commission called on the church to seek and save the lost; relational mentoring is one way to accomplish this. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus instructed the apostles and all Christians to make disciples of all nations by preaching the gospel to every creature, baptize new believers, and instructing them to obey all they have commanded. Water baptism is a public declaration for believers in Jesus Christ. When an individual aspires to learn the basic elements of leadership, an effective path may be through a mentor relationship.

Historical Models of Discipleship and Mentorship

According to Thomas et al. (2012), the mentoring process can seem slow in a culture that seeks results immediately by following a few fundamental rules. Nevertheless, there is no simple solution to developing theologically savvy, morally upright, and competent ministers. In spite of its leisurely pace, mentoring is beneficial for people of various ages, ethnicities, nationalities, and life stages. Similar to how there is no perfect way to locate a perfect mentor, Thomas et al. (2012) explains, it is a genuine connection that develops in spurts. Mentoring is a special connection in which one person helps another discover and embrace their unique identity. By providing both practical guidance and emotional support, mentors help mentees visualize their

full potential. One of the most helpful methods to advance in the lifelong process of spiritual

formation is to find a mentor within the same faith framework.

Moses

For example, in the Old Testament, Moses became overwhelmed with the duties and the

accompanying problems associated with leading this small nation of people. His father-in-law

Jethro showed him kindness and wisdom. It is evident that Moses, who was raised in the house

of Pharoah and had served Egypt as a General and more, needed guidance. It is his father-in-law

who takes the young, impulsive fugitive from justice under his mentorship and provide direction

and family. Jethro's arrival to the chaos of leading the Israelites is an important mentoring

moment in the life of Moses. Moses humbled himself and took counsel from Jethro, who

prudently advised that Israel should be divided into more manageable units and leaders

appointed over each area (Exodus 18). This simple advice removed a tremendous burden from

Moses, thus allowing him to lead other leaders. Though the process was uncomfortable, changes

were needed for progress to be made, and "as weather shapes mountains, problems shape

leaders" (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 17). Moses' humility in accepting his father-in-law's advice

allowed him to be a model for the two individuals he actively mentored, Joshua and Caleb.

Naomi and Ruth

Likewise, Naomi, a Jewish woman, had moved to Moab with her husband and two sons

during a famine in Judea. In Moab, her two sons married two Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.

After ten years in Moab, Naomi's husband and two sons died (Ruth 1:3-5). At that time, the three

widows, Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth, heard the famine was over in Judea, and Naomi decided to

return home (Ruth 1:6). Orpah elected to stay in Moab. However, Naomi brought her daughter-

in-law, Ruth, back to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:15-18). Even though Naomi's life was crushed by the

death of her husband and two sons, she took the time to mentor Ruth and teach her Jewish

customs. Additionally, she gave Ruth specific instructions on approaching a wealthy farmer,

Boaz. From the lineage and offspring of Boaz and Ruth, their generations included Obed, Jesse,

King David, King Solomon, and ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5-16).

Elijah and Elisha

One of the most notable mentor and mentee relationships in the Old Testament included

the prophets Elijah and Elisha. These two prophets (1 Kings 19:14-17, 2 Kings 2) were both

mightily instrumental in the Old Testament to showcase God's might, power, and authority

amongst the Jewish nation and its adversaries. While Elijah was noted for seven (7) major

miracles, Elisha was accredited with fourteen (14) notable miracles. A school of prophets existed

in Elijah's time wherein he could have picked a protégé, however, he chose one individual to

mentor and disciple. Evidently, Elijah saw something different about Elisha that separated him

from the other pupils in the school of prophets. When Elijah realized his ministry to God's

people must continue, he chose Elisha to walk with him and learn from him.

After many miles and years together, Elijah was aware his time and ministry were

ending, and the young prophet, Elisha, asked for a double portion of Elijah's anointing. (2 Kings

2:9). Of the seven magnificent miracles that Elijah performed, his protégé was granted fourteen

miracles, including thirteen while he lived and one after he had died. Likewise, Elisha "must

have seen in Elijah something worth emulating, which was the reason for his request for the

double portion" (Naicker 2004, p.17). At the end of Elijah's day on earth, Elijah spoke with

Elisha and said, "Ask for something, and I will do it for you before I am taken away from you"

(*Modern English Version*, 2014, 2 Kings 2:9). Without hesitation, Elisha requested a "double

portion" of Elijah's spirit and anointing (*Modern English Version*, 2014, 2 Kings 2:9). Thus,

through Elijah's discipleship and training of Elisha, the student, was able to perform twice as many miracles as his teacher. While this relationship would grant Elisha the path to doubling the miraculous events in the life of Elijah, it was not what Elisha was requesting. Elisha was asking Elijah to not merely be his mentor but seeking a father-son relationship with the Prophet of God. A particular relationship that wherein the end result would leave Elisha empowered as the spiritual son of the man of God. God so honored the relationship that he doubled Elisha's spiritual inheritance and legacy.

New Testament Models of Discipleship and Mentorship

Numerous examples in the New Testament showcase the rabbi, teacher, mentor, mentor group, student, and discipleship models that researchers have and continue to extrapolate information for ongoing studies. More than any other individual throughout the writing of history, Jesus Christ of Nazareth significantly impacted history. The leadership model Jesus Christ chose was common to the Jewish culture, wherein, He found common and professional younger men and asked them to follow Him.

Author Ron Edmondson noted the following ways that Jesus demonstrated leadership: willing to invest in people others would dismiss, released ownership and responsibility in ministry, provided a leadership succession plan, practiced servant leadership, handled distractions with grace, held His followers to high expectations, and exercised leadership development and replacement (Edmondson, 2019). Additionally, Jesus took tremendous time and cared to mentor, train, and coach His disciples and those who followed Him. Jesus was quite open about His teaching style, purpose, and directives when He said, "I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, John 12:49). This statement was an example to

those entrusted to carry His message. Individuals learn "both by hearing and seeing as well as doing" (Wilson 2016, p. 104).

Jesus Christ of Nazareth

The three and half years Jesus spent training and mentoring His disciples about ministry, the Kingdom of God, and their assignment meant they would need to be adequately equipped to carry the good news of Jesus Christ to the next generation. The mentoring process feeds wisdom, culture, and direction toward the development of those charged with carrying out the task and completing their assignment (Tang & Choi, 2005).

The writers of the New Testament gave a strong account of Jesus' life and ministry. They detailed His teaching through parables, interactions with sinners, the untold physical healings, and how He taught. On several occasions, Jesus taught the crowds through the use of modern illustrations (parables), and afterward, the disciple pulled Him aside and requested an in-depth explanation. This is a key element of the mentorship process when a teacher explains a concept so the pupil can understand and implement it. The input of a mentor and protégé relationship can impact a person's life and change its course. The idea of one person helping another relates to the beginning of time. The Old Testament King Solomon noted that "two are better than one" (…) and "if either of them falls, one can help the other up" (*New International Version,* 2011, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

In addition to the example of Jesus and Disciples (John 13, Luke 9 and 10, John 15, John 21), the New Testament showcases the mentor and mentee (or discipleship) approach of Barnabas and Paul (Acts 9, Acts 11) and Paul and Timothy (1 Timothy 1, 1 Timothy 4). The first five books of the New Testament account for the life of Jesus Christ and His disciples during His

earthly ministry, the last supper, the prayer in the garden, the awful crucifixion, and His glorious resurrection.

Paul and Barnabas

After the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to Christianity, Paul (Saul) found himself facing a challenge of another type. Even though he was well acquainted with the concept of being mentored from his years in Judaism, it does not appear from scripture that the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem were very open to embracing Paul's newfound faith or offering him similar mentorship. Fortunately for Apostle Paul and for all Christ followers, there was a solution. Author, Orlando Rivera, wrote in the *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* that the Apostle Paul had a "clear understanding that he was called to become an apostle by the will of God, and not as a result of man's selection" (Rivera, 2007). After his conversion, Paul began to travel to Gentile areas sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and eventually wrote fourteen letters (books of the Bible) to the churches he had started and visited throughout Judea and Asian Minor.

Barnabas was a nickname given to a man named Joses. The nickname is translated "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36-37) or "Son of Exhortation", and it is possible that this nickname was given due to his desire to serve as an example of Jesus Christ.' Barnabas or Joses "was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith", and through his ministry "many people were added to the Lord" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 11:24). As an example of integrity, Paul showcased Barnabas as an illustration of one "with a proper perspective on money and property" (GotQuestions.org, 2022b).

Yukl described mentoring as a "relationship in which a more experienced manager helps a less experienced protégé" (Yukl, 2006, p 404). Rivera continued that the relationship between

Barnabas and Paul began "when he introduced him to the apostles in Acts 9, but his mentoring relationship started in earnest when Barnabas recruited Paul to help him teach the new followers of Christ in Antioch" (Rivera, 2007). Rivera concluded that the "Apostle Paul displayed humility by submitting himself in this process" (Rivera, 2007).

Mentoring Throughout Church History

Since the clarion call was given by Jesus the Christ to go and make disciples of every nation and people group, the pattern of mentorship has continued. Both Apostles Peter and Paul divested themselves in other men to see the Great Commission come to fruition. Peter, one of the original twelve disciples worked with the followers after the resurrection of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and was instrumental in bringing clarity and order when disputes arose.

Polycarp

Another leader in the early church was Polycarp (69-155) who was a part of Christian history in Asia Minor (Berding, 2008, p.135). From the multiple accounts and writings, Polycarp gained his knowledge, direction, and influence from the Apostle Paul's missions, the Apostle Peter's letter, and John the Apostle (p.143). Like many other disciples of Jesus Christ, Polycarp was "willing to go to his death", not simply because he was one of John's disciple or Paul's students, but because of his love and devotion for Christ himself (p. 143).

William Tyndale

Hundreds of years later, the preaching was continued, but it was conducted mostly in Latin by priests within the Catholic Churches. Due to a lack of education and formal training, the Bible was generally reserved for the priesthood and not available to the common English-speaking world. In 1525, William Tyndale (1494-1536) began translating the Bible into English using the Vulgate, Septuagint, Martin Luther's writing, and probably Pagninus for the Old

Testament; and for the New Testament, Tyndale used "Erasmus's Greek text and Latin translation, and the Vulgate" (Norton, 2011, p. 8-9). Before he could complete his work, he was martyred and burned at the stake upon orders of King James. Many writers believe that Tyndale was mentored and influenced by Thomas Bilney (1495-1531) who was an evangelical convert who was martyred and executed in August 1531 (Coast, 2021). Tyndale's work was the framework for the King James Bible, and "of all the English translators, he was the one who came closest to working from the original languages alone" (Norton, 2011, p. 8). Tyndale's hope was that the Bible could be read and available to everyone, and his "motivation was to make the Scriptures comprehensible to his fellow countrymen" (Norton, 2011, p. 10).

William Seymour

In the early twentieth century, William Seymour (1841-1922), attended Parham's Houston Bible School in Texas in 1905 under the direction of Charles Parham. Parham and Seymour worked together until "Parham broke fellowship with Seymour in October 1906" due to theological, social, and racial differences. (Espinosa & Espinosa, 2014, p. 8). From 1906-1909, Seymour preached revival services in a livery stable in downtown Los Angeles on Azuza Street, and those meeting began what was later called the "modern classical Pentecostal movement" (Espinosa & Espinosa, 2014, p.2). Though Seymour was a Black preacher, he welcomed Whites, Hispanics, and Asians to his meeting. Something that he learned from his time in Houston, Texas with Charles Parham, and the Apostolic Faith Movement (AFM) where people from all walks of life, minorities and women were not only included but were also ordained as ministers.

From those meetings, he and his church began sponsoring missionaries throughout "Europe, the Middle East, Africa, India, and China. Moving beyond transactional leadership into

a mentoring role, Seymour also wrote to many of these leaders and visited their missions during his preaching tour" (Espinosa & Espinosa, 2014, p.34). This research was unable to find individuals who directly oversaw Seymour's ministry, however, many authors credit him as a leader and mentor to their ministry. Several individuals were influenced by William Seymour's leadership: C.H. Mason – Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and G.T. Haywood – Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW).

G.T. Haywood

Early Church Historian, Bernie L. Wade, Sr., PhD noted that from Los Angeles they formed a plan to set up a series of "Missions" just like the one in Los Angeles. Glen Cook was appointed to oversee these missions. The Old Tin Roof Mission in Indianapolis was one of these. The Mission in Indianapolis was initially pastored by Henry Prentiss until he turned it over to a young man named Garfield Thomas (G. T. Haywood). It was Glen Cook that took the young Haywood under his tutelage and mentored him until Haywood entered into a peer relationship with a plethora of notable ministers in 1919 to form the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P.A.W.).

Mentoring in Practice

Kao (2020) wrote that within formal mentoring programs, more seasoned members match up with less seasoned members so that the latter can gain valuable insight and expertise. However, research has shown that informal mentoring based on the mutual willingness of the persons engaged is more beneficial in the long run. There are at least three phases to a mentoring relationship.

The initial stage, according to Kao (2020), is the process of *getting going* or developing an interest in the mentorship process. The mentor and mentee have reached a point where they

recognize their shared qualities. If a mentor sees promise in a rising leader, they may approach the person in question about starting a mentorship relationship (Pinzer, 2017). On the other hand, an aspiring leader may look up to an established leader because they admire certain traits or skills that the latter possesses. The first step in a mentoring relationship is establishing goals for both parties. There may be assurances of continued openness and regular communication. The second portion of a mentoring relationship is the *cultivation phase*. According to Pinzer (2017), as the mentor and mentee open up to one another and take on difficulties and possibilities together, the relationship enters its fruitful nurturing phase. *Separation* is the third and final stage.

Mentoring relationships often last between three and five years. All relationships eventually end, some sooner than others, due to factors such as a shift in responsibilities, a move, or the desire of those involved. While the Lord used Barnabas to provide Paul with many wonderful opportunities, the two eventually parted ways (Rogalsky, 2014). Despite the discomfort, the mentee must go through this phase to mature. In most cases, the mentor and mentee become friends who continue to support one another throughout their lives. Mentors who are truly wise will recognize this desire on the part of their responsibilities and will provide the mentee with the freedom to pursue God's will for their lives.

The mentorship process is cyclical and allows the mentor and student to experience a full understanding of the development. The mentorship of Jesus began with Him calling a few individuals to follow Him and in this He "revealed immediately the direction His evangelistic strategy would take" (Coleman, 2010, p.26). In Coleman's book *Master Plan for Evangelism*, the author details eight steps that Jesus used to train, disciple, and empower His twelve closest

disciples, later called apostles. These steps included: *selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision,* and *reproduction*.

- **Selection**: The process Jesus utilized for choosing the young men to follow Him began with an introduction and a request to "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 4:19). Though the crowds grew during His ministry, Coleman (2010) noted that Jesus' purpose was not to impress the multitudes, but to choose "people who could lead the multitudes" (p. 34).

- **Association**: Jesus was intentional in how He involved Himself in the lives of His followers and especially His closest twelve. They traveled as a caravan, ate together, and ministered alongside their Teacher. It was because of this closeness that His disciples were allowed into His inner circle and to "know the secrets of the kingdom of God" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Luke 8:10). This notion of association intensified the last few months and even weeks of Jesus' ministry prior to the crucifixion. Coleman (2010) noted that the writes of the four gospels were "constrained to devote so much of their attention to these last days" (p.44)

- **Consecration**: Jesus chose men who would honor Him and would follow Him even when hardship might arise. These men were not "required to be smart, but they had to be loyal" (Coleman, 2010, p.52). The mentorship process began with a simple act of obedience to follow Jesus and obey His commands. His directive was simple when He said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 11:29).

- **Impartation**: Jesus was generous with His time to teach His disciples and give His student everything He had. Coleman (2010) noted that Jesus "gave all he had — nothing was withheld, not even his own life" (p.63). In that process of giving, His disciple "may not have always understood it, and certainly could not explain it, but they could never mistake it" (p.65). They saw His passion on display as He taught them to give, live, and love.

- **Demonstration**: Jesus was deliberate in His method of mentoring His disciples and in how He demonstrated the methods for Godly living. Coleman (2010) noted that the simple practice of continual prayer triggers the curiosity of Jesus' disciples until, at last, they "asked him to teach them what he was doing" (p. 74). And He did.

Scriptural Basis for Mentoring

According to Kao (2020), to grow in spirituality, service, and leadership, one must intentionally focus on one person at a time, as Jesus did. It is a model of leadership based on selflessness and service to others, intending to empower others to know God and carry out God's will in the world. Jesus did not abandon His disciples as orphans when He ascended to heaven. He provided us with solace by way of the Holy Spirit. *Paraclete* is a Greek word that means "one who is summoned to help someone," and Jesus used it to refer to the Holy Spirit in John 14:26. The Greek term "*paraclete*" is sometimes rendered as "comforter," "helper," or "counselor" in contemporary Bibles. The Holy Spirit leads and instructs believers (John 16:13). Pastoral mentors hope to accomplish the same for their mentees by walking alongside them as they grow in their faith, and this serves as a witness for Christ's faithfulness (John 15:26).

Ideas and examples of and for mentorship are found throughout the Old Testament and New Testament books of the Bible. For instance, it appears that Moses prepares Joshua to

succeed him as Israel's leader after his death. Elisha learned the ways of leadership from Elijah. Paul's encouragement and instruction for younger missionaries Titus and Timothy were evident in their letters. Barnabas was Paul's mentor and the one who supported him in a critical meeting of the apostles. Barnabas facilitated Paul's access to influential people and locations so that the Lord may use them to disseminate the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. According to Alcindor (2022), the mentoring relationships shown in the Bible teach us valuable lessons about life and God's kingdom. Some people may be reluctant to assist a new leader because they feel unworthy, however, mentors serve as examples for their mentees. Nonetheless, the mentee will be more equipped to deal with their issues if the mentor is open about their struggles.

To be effective, mentors must be authentic individuals with a genuine interest in God's will for themselves and the person they are mentoring. Additionally, they must be willing to assist others in their spiritual development. Biblical role models appear to have a set of core beliefs. Instead of establishing their personal kingdoms, they focus on God's Kingdom. How they treat others, rather than utilizing authority, defines their leadership. Their brokenness before God and their demonstrations of humility endeared them to others (Alcindor, 2022). One of the core values appears to be the investment in developing other people's leadership skills.

Impact, Absence, and Need for Pastor Mentoring

Church leadership was "business as usual" leading up to the early 2020s when a global pandemic known as the Sars-CoV-2 flu virus (commonly known as Covid-19) was reported. This announcement changed the landscape of governments, schools, families, churches, and businesses. The impact of empty church pews devastated many pastors, churches, and ministries. Following the government-directed shutdowns of non-essential industries (most churches were deemed non-essential), many churches struggled to regain their "pre-pandemic" congregational

in-person attendance numbers, and scores of pastors have resigned or left the ministry (Alcindor, 2022).

With the tremendous depth of uncertainty, multiple pastors and leaders fought discouragement and searched for answers to navigate the many questions affecting their ministry and congregations. This presented an extraordinary problem and created a continual need for pastors to have close mentors to guide them and offer support. Since the New Testament church was formed following the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, leaders have leaned on mentors to assist them as they planted new churches and oversaw existing congregations. New Testament apostles like Paul, Peter, John, and others offered counsel in person (Acts 15) and in writing to the many churches in and around Israel.

Rogalsky (2014) noted that pastors and their wives each need a ministerial mentor, regular relaxation, and reflection away from church life to maintain their strong connection with God and their congregation. Mentors' guidance and commitment are effective tools for ensuring success in the mentorship process. For pastors to maintain their busy lives and balance families, they must perform a large number of tasks while also looking for opportunities to have crucial one-on-one conversations with a mentor or fellow pastor.

Theology of Addition and Multiplication

Pew Research (2020) highlighted that in a climate where the "data suggests that Christians are declining not just as a share of the U.S. adult population, but also in absolute numbers," pastors must celebrate counter-culture accomplishments or "wins." In his recent book on church plants and their pastors, Kao (2020) describes the importance of a "win" and what it may look like if "decline is the norm" and the local congregation is growing if the congregation "turns into 75, 150, or 350 regular attendees", if more than "six to eight" new converts are seen

per year, and if a church plant can sustain financial independence (Kao 2020, p. 158). Jesus understood the need for a "win" when He told the disciples to rejoice that their names were recorded in heaven (Luke 10:20).

In addition to the spiritual development of Jesus, God was able to apply the vocation of Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, as a mentor for the preparation of Jesus' ministry (Kao, 2020). Just as Jesus experienced a "knowledge transfer" from the profession of building furniture and finishing carpentry, this experience allowed Jesus to blend "daily routines and work with spiritual teaching" through parables and other methods (Kao, 2020, p. 34). Jesus promised that if believers continued to trust in and follow Him, they would be fruitful (John 15:4). These examples are shown throughout the book of Acts and within Paul's epistles. Jesus understood the need to focus on a few individuals or a small group of disciples He knew would carry on the gospel (Coleman, 1993). This key piece of wisdom highlights that someone cannot "transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed", apart from the instruction and direction of Jesus (Coleman, 1993, p.24).

As the crowds around Jesus continued to grow, His focus remained to mentor, disciple, and train His closest group that some deemed "unlearned and ignorant" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 4:13). It was in the middle of His second year in ministry that Jesus "called for His disciples, and of them, He chose twelve, whom He named apostles" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Luke 6:13). The time investment Jesus made in these disciples resulted in the apostles and believers turning "the world upside down with the gospel of Jesus Christ" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 17:6).

Pastoral Leadership Roles

According to research in 2020 conducted by Faith Community Today (FACT) of more than 15,000 churches in the United States, about 70% of churches have less than 100 attendees, while 70% of churchgoers attend a church of 250 or more (Earls, 2021). For large and small churches, a pastor (and staff) is appointed or elected to lead the church congregants. McIntosh (1999) divided churches into three categories of worshipers, small (15-200), medium (201-400), and large (401+). The pastor has different roles within these three categories but maintains equal overall responsibilities. McIntosh noted that leadership resides in key families in smaller churches, whereas committees oversee medium churches and larger churches are managed by staff (McIntosh, 1999, p. 130).

Pastors have different skill sets and leadership qualities, and it is possible that transitioning from a small church to a large church may not be the best choice. McIntosh (1999) explained that smaller churches are more akin to a larger family, and the pastor must nurture the church much like a family. In a medium-sized church, the pastor must still prepare for Sundays, however, the role is more of an administrator, and decisions are driven by the needs of the overall community and congregation (McIntosh, 1999). Lastly, in a larger church, the pastor must lead by vision casting on Sundays and have the leadership qualities to lead multiple staff in departments that oversee the multiple functions within the church's organization (McIntosh, 1999).

Although there is no exact science to mentoring, several guidelines can help mentors and mentees develop trusting relationships. Primarily, mentors serve as examples to follow. In most cases, mentees have an aspirational goal of becoming more like their mentors. Mentors should keep a careful eye on their own personal lives and ministries because of the example they are

providing their mentee. This is a crucial focus before worrying about those concerns of their mentees, even though imparting knowledge is essential. As a second piece of advice, mentors should pray alongside and for the people they are leading. The Holy Spirit is the driving force in one's journey toward enlightenment. Work done by a mentor has no value beyond what it does for the mentee (Pinzer, 2017). Finally, mentors should look for opportunities to provide mentees with practical experience in ministry. The mentor can help the mentee develop into a more effective leader by providing sponsorship.

Mentors, likewise, should train themselves in the art of attentive listening. Mentors often have ready-made solutions to everyday difficulties. Mutual trust develops between mentor and mentee when the student senses that the mentor truly cares for the needs of the student. For instance, if the mentee is considering a change in ministry, the mentor could encourage them to reflect on their spiritual gifts, calling, and long-term aspirations (Stevens & Morgan, 2005). The mentee, however, must make the ultimate decision and bear the burden of discovering and carrying out God's will. In addition, mentors need to be conscious that mentees' expectations of mentoring relationships may vary depending on cultural factors. Mentors are considered authoritative figures in some societies. Some mentees may want a less hands-off relationship with their mentor, while others may want their mentor to take on a more parental role. Some guides would want to maintain a rigid timetable, but the host culture may value connections more than time (Stevens & Morgan, 2005). Maintaining a healthy mentoring relationship requires cultural sensitivity, open communication, and a positive demeanor.

Professional Development Opportunities for Pastors

Though many ministers and pastors seek formal training from Christian colleges, theological universities, and seminaries, others are called to serve and learn by watching their

local pastor. Whether a pastor is called at a younger age or later in life, the training may not prepare them "for what is needed to effectively perform the task of preaching in the twenty-first century" (Polk, 2007, p. 135). Polk (2007) noted that one of the most important elements of a person in a pastor role is Godly character. If Godly character is absent, the results will be a failed ministry, damaged lives, and a divided congregation (Polk, 2007, p. 13). The practice of daily prayer, devotion, fasting, and maintaining a godly mentor can benefit the pastor in the role of leading others. Jesus understood the distractions that could derail His disciples, and He said that those who remain united, connected, and attached to Him would produce much fruit (John 15:1-8).

Perry Holley, a coach and facilitator with *The John Maxwell Company,* noted that each day has the same amount of time, and choosing to invest time in oneself with a personal development plan can and will yield tremendous results for the pastor and staff. Additionally, for any pastor or leader to grow and be successful, they must have an effective *Personal Development Plan*. This plan would include three areas: personal development, professional development, and operational experience (Holley, 2018).

These include the following:

1. *Personal Development* — Focusing on personal values and Godly character.

2. *Professional Development* — Balancing the leader's attention through continued education in ministry and leadership training.

3. *Operational Experience* — Spending time with other pastors to glean from their experience and determine what is transferable. (Holley, 2018).

Holley (2018) added that reading and studying other pastors, reading blogs and articles, and watching YouTube videos can enhance the leaders' personal development plan. Holley

noted that to keep from becoming stagnant, any leader or pastor must make efforts to control the input and focus on developing oneself and those under their care. With the addition of a coach or mentor, Holley noted that it is easier to track progress and performance.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The concept of coaching and mentoring spans the horizon from business to parenting to ministry to sports. In the world of sports, multiple coaches are needed to make a healthy team, including a personal coach to a specific player. Early in an athlete's journey, the personal coach is "much more heavily invested in the personality development of that athlete" (Collins et al., 2019, p. 16). Additionally, the strength and conditioning coaches understand that "every individual is different, so whilst the team may be on a schedule to enable them to prepare game to game, every individual player within that team is different" (Collins et al., 2019, p.85).

Mentoring is crucial to instructing nurses, physicians, and other personnel in medicine. Specifically, in the fields of nursing, the role of a mentor is crucial because the student "can experience day-to-day practice with a role model and resource person immediately available within the clinical setting" (Chickerella & Lutz 1981, p. 107). With the oversight of a mentor, a nurse progresses through five levels of aptitude that include the following: "novice, advance beginner, competent, proficient, and expert" (Benner, 1984, p. 14). The value of a mentor is immeasurable, and the benefits to the protégé are that they "have the luxury of going out into the world to test their knowledge, returning to a supportive environment where they can talk things over with their mentor" (Nolinske, 1994, p.29).

Social Science of Mentoring and Coaching

To say that all mentoring is beneficial is simply naive and an oversimplification of the process of the mentor and mentee relationships. Most "research starts from the biased starting point of investigating the assumed benefits of mentoring, rather than its full range of outcomes" (Colley, 2003, p. 35). In Homer's poem *Odyssey*, the original character Mentor appears "repeatedly in academic articles, practitioner journals, and in publicity and training materials for mentoring" plans and programs (Colley, 2003, p. 60). This poem leads readers and researchers to believe that the mentor and mentee relationship has been a common practice dating back thousands of years (Colley, 2003).

The role of mentoring has been "described as a gift exchange with the mentor showing the protégé a new way of seeing and doing" along with providing a clearer "vision of life" (Nolinske 1994, p.5). Within the scope of mentoring, there are both formal and informal mentoring relationships (Fagan & Walter, 1982; Kram, 1986). The formal relationship stems from being more structured, and the informal leans more towards a voluntary basis from both the mentor and protégé. When the relationship is more structured, companies and organizations have discovered the mentor and protégé relationship is "helpful in training or cross-training" employees for additional roles (Nolinske 1994, p. 8).

Though multiple manners and methods describe mentoring, Kochan and Pascarelli (2012) suggested a three-prong mentoring approach that includes traditional, transitional, and transformative. In the first approach, the mentor is the teacher, and the protégé is the learner (Irby et al. 2020). The transitional mentorship approach is a partnership that focuses on "blending the culture within which the mentoring occurs" (Irby et al., 2020. Section 1). The third

part of Kochan and Pascarelli's description of mentoring involves a transformation involving the changing of an individual, their organization, and the culture (Irby et al. 2020).

Types of Mentoring

Similar to the three methods of mentoring detailed by Kochan and Pascarelli (2012), there are general roles (or subsets) of mentoring that include the following: *Mentor*, *Executive Coach*, *Pastor's Pastor*, and *Peer Group*. The mentor and protégé relationship "involves empowerment, which is the opposite of dependence" and it allows the student to have "room to struggle through problems and decisions" (Pinzer 2017, p. 28).

Mentor.

The rudimentary and basic relationship is the "mentor showing the protégé a new way of seeing and doing" the tasks assigned or the project prescribed (Nolinske 1994, p.5). This usually involves an older individual who takes time with a younger person to assist in improving the areas of interest (Wilson & Johnson, 2001). There is a higher standard for those who chose a mentor role and "historically, mentors have been expected to model admirable personal traits and professional skill" (Wilson & Johnson 2001, p. 122). A good mentor should be passionate and someone who is a "life-long learner[s] and should want to pass that desire on to everyone they come in contact with" (Loretto, 2019). In reality, anyone in a leadership role can become a mentor, as long as they have a desire to provide "guidance and counsel to someone who has less experience in a field" (Lipscomb & An, 2010, p. 1002).

Mentee, Protégé, and Student

Much is researched about the leadership role of the mentor or coach, however, the role of the mentee and protégé is crucial, as well. The first and most crucial step for a mentee to grow in their field or calling is to locate and choose a mentor. Once the mentor and mentee relationship

begins, it is the mentee's responsibility to be proactive when engaging with the mentor along with contacting, making appointments, and verbalizing their goals to the mentor. Though a match may be made by the mentee or a third party, a critical element of a successful learning platform is the mentee's desire to learn and apply what the mentor is providing (Lipscomb & An, 2010).

Executive Coach

As leaders look to improve and sharpen their skills, a valuable tool is executive coaching. This type of coaching has "become an integral tool for practitioners in the fields of training and performance improvement as well as a viable leadership development strategy" to enhance the performance of an organization's leadership (Gan et al., 2021, p.1405). In an effort to develop younger members of management, the use of an executive coach is "one of the most effective methods for developing high potential internal managers for multiple job levels and promotions" (Gan et al., 2021, p.1407). Lastly, executive coaching "aspires to be a form of organization and leadership development that results in a high occurrence of relevant, actionable, and timely outcomes" for the client or leader (de Haan et al, 2013, p.41).

Pastor's Pastor

For a pastor or executive-level minister to flourish in their field or calling, they must cultivate "key relationships where true, two-way intimacy occurs" (Adam & Bloom, 2017, p. 256). Amongst the Mennonite Church in Easter Canada, local pastors participated in a three-year program that involved "practical experience, training, peer cohorts and mentoring" (Rogalsky 2014, p.21). Additionally, each pastor was given a coach, pastor, and peer group to assist in their success. The outcome was the pastors were "staying longer in pastorates because they received the support they need to thrive" (Rogalsky 2014, p.21). Many pastors were inspired by other

pastors or role models in their life and found satisfaction in developing young leaders in their local congregation (Pinzer 2017, p.86).

Peer Group Mentoring: Internal and External

Where one-on-one coaching has been shown to be effective, so peer mentoring relationships have proven "to be more relevant and readily available than traditional mentoring relationships" (Pinzer 2017, p.37). Within the constructs of a peer mentor relationship, *internal* peer groups are generally "inside the immediate organization where one works", whereas, the *external* peer groups are those that extend "beyond one's organizational context" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992 as cited in Pinzer 2017, p.34).

Need for and Importance of Mentoring and Coaching

With the uncertainty in the world economy and the future of religious liberties, leaders and employers are looking to "maximize efficiency" and "demonstrate their value" (Lipscomb & An 2010, p. 1002). With these two interests in play, this creates the "fertile ground from which successful mentoring, whether an organizational program or an individual relationship, can grow" (Lipscomb & An, 2010, p. 1002). In the research from Zambrana et al. (2015), the authors described the importance of having a mentor, while "others lamented not having mentors throughout their life course" (p. 51).

Along with a solid support system, Zambrana et al. (2015) noted that some mentors "offered invaluable instrument support" such as writing letters of recommendation to employers and connecting their mentee to other members who had been mentored (p. 53). A mentor should be respectful of the mentee's desire to learn and "should know how to be tactful in their conversations, and be emotionally intelligent" with their feedback and direction (Loretto, 2019).

History and Evolution of Mentoring

Author John Maxwell asked, "if mentoring others is such a rewarding calling, why doesn't everyone do it?" (Maxwell, 2015, p. 538). The benefits of mentoring and having a mentor far outweigh the desire to traverse any leadership journey alone. The term "mentor" has its roots in Greek mythology and stems from Homer's *Odyssey* wherein one of his characters, Mentor, is entrusted to instruct, tutor, and educate Telemachus, the son of Odysseus (Daloz, 1999, p. 20). Mentor was a significant figure in the Hormeric story during the period of the Trojan War (Homer, 1969). In the poem, when it was time for the men to go to war against the Trojans, Ulysses (Odysseus) who was the King of Ithaca left behind his wife, Penelope, and child, Telemachus, into the care of Mentor (Barondess, 1995). As the account continues, twenty years pass, and Mentor had assumed responsibility for the care, education, and overall well-being of the young lad, Telemachus. Homer's account of Mentor includes the embodiment and embellishment of the supreme Greek goddess, Athena, who often took the shape of Mentor to help Telemachus when "critical choices had to be made" (Barondess, 1995, p.4). In Homer's *Odyssey*, this writing provided a canvas of a strong mentored relationship between Mentor and Telemachus, and in addition, an "eloquent expression of important elements of its anchoring and guiding characteristics" (Barondess, 1995, p.6). During the twenty-year period when Telemachus'' father was away at war, Mentor gave instruction to the lad pertaining to his father, the King, "let not your courage and resource fail you now… if your body holds a trace of his temper it will suffice to make this effort of yours neither bootless nor aimless" (Homer, 1969, p.22).

Over the last fifty years, the amount of scholarship regarding the discipline and benefits of mentorship has grown from academic researchers to business writers to self-help authors. In

1978, an association of Yale social scientist spearheaded by Daniel Levinson produced a research paper titled, "*The Seasons of a Man's Life*" (Levinson, 1978). Within this research, Levinson and the team interviewed forty men from different walks of life who noted that having a mentor or a mentoring relationship was a crucial element in their formative years (Barondess, 1995). When mentoring is done well, it begins to "shape the skills every future leader needs" (Fournier, 2018, p. 20).

The impact of "employee socialization, learning, career development" and overall job preparation has resulted in successful mentoring in the fields of academia and overall workforce (Noe, et al, 2002, p. 130). When individuals who were mentored were compared to non-mentored individuals, those who had been placed with a mentor showed an increase in overall job satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). As mentoring studies increased throughout the 1980's and 1990, the benefits of mentored relationships continued to show a positive effect that, in turn, resulted in more promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Whitely, Dougherty & Dreher, 1991), higher income (Dreher & Ash, 1990), and a decrease in employee turnover (Scandura & Viator, 1994).

In 1984, Kram researched and reported that a mentor and protégé relationship is one that will enhance overall career development. In this particular research, Kram included two groups. First, she examined eighteen mentor and protégé relationships in a large 5000-employee public utility firm, and, second, she conducted a similar study with fifteen mentorships in a large Fortune 500 manufacturing company (Marshall-Triner, 1986). One notable characteristic that Kram (1984) discovered was when both parties were demographically similar, then the result was a healthy mentored relationship and more successful protégé. Lastly, Kram (1984) highlighted the crucial point that "traditional mentoring is only one part of an individual's

relationship constellation", however, other success factors included "peers, family members, subordinates, supervisors, and more senior employees" (Noe, et al, 2002, p.131).

As researchers continued to study the effects of traditional mentoring within varying industries, new findings in the early 2000's showed relationships that included: "developmental relationship, social networks, developmental networks, and peer mentoring" (Noe, et al, 2002, p.131). The findings Kram had discovered and reported in 1984 became a foundation for additional discoveries and relationship constellations.

Functions of Mentor-Protégé Relationships

In 1997, Lillian Eby, showcased two additional and alternative dimensions of mentoring that included: the lateral or hierarchical relationship and the job-related or career-related mentorship experience (Eby, 1997, p.126). This research compared four cells, I, II, III, and IV, that were set on an X-Y axis. This table differentiated the Job-Related and Career-Related by the Lateral and Hierarchical (Eby, 1997, p.129).

Eby provided comparisons between the Job-Related Skills Development and Career-Related Skill Development Functions and some included the following (Eby, 1997, p.128):

Table 1 – Job-Related vs Career-Related Skills Development

Job-Related Skills Development	Career-Related Skills Development
- Clarifies protégé's job duties - Provides advice on how to complete assignments more quickly and efficiently - Discusses strengths and areas for opportunities on the job - Suggests specific strategies for advancing within the organization - Supports or sponsors protégé's attempts to advance within the organization	- Provides assignments that develop a broad repertoire of new competencies and skills - Encourages continuous learning and cross-disciplinary experiences - Encourages protégé to develop diversified contacts within and outside the organization - Counsels protégé on how to engage in career planning that will enhance internal and external marketability

Lateral or Peer mentoring (Kram, 1984, Kram & Isabella, 1985) was defined as the "relationships among individuals who are at a comparable organizational level in terms of pay, status, and job responsibilities" (Eby, 1997, p.127). The Hierarchical form of mentoring places an emphasis on supervisors and managers who have the overall responsibility for the protégé's success and career path within the organization (Feldman, 1988). The four cells that Eby (1997) provided showed the interactivity between the Job-Related vs. Career-Related along with the Peer vs. Lateral mentoring.

In Cell I, the peer relationship between individuals within comparable levels showed a team concept or an "intrateam" mentoring to job-related skills (Eby, 1997, p.128). Within this, these working intrateams may take on leadership roles by setting goals and providing feedback to other team members (Eby, 1997). The *interteam mentoring* allows teams members to learn from separate teams within the organization. Eby (1997) noted that additional research was needed on intrateams, however, the data showed the positive effects of learning from the other team members. In addition to intrateam mentoring, Eby (1997) included two additional mentorships in Cell I: *co-worker mentoring* and *survivor mentoring* (p. 130-131). *Co-worker mentoring* was used frequently and provided guidance and encouragement to both individuals along with "helping each other with career strategizing" (Eby, 1997, p.131). *Survivor mentoring* is often difficult because these are workers who have survived lay-offs, cut-backs, and downsizing (Eby, 1997). Other mentoring opportunities within Cell I include *Peer mentoring for international and domestic relocators.*

Much like the mentor relationships in Cell I, the *Lateral Mentor–Protégé Relationship, Career-Related Skill Development* also included learning among peers (Eby, 1997). Unlike the skills that are learned that may only remain within the current organization, this type of

mentoring allowed the protégé to gain skills that were both "career-enhancing and easily transportable to other organizations" (Eby, 1997, p. 133). Two types of mentoring were defined in Cell II: internal collegial peer mentoring and external collegial peer mentoring (Eby, 1997). Much like "intrateam" mentoring, the *Internal Collegial* peer mentoring allowed the student or protégé to develop additional or extended social networks with employee or managers from other departments within the organization. Additionally, *Internal Collegial* peer mentoring afforded and allowed other departments to identify talented individuals from other areas and provide job openings or positions for promotion (Eby, 1997). *External Collegial* peer mentoring allowed a protégé to experience mentorship from outside the organization and "fulfill some career and psychosocial mentoring functions" (Eby, 1997, p. 134). Lastly, these contacts can become "vestibules of otherwise inaccessible information" (Eby, 1997, p. 134).

Cell III began the mentoring from *Hierarchical Mentor–Protégé Relationship*. Within this cell four categories were highlighted. All were kept with the organization structure, and the *Internal Sponsor* mentoring involved a "relationship between a senior, influential organizational mentor and a younger, more junior" employee (Eby, 1997, p. 135). By sponsoring a protégé, this sponsor acted as an advocate or promoter of the employee to provide specific work-related instruction. The *Manager-Subordinate* relationship seemed to be the "most natural position" to assist with an employee and to help them develop a specific plan to map out their personal and profession career goals (Eby, 1997, p.135). *Hierarchical mentoring for domestic relocators* and *international relocators* involved an experienced mentor who possessed the ability to transfer culture and patience as the new employee acclimates to the new environment.

The final Cell IV is the *Hierarchical Mentor–Protégé Relationship, Career-Related Skill Development,* and very similar to Cell III, focused on a higher-level mentor who took time with a

more junior protégé. This relationship, however, focused on transferring the development of

career-related skills and ensuring they were transferrable to other organizations (Feldman, 1988;

Kram, 1985; Eby, 1997). The first category of *Group professional association mentoring*

encouraged the protégé to involve themselves in national and local professional association that

included a particular type of membership.

Table 2 – Type of Skill Development

Type of Skill Development

	Job-Related	Career-Related
Lateral	**Cell I** Intra-team Mentoring Inter-team Mentoring Co-worker Mentoring Survivor Mentoring Peer Mentoring for Domestic Relocators Peer Mentoring for International Relocators	**Cell II** Internal Collegial Peer Mentoring External Collegial Peer Mentoring
Hierarchical	**Cell III** Internal Sponsor-Protégé Mentoring Manager-Subordinate Mentoring Hierarchical Mentoring for Domestic Relocators Hierarchical Mentoring for International Relocators	**Cell IV** Group Professional Association Mentoring External Sponsor-Protégé Mentoring

Form of the Mentor-Protégé Relationship

This allowed the protégé to gain further experience through the networking opportunities

that could surface. Eby (1997) noted that these types of professional associations may even

"complement, or even substitute for, traditional mentoring relationships" (p. 138). The final part

of the four quadrant was *External sponsor–protégé mentoring*, and, like the *Internal sponsor* in

Cell III, it allowed a higher-level leader with more extensive work experience to sponsor a

protégé from a different vertical. The advantage to this was when the external mentors were able to provide and be "important sources of information, guidance, and career advice" (Eby, 1997, p. 139).

Mentorship Designs and Theories

Due to the complexities of the mentor relationships, several theories have been associated with and between the mentor and protégé. The effectiveness of the transfer of skills and information required strong interpersonal and communication skills (Wood & Stanulis, 2010). Of the numerous theories that have gained attention, five have contributed to academia and the work force: *social learning theory, attachment theory, self-determination theory, and mentor role theory*.

Social Learning Theory

In early research on knowledge transfer, Bandura introduced the theory of *Modeling Theory: Some Traditions, Trends, and Disputes* (1972) wherein the manager or mentor's behavior conveyed information "to observers about the characteristics of appropriate responses" (Bandura, 1972, p.37). His research sought to uncover the reasons for or possibilities why the subordinates in this type of relationship often were more inclined to exhibit similar behaviors in similar circumstances as the manager within the context of social learning (Bandura, 1972). The process of transmission of information and behaviors from one person to another can be conveyed "through physical demonstration, through pictorial representation, or through verbal description" (Bandura, 1972, p. 51.) Within the confines of social learning, this theory suggested that protégés can learn from the examples, observations, and behavior of their mentor or teacher, therefore allowing a transfer of knowledge and information.

Attachment Theory

In 1969 and 1982, Bowlby introduced and reiterated his studies of the *attachment theory* (Bowlby, 2004). This theory proposed that early attachment to a mother, father, or care taker can influence a person's ability to find, form, and maintain healthy relationships (Bowlby, 2004). In regards to the attachment model, "parental support contributes to the schema that the adolescent develops about relationships, and the schema provides a basis for interpretation and action in relationships with peers" (Germain, 2011. p.126). Akin to the close relationships with a parent or loved one, mentoring has shown to be a critical part of a person's career development and identity (Kram, 1985). To build on Bowlby's theory, Scandura and Pellegrini (2004) introduced a fresh model of mentoring and noted that the "attachment style is a mediator between someone's past experiences and a mentoring relationship" (Germain, 2001, p. 125). In regards to the attachment model, it appeared to be "appropriate at the workplace because it is relatively simple to understand and captures much of the variations in adult interpersonal relatedness" (Germain, 2011. p.127).

Self-Determination Theory

In 2017, Ryan & Deci introduced the *self-determination theory* (SDT) that examined how "biological, social, and cultural conditions either enhance or undermine the inherent human capacities for psychological growth, engagement, and wellness" (p. 3). In essence, they examined a person's physiology to determine the importance of independence, capabilities, self-governance, and applicability for personal motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). One key to a healthy mentorship was supporting the protégé so that when the mentor was absent, the student could continue with limited oversight. Though there was a degree of autonomy for the protégé in a mentorship, the use of SDT saw "it as relevant to the processes through which

cultural contents of any type, whether collectivistic or individualistic" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p.71).

Mentor Role Theory

The *role theory* was introduced by Mead and others (1934), and it theorized that everyone has a role in society and each shapes the behaviors and morés of the culture. In 1999, Weave and Chelladurai introduced a more applicable mentorship model that identified a "process in which a more experienced person (i.e., the mentor) serves as a role model, provides guidance and support to a developing novice (i.e., the protégé), and sponsors that individual's career progress" (p. 25). The mentor role theory (MRT) framework, introduced by Kram in 1985, allows for a "deeper understanding of mentoring relationships, as it breaks down to the actual lived experiences of mentors and protégés through both career and psychosocial functions" (Swim, et al, 2022, p. 103). These shared experiences were the essence of this phenomenological study of pastors who had identified role models to guide and encourage them.

The benefits of a mentor and mentee relationship far outweigh the process of a person learning alone. Both secular and religious studies "note the benefits of utilizing a collaborative approach in mentoring practices" (Wahl, 2021, p.55). For the coach or mentor to achieve full effectiveness with the protégé or mentee, several factors were helpful in the process like organizational support, proactive and positive coaching, honest and goal-oriented feedback, along with a strong commitment by both the mentor and mentee to finish strong and achieve goals set forth in the onset of the relationship (Gan et al., p.1419).

Related Literature

In terms of mentoring and coaching on a broad spectrum, there is a vast amount of scholarly literature that is available in journals, books, blogs, and articles. This section will cover studies and additional research associated with mentoring.

Example to Follow

Coleman noted in *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (2010) that the strategy Jesus Christ used to train His disciples was to "demonstrate the kind of life he planned for his people to live" (p. 149). The mentor-student relationship Jesus used to teach His disciples was an example of prayer to the Father, a command of scripture from the Old Testament, and how He was able to win over the heart of people with whom He came into contact (p. 149). For the first three years of Jesus ministry, He took time to answer question that His young disciples posed. Through His example and question-answer sessions, He was able to teach His students and provide direction for the next phase of His and their ministries. The end goal was to see His disciple take over the ministry He started (p. 153). By His example, His disciples were able to participate in the miracle of feeding the five thousand (Matthew 14:31-21), see a man's son healed who suffered from seizures (Matthew 17:14-21), and watch a fig tree withered after Jesus cursed it (Matthew 21:18-22).

Supervision and Encouragement

Jesus took time to train His disciple and trust them enough to send them out in teams of two to share the gospel of the Kingdom of God. In Luke's account of the Gospel, Jesus "called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Luke 9:1-2). Coleman noted that "even in the limited amount of redemptive work

in which they had engaged, they needed supervision" (Coleman, 2010, p. 157). Following their

mission trips, Jesus met with His disciples to hear about their victories, concerns, success, and

failures (et al., p. 157). Soon after sending out the twelve disciples, Jesus sent out seventy

additional close followers and instructed him them to go peacefully, eat the food that is given,

heal the sick, preach the kingdom of God, and to not take it personally if they were rejected for

His name's sake (Luke 1:1-12). When the seventy returned with accounts of successes in

ministry, Jesus said, "do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your

names are written in heaven" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Luke 10:20).

Addition and Multiplication

The goal of any teacher or mentor is to see the student's activities continue even when the

teacher has left or the season of mentorship has concluded. Coleman noted that the definitive

goal of Jesus' ministry was to replicate or reproduce followers who were trained, taught, and

encouraged to continue what He began at His baptism in the Jordan River. Even though Jesus

wanted to see His disciple grow in their faith, His eventual goal was that they reproduce

additional followers and ultimately multiply to the surrounding areas (Coleman, 2010, p. 161-

162). The moments before Jesus ascended into heaven after His forty days of encouragement to

His followers following His resurrection, He said to His followers that they would receive

"power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and

in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Acts 1:8).

This power from the Holy Spirit would eventually provide them the strength and direction to

share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the known world.

The local church is the strongest organism for seeing the Great Commission fulfilled. The

Lord Jesus share with his disciples that they should, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel

to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Mark 16:15-16). In his book *Multiply*, author Francis Chan (2001) wrote that inside the local church, pastors and members are responsible for challenging one another, serving one another, and love each other in various ways (p. 65). When these elements are taught and in place, it makes for a healthier church family, thus allowing church membership to work as a body of believers. When the whole body is functioning properly, and Jesus is the head of the organism, then the "whole body is joined together and connected by every joint and ligament, as every part effectively does its work and grows, building itself up in love" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Ephesians 4:16).

Chan wrote that the focus for fellowship is important, however, there must be a desire to reach outwardly to see God's plan fulfilled, and the calling must be to reach those who have no real understanding of a relationship with God (p. 65-66). Jesus reminded His follower of what they had been given and what they had experienced by being close to Him. He reminded them, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (*Modern English Version*, 2014, Matthew 5:14-16).

Rationale for Study and Gap in Literature

The research questions steering this study addressed how pastors of congregations with less than thirty (30) regular attendees can successfully and effectively grow in their leadership skills while overseeing a growing congregation through the time spent with a coach or mentor. The questions influencing this study arose from a gap in the literature on the value of a mentor for pastors who are leading or have led smaller congregations. More research is certainly needed, despite available data on the general uses of a mentor or coach.

The need for mentorship relationships for pastors, regardless of age, who are forging to lead a church of less than thirty to more than one hundred is worthy of research. Researcher, George Barna (2016), noted that due to social uncertainty, there is a "decline in the percentage of born-again Christians who believe they have a responsibility to share the gospel with nonbelievers during the course of the year— a twelve-point decline in the last ten years" (p.20). This data shows that pastors who desire to lead a smaller congregation to see the Great Commission fulfilled have a daunting task. The American churches are changing dramatically from the country church or inner-city church to larger buildings with multiple campuses pastored by a large team of leaders (p. 47). Barna wrote that a "new generation of pastors is assuming control of the nation's pastorates, replacing the Builders and Boomers who came before them" (Barna, 2016, p. 47). This, however, does not negate or preclude the need for smaller congregational pastors who may reach a different type of individual or families who are unable to attend larger church congregations.

Profile of Current Study

This research interviewed seventeen pastors who with the help of a mentor were able to lead a church of less than thirty attenders to more than one-hundred regular attenders. These pastors answered a questionnaire online that assisted the researcher in determining shared experiences thus warranting this phenomenological study. These pastors were all from the United States and served as lead pastors in Evangelical style church settings. They were asked to explain the role of a mentor in their life, their journey to lead a growing church, and the value of the mentor along the way. This researcher applied a qualitative phenomenological approach to this study to investigate and to better understand the shared experiences of the pastors

interviewed. This particular design was utilized to better understand the lived experiences and explore shared themes to bracket those similarities.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a literature review germane to the research problem. Many volumes and publications of literature exist that address the subjects of mentoring, coaching, and peer groups. Though mentoring has been studied and continues to be developed, much more is available to be learned and understood surrounding the effectiveness of pastoral mentoring. This phenomenological study sought to better understand the dynamics, nuances, and shared experiences of mentored pastors. Philosophical, biblical, and theological applications have been presented throughout the literature review. This review established a strong possible connection within the relationships of the mentors and mentees. Nonetheless, the literature review found insufficient research specific to the pastor mentor relationships. Therefore, a research gap existed thus warranting a need for this research. The following chapter will present the methodology for addressing the research problem.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter begins with a statement of the researcher's philosophical assumptions along with the research design, problem, purpose, and questions. Following this, an analysis of the qualitative research with a phenomenological design within this study will be presented. This exploration will detail the overall features of the qualitative study with a phenomenological design in relation to the research. This research focused on pastors who have been mentored, the perceived value, and the resulting effects on their leadership and church congregations.

This research sought to explore or demonstrate a link between mentored pastors of smaller church congregations who were able to benefit from the value of a mentor and provided leadership development along with direction as their congregations grow. Several independent organizations offer mentorships for pastors, and some denominational organizations have regional leaders to provide direction.

Research Design Synopsis

The research design for this study was qualitative with a phenomenological design. Creswell (2013) noted that qualitative research is similar to a bundle of fabric that is made up of tiny threads of varying colors, textures, and materials. The qualitative study is complex and may have many interpretations, however, qualitative research with a phenomenological design seeks to understand the correlation of lived experiences shared by multiple individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The phenomenological design of this qualitative research studied the attributes between individuals and their shared experiences along with "their world to be the fullness of reality while the science focused on merely observation of an object finds only abstraction" (Pinzer, 2017, p. 121). This research design allowed the researcher to discover and examine the

apparent benefits and perceived value of mentors along with the leadership traits provided to the pastors.

This research sought to better understand the pastor and mentor relationship from the viewpoint of the pastor and the perceived value it brings to the pastor, and this was the primary inquiry for this study. This process included what Creswell (2013) called a "list of characteristics of a good qualitative study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 53). These characteristics included the following:

- research must include procedures that catalog and categorize the data, research must be framed within the "assumption and characteristics" of a qualitative research approach (p. 53),

- research must begin with a "single approach or concept" to be evaluated and investigated that may include additional groups, themes, or factors (p. 53),

- research must include methods and a "rigorous approach to data collection" along with the analysis of data and accurate reporting (p. 54),

- research is written persuasively so that the reader can have the feeling of "being there" (p. 54),

- the research showcases the "history, culture, and personal experiences" of the topic studied (p. 54),

- the research is conducted ethically and includes the full permission of the Institutional Review Board along with the dissertation supervisor to ensure ethical standards are met.

Research Problem

It is not definitively known how pastors are able to lead a church from less than thirty (30) in regular attendance to more than one hundred (100) in attendance regularly. Much can be learned by investigating the perceived value of a mentored or coached pastor who is leading a smaller congregation and the perceived value of the role of a mentor to encourage a pastor to lead the congregation to more than one hundred regular attendees, thus warranting a need for further exploration.

The research questions steering this study addressed how pastors of congregations with less than thirty (30) regular attendees can successfully and effectively grow in their leadership skills while overseeing a growing congregation through the time spent with a coach or mentor. Individuals who have a "growth mindset" often see themselves as "having potential in a wide range of area" (Lancer, et al, 2016, p. 213). In addition, Lancer (2016) noted that they enjoy stretching themselves regardless if they have natural talent or the help of a mentor. The questions influencing this study arose from a gap in the literature on the value of a mentor for pastors who are leading or have led smaller congregations. More research is certainly needed, despite available data on the general uses of a mentor or coach.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine and investigate the perceived value of a mentor for a person in the role of a church pastor. The relationship and interactions between pastor and mentor largely depend on the understanding and fellowship between the two individuals. For a mentor and mentee relationship to be effective and successful, there must be trust or rapport established between both parties (Thompson, 2019). Thompson

(2019) described rapport as "a harmonious liaison between people who feel they have a sense of connection" (p. 27).

In general, the purpose of this qualitative research with a phenomenological design was to unearth the participant's perspective and seek to explain in detail what it was like to experience the phenomenon that is being researched (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Three major value categories were considered. First, the study focused on the influence the mentor provided on the pastor, the pastor's family, and the congregation. Second, the study sought to determine what leadership qualities were perceived to have been gained by pastors who had a mentor. And third, the study sought to understand the perceived value of the role of mentoring among pastors who oversaw the growth of a church of fewer than thirty members to more than one hundred regular attendees.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) were asked in interviews to determine emerging themes:

RQ1. What perceived effect did the use of a mentor have on a pastor's overall leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees?

RQ2. How did the participating pastors describe the value of having a mentor (coach, pastor, or mentor)?

RQ3. What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members?

The purpose of the first question was to discover the perceived value the mentor had on the pastor's leadership, the congregation's growth, the pastor's family, and the overall spiritual health of the pastor. Subquestions were used to better understand the role of the mentor's time, influence, and tenure as a pastor or coach. Open-ended subquestions were included but not

limited to the following themes: home life, weekend schedules, personal goals and dreams, spiritual health, hearing God's voice, advice received, and examples of the mentor's leadership.

The second question was open-ended to allow leeway for the mentored pastor to share stories and examples of how the mentor provided leadership and direction. Subquestions included how often they met together and how often they spoke on the phone. Additional themes were explored and were included but not be limited to the following: describe the journey from the first introduction to the present, motivations for staying with the mentor, examples of mentor's advice, an example of when or if the pastor had been corrected, and the top three strengths of the mentor.

The third question was to better understand what mentor models are used to assist and lead the local pastor. Subquestions included books assigned to the pastor, seminars attended, or small groups formed to facilitate growth among mentors and pastors.

Research Design and Methodology

The research design for this phenomenological study sought to understand the commonality of pastors with a particular shared experience and to discover how each pastor brought meaning within a natural or neutral situation (Neuman, 2003). The phenomenological design or maxim for this study was to provide the "impetus for experience and for generating new knowledge" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). The phenomena or shared experiences are the ingredients that are the foundation of "human science and the basis for all knowledge" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Moustakas highlighted the use and conceptual framework of Transcendental Phenomenology (TPh) and described it as a "state of freshness and openness" along with a "readiness to see in an unfettered way" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41). Moustakas (1994) wrote that this framework involved four core principles that included the following: "Epoche,

Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation, and a Synthesis of Meaning and Essences"

(p. 41). Moustakas wrote that e*poche* is the beginning stage of the process, and it required a new

way of looking at the shared experiences of others. Next, the process of *transcendental*

phenomenological reduction involved moving beyond the mundane to experience a singularity

or phenomenon with the use of varying sounds, colors, thoughts, shapes, and perceptions

(Moustakas, 1994). The *imaginative variation* is similar to the TPh reduction with the addition of

structural essences that supported the shared experience (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, the *synthesis*

of meaning and essence included the intersubjectivity of the shared experience and painted a

picture of the culture and conditions that "precipitate an experience and connects with it"

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 35).

The existential assumptions of this research comprised the understanding that varying

social realities existed and the individuals interviewed for the study were able to explain and

remember details that define the pastoral mentoring relationships along with the perceived value

it eventually brought to their leadership, family, and congregation (Hicks, 2007). Creswell

(2003) noted that researchers who chose a qualitative approach have a comprehensive and

integrated view of social phenomena. This researcher sought to better understand the pastor and

mentor relationship and the qualities attributed to the relationship.

Within qualitative research, the use of one to three central questions allowed the

researcher to explore the main concept or phenomenon surrounding the problem (Creswell,

2014). These questions normally included a broader question followed up by a narrower question

(Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) recommended that the researcher ask no more than five to

seven subquestions related to the central questions. Under the qualitative umbrella of research,

the phenomenological design focused on a "single phenomenon or concept" (Creswell, 2014, p.

134). Creswell (2014) noted that qualitative research is "interpretative research" (p. 183), and the researcher's responsibility is to capture the experience of the participants within the study. Contained within the questions, the researcher sought to understand the participants past experiences along with how those experiences shaped their interpretation of the experience (Creswell, 2014).

This design and methodology began with broad assumptions that lead to the particular inquiry (Creswell, 2013). Following, the broad assumptions, this research included the process of data collection by gathering "multiple forms of data, adequately summarized" to begin the blocking and framing of the data (Creswell, 2013, p.53). The researcher made no premature hypothesis or inferences concerning the objectivity surrounding the participants but instead concentrated on collecting information and recognizing each person in the study (Mertens, 1998). An integral aspect of the qualitative research process included the development of codes and categories wherein the researcher was able to create a block outline of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013). Because the research questions concentrated on exploring the shared experiences of the chosen participants, the TPh model was used (Creswell, 2013). Creswell noted that the use of TPh allows the researcher to study the data by "reducing the information to significant statements or quotes" and then combining the statements into themes (Creswell, 2013, p.80).

The phenomenological path of this research included a focus on explaining the elements and details of each participant's experience within the pastor and mentor relationship. Each phenomenological interview was framed to understand from the participant's viewpoint a better understanding of their shared and personal experience within the pastor and mentor relationship. At the conclusion of this study, some participants involved in the research requested the finding

and were sent a summary of the data. This researcher hopes that mentors, pastors, overseers, and instructors who review this research will gain a better understanding of the perceived value of a mentor and possibly persuade them to consider the value of a mentor in their ministry.

Setting

The settings for this research were within the confines and boundaries of the United States of America and included pastors from Evangelical churches. These pastors were screened and selected from lists generated by the Apostolic World Christian Fellowship, and referrals from other pastors. The process of qualitative research is rooted in the area of social sciences, and that paves the way for a particular shared life experience. Aspects of qualitative research often include the following elements: an understanding of multiple elements, the participants are better equipped to provide details when they are in a comfortable setting, the more descriptive the answers (questions and sub-questions) the participants give, and the overall appreciation given to each participant (Creswell, 2003; Glicken, 2003; Jones, 2002).

This research focused on allowing the participants to be in their natural setting (i.e. home, church, or office), and the interviews were recorded via Zoom or in-person with copious notes. Creswell (2003) noted that when participants are in their natural setting, the researcher can extract a more in-depth level of realization of the phenomenon that each participant has experienced. This researcher made every effort to arrange a suitable time with the participants and asked each of them to find a quiet and comfortable setting free of all possible interruptions and distractions. The process of a comfortable setting allowed the researcher to interview the participants and ask questions relating to the following: facts, beliefs and perspectives, feelings, motives, past and present behaviors, standards of behavior, and conscious reasons for actions or feelings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 263).

Participants

Creswell (2013) wrote that the entirety of a qualitative research project must remain focused on the impact of the participants' answers and understanding the position they have about the problem being researched. Additionally, the research should explore and analyze the "multiple perspectives" and "diverse views" the participants provide to the study (Creswell, 2013, p. 47). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019), the participants should fit into a small segment of the overall population of pastors and be non-random. In the process of selecting the particular sampling of pastors who have been mentored, the process was purposive, which Leedy and Ormrod (2019) described as the process of choosing individuals that will "yield the most information about the topic under investigation" (p. 261). The researcher chose participants from the Association of Related Churches (ARC), Apostolic World Christian Fellowship, and non-denominational backgrounds who had been mentored and had seen their congregations grow from less than thirty regular attendees to more than one hundred regularly. The researcher sought to choose pastors who were able to provide "typical perceptions and perspectives" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 266).

This research took place to gain an additional understanding of the perceived value and effects a mentor had on a pastor. Additionally, this researcher aimed to collect common themes within the pastor and mentor relationships. The research design was to locate, screen, and prequalify a minimum of fifteen Evangelical pastors who have successfully overseen the growth of a congregation with the assistance or oversight of a mentor. A list of qualifying general questions was to be sent to a wide range of Evangelical pastors of an online platform, Survey Monkey, to differentiate the participants in order to study the shared life experience of a specific population.

Once the results from Survey Monkey were analyzed, an email was sent to the screened candidates, and a minimum of fifteen were asked to participate in an in-depth interview that lasted forty-five to seventy-five minutes to determine the perceived value of a pastoral mentor. When an individual answers the call to pastor a smaller church or any sized church, is there a need for a pastor and mentor relationship to ensure overall growth? If this relationship grows, the pastor should see growth in his role. It is the hope of the mentor that these bonds grow stronger, and, therefore, "both mentor and protégé must see the relationship as something that might go beyond a few years of interaction, instructions, and guidance" (Royster, 2016, p. 34).

Role of the Researcher

This researcher understood that some level of bias may be present in the research, however, all attempts were made to remove personal biases and remain neutral (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). This researcher has served as a music pastor, outreach pastor, and currently serves as a lead pastor for a congregation of approximately fifty regular attendees.

Within the constructs of phenomenological research, one method of incorporating shared experiences is known as bracketing (Laverty, 2003). This researcher focused on bracketing and categorizing the details of the shared life experiences of the participants to ensure all the data was collected and cataloged properly. This researcher assumed that the evangelical pastors chosen to discuss their mentor and pastor relationship were honest and trustworthy with their answers. Creswell (2013) noted that in a qualitative research design, the role of the researcher is to gather the information and data through "examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants" (p.45). This type of phenomenological research allowed the researcher to be one-on-one with the participant and ask open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the researcher was given latitude to ask questions specifically tailored to the shared experience

and did not simply "rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers" (Creswell, 2013, p.45).

The role of this research was to investigate the perceived value a mentor has had on a pastor and to make observations that were recorded to ensure the integrity of the interviews (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). This allowed the researcher to "capture the wide variant of ways in which people" act and interact (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 263). Even though the process of recording the interviews was timely, costly, and arduous; the researcher understood the inefficiency and insufficiencies of taking written notes to capture the beauty and richness of the participant within the interview setting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

Though the research focused on three major questions, subquestions were asked to investigate the shared experience of the pastors to determine specific themes. The use of open-ended questions allowed the participant to share stories and details that may not have been previously considered (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The researcher sought to understand the cultural background of the participant and how they were impacted by the pastor and mentor relationship.

Ethical Considerations

Before proceeding, this researcher sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University to evaluate the proposal for the aforementioned pastor and mentor relationship proposed study. Initially, this researcher chose pastors with whom he has had no prior affiliation, thus ensuring the removal of any residual bias, however, through referral, two were one he had known previously. Within the parameters of a qualitative research design, this researcher advised the participants that the information shared would be used in the data collection process and that no deceptive practices would be implemented to extract information.

For participants in this study, the researcher asked each to acknowledge a form consenting to information gathered to be used in this research.

When considering the weight of a qualitative study with a phenomenological design, Babbie (2004) details seven areas of ethical research that this research intended to apply to this phenomenological social study.

1. Voluntary contribution – each participant was asked to participate voluntarily without preconditions. A form letter that was approved by the IRB was presented to each participant detailing the risks, benefits, and purpose before any interviews.

2. No harm or ill-intent to any participant – this research sought to gain information about the pastor and mentor relationship and offered to protect the integrity of each participant and the data gathered. Each participant was informed that they can withdraw at any particular time throughout the process.

3. Confidentiality and privacy – The interviews that were recorded and transcribed were coded in a manner to protect each participant's identification. Pseudo-names or coded numbers were given at the request of a participant and Bible names were used in place of their given name.

4. Deceptive practices – All participants were given a written disclosure informing them of the details, objectives, and constructs of this study along with a list of the research questions.

5. Evaluation and Summarization – All data was recorded and reported honestly to the best of the researcher's ability throughout the research process. Through the assistance of the dissertation supervisor, IRB, and peer review, information and data was checked to ensure the integrity of the research.

6. Institutional Review Board – This research proposal sought approval from the IRB to comply with all ethics, policies, and practices of the Liberty University Standards and Practices to provide integrity and protection of the participants, data, and findings of this research.

7. Professional Code of Ethics – This research was governed and administered in a manner that was honest, principled, and straightforward. Each participant was fully aware of the research, its intent, and, eventually, have access to the findings. In total, this study complied with all seven noted items.

If a participant later requested that their information be excluded, then all data from the aforementioned interview was deleted from further consideration. Before any in-depth questions or sub-questions were asked, a consent form was given to each participant to review and acknowledge. The use of the consent form allowed the researcher to "explain the nature of the study" along with "plans for using the results" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 266). The data collected from the questions in the interviews and all gathered information was presented in an honest form to ensure readers may gain additional insight into the pastor and mentor relationships.

<div align="center">**Data Collection Methods**</div>

According to Englander (2012), the instrumentation for qualitative research with a phenomenological design explores the meaning of an experience rather than the statistics and data. At the onset, the researcher was granted permission to send out an email to a list of names from Apostolic World Christian Fellowship. Next, through referrals, pastors from the Association of Related Churches (ARC) and non-denominational church were given to identify candidates who met the qualifications and matched the parameter of this research. Next, the

researcher presented the questions to screen or qualify potential candidates for participation in this research. Additionally, the screening questions were sent with the help of an online survey instrumentation, Survey Monkey and JotForm, to collect data thus making it cost-effective and quicker "access to and return of the participant experience data" (Pinzer, 2017, p. 142). This research used a research software similar to NVivo to organize, analyze, and ascertain the emerging themes. Nvivo-type platforms also allow for importing videos, emails, online surveys, relationship coding, charts, and transcripts. An integral part of the qualitative research process included the development of codes and categories that this researcher used to build a block outline of the answers to this phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). After a population of candidates was collected, then a disclosure was sent to potential participants asking them to review and participate in the remainder of the research.

In the process of collecting the data from the interviews, the researcher was able to "clearly distinguish between [the] actual observations (data) and [the] interpretations (memos)" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 263). This process of distinguishing between observations and interpretations helped this researcher to remain objective about the data collected and review any concerns about changes that needed to be made over time due to interpretations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Additionally, the researcher sought to create and maintain rapport with the participant by beginning with small talk, remaining courteous and respectful, and showing genuine interest in the answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). In the process of maintaining rapport, this researcher showed "compassion and interest" in the answers given through body language and affirming gestures (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 267).

Following the collection of data from the online screening, the research sought to find at minimum fifteen qualified pastors who had been mentored and have pastored a church of fewer

than thirty members and oversaw its growth to more than one hundred regular attendees. Later in

the research process, this researcher collected the answers given to open-ended questions during

the one-on-one interviews conducted between the researcher and participants. This review of the

collected data included transcriptions of the recorded interviews (audio, video, or both) to assist

with the data collection and analysis process (Bailey, 2008). The questions used along with the

subquestions to further explore the particular phenomenon being researched are included in the

appendix (see Appendix C). The interview process in this phenomenological design involved the

use of informal and interactive interviews that included open-ended questions to allow for

additional comments from the pastors, and these questions can be reviewed in the section below

titled "*Interviews*" (Moustakas, 1994).

According to Moustakas (1994), it is the role of the researchers to create an atmosphere

and climate wherein the participants can feel comfortable to respond honorably, honestly, and

openly about their experiences. The qualifying participants were asked to set aside forty-five to

seventy-five minutes for an in-person interview using the platform Zoom and agree to have the

interview recorded for later analysis. Even though the researcher preferred to have an in-person

face-to-face interview with each participant, time and location prohibited this. Upon completion

of the interviews, this researcher began the analysis of the collected raw data.

Collection Methods

The purpose of the Transcendental Phenomenology (TPh) data collection process

proposed was to evaluate the answers and responses to ascertain similar and emerging themes

from the pastor participants. The data collection process was a "series of interrelated activities

aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions" (Creswell, 2013,

p.146). After the participants were screened and met the criteria for this research, the interviews

were, in most cases, virtual from the researcher's office and were recorded following the completion of the participants acknowledgement of the consent forms (Creswell, 2013).

Instruments and Protocols

The goal of this research was to gather data to determine the value of a mentor in the life and ministry of a pastor and to ascertain shared experiences with the various pastoral participants interviewed. With two participants, the researcher did have previous knowledge of a participant prior, however, the researcher made every attempt to remain impartial as the data is collected. This researcher was the human instrument of this research and was responsible for collecting the data and determining emerging themes (Creswell, 2013). This researcher used the technique of bracketing, or e*poche*, to ensure the limitations of any resident or preconceived ideas of the researcher to ensure a path toward this phenomenological study.

Interviews

The interviews were a crucial part of this phenomenological research, and the interviews were used to collect the emerging themes and shared experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). The main three questions were introduced and subquestions were asked in a semi-structured manner to allow the participants to speak openly and freely. The following were questions that were used:

1. How long have you pastored?

2. What or who led you to seek a pastoral role?

3. Did you start your church ministry from the ground up or did you transition into this office or role from another pastor?

4. At what point in your pastorate did you begin to utilize your mentor?

5. What value did the mentor bring to your:

a. weekend message preparations and church government,

b. family structure and personal well-being,

c. personal leadership development and ministry maturity

6. What was the timeframe it took to grow your church from less than 30 members to more than 100 regular attendees?

7. Do you feel that you could have accomplished this without a mentor?

8. How often do (did) you meet with or speak with your mentor? Is it a regularly scheduled meeting or just when you need counsel?

9. Will you describe the structure of your meetings and conversations?

10. How has the general questions and answer times with your mentor affected your ministry?

11. Describe a time when the mentor gave you counsel that made a deep impact on your personal life or ministry.

12. In what way has the mentor prepared you to pastor more effectively?

13. Have you had more than one mentor? If so, how has each one impacted your ministry and you personally?

14. In your opinion, how valuable is a pastoral mentor and what advice would you give to pastors who are without a mentor?

Questionnaires

Babbie (2004) noted that the "format of a questionnaire is just as important as the nature and wording of the questions asked" (p. 250). The questions asked sought to uncover emerging themes surrounding the value of a mentor in the life of a pastor. The interviews, whether in-

person, by video, or by telephone were recorded and copious notes were taken to ensure data collected was preserved for future analysis.

Focus Groups

This researcher had hoped to request the advice and counsel of a small focus group of pastors to view the aforementioned interview questions and request if further questions, however, after interviewing the pastors, the researcher felt it was not needed. Additionally, the research noted the answers and used the data to compile the shared experiences.

Case Study

It is unknown if a case study will result from this in-depth research. It is the hope of this investigator that this research will result in the collection of data surrounding the value and essence of a mentor in a pastor's life and ministry. The interviews along with data collected from the individuals will hopefully allow the research to produce transferable data that may be beneficial to future researchers.

Document Analysis

The data collected from the recorded one-on-one interviews and copious notes was categorized or blocked into specific and relevant themes. The information was transcribed into a Word document that was saved on an external hard drive along with a copy secured in Dropbox. The Word document included the participants' names, location, time and length of the interview along with the overall demeanor of the interview. Additionally, all handwritten notes taken during the interview were scanned and uploaded into a work file.

Procedures

Before beginning this research, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the proposed study. Following the approval of the IRB, this researcher contacted the Apostolic

World Christian Fellowship (AWCF), Associate Related Church (ARC), and Faith Ministry

Alliance to obtain a list of pastors' names.

1. Upon receiving the lists, this researcher asked for permission from the aforementioned organizations to contact pastors from the list.

2. This researcher sent out screening questions to the pastors on the list to identify mentored pastors who had begun with less than thirty regular attendees and who had seen the church congregation grow to more than one hundred regular attendees.

3. After identifying pastors, this researcher contacted each of them individually to ascertain if they would be willing to participate in interviews and data collection to assist with this research.

4. The minimum number of participants this researcher believed was required was fifteen candidates.

5. As the fifteen pastors (the final number of interviewed pastors was seventeen) were identified, this researcher then emailed an additional questionnaire using JotForm along with an acknowledgment of the consent forms from each participant.

6. Upon receiving the completed questionnaire from JotForm, the researcher scheduled interviews either over the telephone or the preferred choice of a video or in-person interview.

7. With each interview, the sessions were recorded and copious notes were taken for future analysis.

8. The interview began with a formal introduction, and the researcher began the 45 to 75-minute interview with each pastor. Some interviews extended to more than 90 minutes as

the researcher allowed the participants to explain their relationship with their mentor and their church growth.

9. The questions listed above were asked of each mentored pastor, and subquestions or follow-up questions were also asked (See Appendix C).

10. Following the completion of all interviews, the researcher reviewed the recorded sessions and copious notes to ascertain emerging themes of the shared experiences of the participants.

11. The process of blocking and horizonalization allowed the researcher to organize the data's common and emerging themes.

12. After the common themes were organized, the researcher went about answering the three research questions (RQ) introduced at the onset of the research.

Data Analysis

This researcher received permission to research the aforementioned three research questions from pastors who have been mentored. Next, once the participants for the research were screened and prequalified, online answers were returned, and one-on-one interviews were scheduled and completed, then the process of analyzing the data began for the researcher. The data from the initial online questionnaires assisted the researcher in selecting the participants according to themes, systems, and applicable information that tethers the participants to a general phenomenon (Bailey, 2008). Due to the immense amount of information collected in a qualitative research project, Creswell (2013) noted the importance of reading and re-reading transcripts to allow the researcher ample opportunity to become immersed in the specifics to gain understanding before dividing the findings into segments.

By its own design, qualitative research is not necessarily focused on discovering or attributing a binary or mathematical value to a particular phenomenon (Werth, 2019). Organizing the data was fundamental for the researcher, and one way to accomplish this was through what Moustakas (1994) coined as *horizontalizing* the information. This horizonalization process included analyzing answers, bracketing comments, and highlighting statements made by the participants in the interviews, comparing them narrowly, and building toward a wider meaning (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). The highlighted areas were then segmented and used to create clusters of similarity and significance (Creswell, 2013). Because horizonalization is a tool used to analyze data systematically, the goal was to identify similar themes that surface from the participants' shared experiences (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015).

Various platforms have been created and used to code the data collected. This is vital in the research due to the enormous amount of data needed to be organized and analyzed. The process of data collection and analysis included steps offered by Creswell (2003) and Moustakas (1994) that include the following: coordination and arrangement of data, review of notes and transcription, beginning the analysis by horizonalization (smaller to broader), organize themes to facilitate the common phenomenon experienced by participants, lastly, deconstructing the data to clarify themes and apply logical interpretation (Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

Once the one-on-one interviews were complete, then the recordings of the interviews were collected for transcription. The process was crucial for the analysis and review of the data collected. According to Bailey (2008), the process of reading and re-reading transcriptions from the interviews assists the researchers in analyzing the data. This, in turn, allowed the researcher to connect and tether similar themes that connected the shared experiences of the participants and link the phenomena together for analysis (Baily, 2008).

Once the themes were identified, the next step included the development of codes and categories (Creswell, 2013). This process of coding "involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information" while searching for similar information from other participant interviews (Creswell, 2013, p. 184). Within the process of determining codes and categories, the researcher attempted to winnow the finding into five or six categories (Creswell, 2013). The process of naming the categories can include *in vivo* coding which is naming the categories with the same thematic wording as the participants used (Creswell, 2013). The researcher also developed structural and textural descriptions that describe the shared experience to ensure clarity with the themes (Moustakas, 1994).

Analysis Methods

At the onset of each interview session, the researcher notified the participant to confirm verbally that the interview was recorded to ensure it can be reviewed and analyzed at a later date. The recordings (both audio and video) were stored off-site to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the data. Each interview was dated and recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. After all individual interviews were complete, the researcher reviewed each interview to determine if common themes, patterns, shared experiences, or general designs emerge. Through the process of storyboarding, the researcher constructed commonalities within the themes and relationships.

Trustworthiness

To ensure and maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of this research, this study employed triangulation which involves corroborating facts and details from multiple sources to "shed light on a theme or perspective" (Creswell, 2007, p.251). Creswell (2007) noted that the term *validation* can be used similarly to the topic of *trustworthiness* (p.63). Validation, according to Creswell (2007), is a portion of the research "for being reflexive through personal biography,

and both the ethical and political consideration of the author" (p.63). Because this researcher was the one explaining and detailing the shared experiences of the participants, it was crucial to accurately represent the shared lived experiences of each pastor participant. Additionally, this research included *member checking,* which is a technique of presenting the information gathered, analysis, and findings back to the pastor participants to gauge the accuracy and credibility of the emerging themes from the interviews (Creswell, 2007).

Credibility

Through the use of member checking, reflexivity, and triangulation, this research sought to establish credibility through the use of firm theoretical and theological structures. Amankwaa (2016) noted that member checking is a manner in which validity is established. This research included the measure of time required for interviews and analysis along with previous literature presented. This researcher sought to be open and transparent with the data collected to ensure the credibility of the study. Poth (2019) noted that the process of seeing and experiencing transparency in the "methodological descriptions of origin research expedite the assessment of rigor of any study" (p.2).

Throughout the interviews and data-gathering process, the credibility component is associated with two aspects, *scope* and *data collection* (Roller, 2019). According to Roller (2019), the scope of the research applies to the "coverage and representation of the sampled elements" of the overall population of the research (p. 8). The data gathering or collection process involves specific steps that "are taken to actually integrate best practices in the collection" of the information (Roller, 2019, p.10).

Dependability

The dependability of the study can be defined as the consistency, stability or strength of the research, data collection, and analysis (Gall et al, 2002 and Korstjenz & Moser, 2018). Additionally, dependability is the process of detailing that the analysis and findings are reliable and repeatable (Amankwaa, 2016). This researcher had thought to establish dependability by involving another researcher (or reader) to perform what Lincoln and Guba (1985) define as an *inquiry audit*, however, this instrument was not used because the researcher was the sole individual who conducted the research. The overall reason for the inquiry audit and use of an independent researcher (or reader) is to determine if the information collected, analyzed, and conclusions are supported by the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The need for dependability ensures that an acceptable analysis process is in accordance with the accepted principles and standards set forth within the qualitative study (Korstjenz & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is the need to remain neutral within the confines of the data collection process. Korstjenz and Moser (2018) noted that the "interpretation should not be based on your own particular preferences and viewpoints but needs to be grounded in the data" (p. 3). An *audit trail* is an approach that ensures the dependability and confirmability of a study. The audit trail provides a step-by-step map that safeguards the data within a work file that is kept throughout the research (Korstjenz & Moser, 2018). Confirmability was the goal in which the conclusions of this study were authenticated and supported by other researchers (Korstjenz & Moser, 2018).

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) detailed two techniques that encapsulated transferability: *thick description* and *journaling*. Thick description, according to Amankwaa (2016) can include the following: collaborating with peers to review questions, planning the open-ended questions to ask participants that allow for expanded answers, making detailed plans to ensure reproducible results of shared experiences and the phenomenon of the research, the expectation to receive "thick responses" from the participants, and finally, the transcription of the responses to accurately detail the phenomena as a "thick response" (p. 5). The second half of transferability includes journaling. Amankwaa (2016) wrote that this may include journaling after each interview or major event throughout the research, discussing the journal entries with another researcher (or reader), detailing dates and times of events, and creating a timeline in the journal before beginning the analysis of data. Transferability was accomplished in this research by the detailed analysis, volume of the data collected, and ability for the information to be transferred to other researchers.

Chapter Summary

The process of preparing, collecting, and analyzing the data collected from mentored pastors was used for review and interpretation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). This chapter presented an overview of the research design that included the problem, purpose, research questions, and methodology. Additionally, the proposed setting, participants, researcher's role, data collection, and analysis have been presented. This research was guided by three research questions and included additional open-ended questions to gather supplementary information on mentored pastors. This research, more specifically, sought to determine the perceived value of a mentored pastor and the resulting leadership, congregational growth, and family stability it may bring. This

researcher found seventeen qualifying pastors with a shared life experience of a mentor,

collected the data, and analyzed the perceived value of a mentor.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine, explore, and investigate, through a qualitative phenomenological study, the perceived value of a mentor for a person in the role of a church pastor. The previous chapters described the research concerns, literature review, and research methodologies. Chapter Four presents the sources and procedures of the data collection for this research along with the relevant data and analysis for each of the three research questions.

This chapter is divided into four parts: first, it outlines the compilation protocols and measures; second, it highlights the demographics and sample data for this research study that include the methods used by this researcher to warrant the validity and reliability with the process of data collection; third, this chapter shares the data analysis and findings through the lens of the research questions which is the focus of this research; and finally, this chapter provides an evaluation of the research design.

This research sought to determine the value of a mentor, coach, or pastor's pastor in the life of a lead pastor who was either actively pastoring or retired. This research relied on a phenomenological design which allow the researcher to focus on shared experiences of the participants by asking open-ended questions.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

This section details how this qualitative phenomenological study was used to collect data and analyze the answers from pastors (currently serving and retired) who began pastoring a church of less than thirty (30) members in attendance and lead the congregation to exceed more than one hundred (100) in regular attendance. The data and shared experiences were organized

using blocking techniques. This researcher began with broad assumptions that lead to the particular inquiry (Creswell, 2013). Following, the broad assumptions, this research included the process of data collection by gathering "multiple forms of data, adequately summarized" to begin the blocking a framing of the data (Creswell, 2013, p.53). The researcher made no premature hypothesis or inferences concerning the objectivity surrounding the participants but instead concentrated on collecting information and recognizing each person in the study (Mertens, 1998).

This researcher began the data collection process by first requesting from several large evangelical organizations to send out a mass email inviting pastors who qualified to participate in the study by using Survey Monkey. The first and only mass email was sent out to over 800 pastors and ministers, the results only garnered four returns through Survey Monkey, and none met the qualifications for the research. This researcher then began to contact organizational leaders and request people they knew who may meet the requirements. This process was more time consuming, but it became more beneficial in that more recommendations were provided. When names were given to the researcher, a personalized email with the attached consent form was sent out to the potential candidate requesting each to fill out the online survey (JotForm.com) to ensure he or she qualified for the survey.

Online survey platform, *JotForm.com*, was used for pastors who qualified and met the requirements for the research. After the JotForm questionnaire was completed and verification was met, a subsequent email was sent out to the pastor participant asking him or her to schedule and participate in a Zoom call, phone call, or one-on-one interview. Two large organizations were contacted and asked if their list of members could be used to contact members. They

declined and recused themselves over concerns of violating members' trust in the membership rosters.

The JotForm survey consisted of twenty questions that centered around the pastor's perceived value of the mentor in their life. Of the twenty-two submissions, seventeen participants were interviewed via Zoom, telephone, or in a one-on-one in person meeting. The researcher sent out two additional emails to the pastors who did not respond to the Zoom interview request, and the emails were left unanswered. The Zoom meetings, phone calls, and in-person meetings were scheduled to last from forty-five minutes to ninety minutes.

Some of the participants answered the questions fully, however, did not add commentary, while others gave more expository answers that allowed the researcher additional time to gather shared experiences and more in-depth answers. Following the interviews with the pastors, the researcher reviewed the Zoom meetings and handwritten notes in an effort to provide accurate participants' answers and to bracket as accurately as possible within the analyses of data collected. Following the review of data, the researcher then began to block, bracket, and code the answers given in order to segment shared experiences from the pastors interviewed.

Demographics and Participant Data

Of the twenty-two pastors surveyed through JotForm, sixteen had served more than twenty years and three had served 10-20 years. The remaining two categories had one pastor who served 5-10 years and a pastor with less than five year experience.

The seventeen pastors who were interviewed were all male participants, fifteen were actively pastoring, one was retired, and one was serving in an administrative counseling role. The survey results gathered and interviews with participants spanned over an eleven-week period from late October through the middle of December.

Table 3 - Pastor or Participant Overview

Pastor or Participant	Gender	Q1. How long have you pastored
Pastor 1	Male	20+ years
Pastor 2	Male	20+ years
Pastor 3	Male	20+ years
Pastor 4	Male	20+ years
Pastor 5	Male	20+ years
Pastor 6	Male	20+ years
Pastor 7	Male	20+ years
Pastor 8	Male	20+ years
Pastor 9	Male	20+ years
Pastor 10	Male	10-20 years
Pastor 11	Male	5-10 years
Pastor 12	Male	10-20 years
Pastor 13	Male	20+ years
Pastor 14	Male	20+ years
Pastor 15	Male	20+ years
Pastor 16	Male	10-20 years
Pastor 17	Male	20+ years

Seventeen pastors were interviewed either over the phone, through a Zoom call or in-person at their location. Below is a brief description of each participant and their respective ministerial roles.

*As of December 01, 2023

Participants' Background and Overview

      Pastor 1. This pastor leads a Church of God of Cleveland Tennessee congregation in east central Indiana. He has held several leadership roles within his organization and has pastored in several locations throughout Indiana. In his most recent role, he has pastored more than six years and has seen his location congregation grow to more than 150 regular attenders. He is 60-65 years old and still has several mentors that he looks to and leans on for counsel and direction while simultaneously serving as a mentor to younger pastors.

      Pastor 2. This pastor leads a church that is southeast of Indianapolis and is independent of a structured organization. He is 70-75 years old and has pastored most of his adult life. He has held several leadership positions in several states. Currently, he pastors a large congregation, however, this research focused on his role when he started a church northeast of San Antonio, TX. There he began from scratch by having home church, launched a radio ministry, and through the counsel of his mentor grew the church over a ten-year period to lead the congregation to more than 100 regular attenders.

      Pastor 3. Currently, this pastor who is 65-70 years old serves as a Pastor Emeritus to his congregation and is in a leadership role to assist a younger pastor that his church has recently installed. He began his ministry under the direction of an older pastor in Knoxville, TN. Pastor 3 felt led in prayer to start a new work in an area northwest of Knoxville, and his senior pastor was fully supportive. After meeting in a smaller building with only 35 regular attenders, he decided to build a large facility that would potentially hold more than 200 people. Through the encouragement and counsel of his mentor, he was able to lead his congregation to more than 175 regular attenders.

Pastor 4. This participant began pastoring an independent Baptist church north of Columbus, Ohio with less than 25 regular attenders. He has held several leadership roles including youth pastor in Florida before relocating to Ohio. He is 40-45 years old and works in a covocational role. He began weekly meetings with a mentor and within twenty-four months, he led the congregation to more than 180 regular attenders. Currently, he pastors two congregations wherein one is English speaking, and the other is a Hispanic congregation.

Pastor 5. This individual had previously pastored in Indiana and currently serves as lead pastor in a Pentecostal style congregation in New Jersey. He is 55-60 years old and began from scratch in New Jersey. He was covocational in the beginning of his church plant and soon began by inviting individuals into his home. As they grew, they began meeting in a bar, then a civic center, and now have transformed an old theatre into a house of worship. With the help of several mentors in his life, he now leads a congregation of more than 400 regular attenders. His current congregation is multicultural and often has translators for guest to enjoy the Sunday message.

Pastor 6. This pastor who is 40-45 years old currently leads two Pentecostal style congregations in Indiana. Before He had begun pastoring the first church, which is northeast of Indianapolis, he served as a lead pastor in southern California. The north church was already established, however, when he took the role of pastor, there was turmoil in the leadership. He describes how he was able to "steady the ship" and contend for long-term vision. After five years, the congregation sold their building and moved into a location that another church congregation had occupied and vacated. Without an invitation, several families started driving two hours every Sunday to participate in the weekend worship meetings. After much prayer, he

began driving south (two hours) to meet these families, and soon, it became a congregation. With the help of his mentor, he now pastors two churches that both meet on Sundays.

Pastor 7. This pastor leads a church in east central Indiana that is independent, however, it is Pentecostal in its style of music and preaching. He is 70-75 years old and began meeting with a small group of twelve people in an old building that was once a bait shop. He was covocational in the beginning and leaned on his mentor for direction and encouragement. Once his congregation outgrew the bait house, they began a building process on several acres, and today, he leads a congregation of more than 175 regular attenders.

Pastor 8. This participant who is 87 years old currently serves as a pastor emeritus and mentor to several younger pastors. He has dutifully served in several ministerial roles in the past 66 years. As a young man, he began in the late 1950's in the Knoxville, TN area by holding Pentecostal style tent revivals during the summertime and soon grew to move into a lodge style building. Within a year, he and his congregation dug a basement, built a make-shift roof, and began meeting there. Over the next year, the remainder of the church building was finished. Although his mentor was in Michigan, both pastors made the sacrifice to have his mentor visit and preach in Knoxville three to four times a year in the early years of his congregations' growth. Over the next twenty years, this pastor led the congregation to more than 175 members.

Pastor 9. This participant, who is 50-55 years old, currently pastors a church of more than 300 members in Austin, Texas suburb. He served as an evangelist and traveled throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Africa. He chose the Austin area because his research showed that only 12% of the population associates with the Christian faith. His overall view of church growth was realized when he began pastoring a church in Central Louisiana with twelve voting members, and under his leadership and with the help of a mentor, the congregation grew

to more than 225 regular attenders in two years. He credits the growth of his current congregation to his mentor and a group of fellow pastors from whom he sought counsel and direction.

Pastor 10. This pastor who is between 50-55 years old was raised in the Mississippi area and began his ministry by evangelizing throughout the United State on weekends while holding a full-time job. In his 40's, he felt the call to take a church in central Kentucky that had four members. In two years, the church grew from 4 members to 35 regular attenders, and by the nineth year, the church had grown to around 80 members. In the tenth year of his ministry, he was introduced to an older pastor from Mississippi who took on the role of his mentor. The pastor credits his mentor (spiritual father) for leading his church to more than 150 regular attenders.

Pastor 11. This pastor is in his early 40's and served as an assistant pastor and evangelist earlier in his ministry. He began his current congregation in 2014 with his family members and a few friends. The first few months were meeting with interested people, holding meetings that included question and answer sessions, and in January 2015 launched his church with 22 people. For the first three months, his mentor drove an hour each way to support this pastor who was meeting in a high school auditorium. Within the first five years, the congregation grew to 60-70 members. In late October 2022, the church elders were able to purchase land and build a permanent building that could seat 150 people. Within one year of completion, the congregation grew to 120 members.

Pastor 12. This participant who is in his mid-40's began his ministry as lay minister and then was asked to serve as an assistant pastor for a church with more than 200 members. After serving several years as an assistant pastor, he asked his pastor (who was also his mentor) if he

could start a ministry in the contiguous county to the north. His ministry focused primary on reaching individuals in drug and alcohol recovery. He began to implement the principles he learned from his mentor and connected with the local drug court judges to ask how he could help. A 12-step Christian recovery program was offered along with a home for those men who sought to be drug and alcohol free. A large part of the program requires group meetings, Bible studies, and weekend church attendance. The success of this program has grown to more than three building for housing those in recovery, and with the help of his mentor a church building has been built that now has more than 150 regular attenders.

Pastor 13. This participant is between 50-55 years old and serves as a lead pastor in the northwest Kentucky area. He felt led to temporarily help a smaller church of less than 40 members as a lay minister that was 70 miles from his home. After a year, he was asked to permanently take the role of lead pastor, so he and his wife moved closer to the church ministry. In a period of church growth, his mentor (former pastor) immediately quit the ministry without warning or explanation. Pastor 13 explained the loneliness of not having a mentor for more than a year and a half. After considerable prayer, he explained that a local pastor for whom he had high regard was asked to be his mentor and he gladly accepted. Since the placement of his new mentor, Pastor 13 has led his church to more than 240 members.

Pastor 14. This participant, who is between 50-55 years old, currently serves with his wife in a counseling role to married couples from varying walks of life. After Bible college he served as a youth pastor, and when he was in his late 20's, he and his wife launched a church in central Indiana that grew very quickly. The church he started with twelve people grew rapidly, and within three years, the congregation was more than 700 regular attenders. He had a close mentor in a neighboring town that he met with regularly. By his own admission, Pastor 14 began

an emotional relationship with a female staff member. Within a few months at a church conference, his mentor asked him directly if anything was going on between him and that staff member, and pastor 14 denied any wrongdoing. Sadly, within a few weeks after the conference, the relationship digressed from emotional to physical. Pastor 14 admitted the affair, resigned the church, and moved to a southern state. After more than ten years, he and his wife were asked to publicly tell their story of love, failure, and reconciliation. His wife vehemently opposed this idea at first, however, in prayer, she felt released to share his and her story publicly. After their first public address at a large church, more than 75 people stayed after to explain they were in a similar situation. Since that encounter, they have been asked to speak at multiple churches throughout the United States.

Pastor 15. This pastor who is 35-40 years old served in multiple ministry roles that include children's pastor, missionary, and church planter. Before his church planting endeavors, he participated in a Nexus screening process that evaluated temperament, openness to mentoring or coaching, and discipline. After a thorough review, he was accepted into their program and approved to launch a church in south of Oklahoma City. Along with his family and launch team, they began meeting in an elementary school. He explained two phases of mentoring that included begin with vision casting and maintain momentum with new family and guest follow-up. They eventually bought a vacant bowling alley, went under construction, and moved from the rented school to the newly renovated space. The grand opening in January 2022 at their new facility welcomed more than 175 people. The following Easter (2022) they began two services and have more than 300 regular attenders. He credits the counsel and direction from the Nexus coaching group that assisted him along his pastor journey and acted as a sounding board for tough decisions and day-to-day operations.

Pastor 16. This pastor is 50-55 years old and has served as a lead pastor for more than ten years. He felt the call to minister while in Bible college and served as a student pastor, music minister, executive pastor, and church planter. In the infant years of the church plant in a Baltimore, Maryland suburb, he was covocational and struggled to grow the church from 100 people in six years. He was invited to participate in a round table session with Pastor Chris Hodges (Birmingham, AL), and there he learned the simple concepts of weekend worship, small groups, growth track, and having a volunteers serve on a dream team. After the meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, he decided to "hitch his wagon" to the new concept and participate in a coaching network. Within a few years, the church grew to more than 4,200 regular attenders at multiple locations. He credits the church growth to the time with his mentors and the counsel he gained from the coaching network.

Pastor 17. This participant who is 60-65 years old serves as a lead pastor in Central Ohio and also serves as the president of an organization that mentors pastors. In his early years, he planned to play baseball professionally, but after much prayer, he attended Texas Bible College. The campus president began mentoring Pastor 17, and after graduation, he served as an assistant pastor for two years. Following his role as assistant pastor, he and his wife began traveling to churches throughout the United States as evangelists. In his early 40's, while preaching for a local pastor in Ohio, he felt the call to launch a church in a Dayton, Ohio suburb. With the help of two mentors, he launched his church, and within the first six months of the church launch, more than forty people received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The local congregation continued to grow, and within two years, the church had more than 120 regular attenders. Pastor 17 currently mentors more than forty pastors and leaders in ten different denominations.

Data Analysis and Findings

Prior to the participants' interviews via Zoom, phone calls, or in person meetings, a detailed email describing the research along with a consent form attachment was sent out to each participant. In each email, a JotForm link was included to assist the researcher in determining the participant's view of the value of a mentor and how that experience had impacted their life and ministry. Data from the JotForm included the following questions and responses. The questions are listed in italics and the responses are grouped by their answers. Some answers were left blank; therefore, all numbers may not add to twenty-two.

Table 4 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q2. What or who lead you to seek a pastor role?	
14	felt the call (to pastor) in prayer
5	another pastor or minister
1	family member
1	initially planned to work in foreign mission but was instead took an internship that led to a full-time pastoral role.

Table 5 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q3. Did you start your ministry from the ground up or transition from another pastor?	
18	started from scratch
4	continued another pastor's work

Table 6 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q4. At what point in your pastorate did you utilize a mentor?	
18	early in my ministry
1	my mentor was a family member
2	upon the counsel of another pastor or minister
1	none of the above

Table 7 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q5. What value did your mentor bring to your weekend message? Scale of 1-10	
12	9-10
7	5-8
2	3-4

Table 8 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q6. What value did your mentor bring to church government and structure? Scale of 1-10	
13	9-10
7	6-8
2	4-5

Table 9 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q7. What value did your mentor bring to family structure ? Scale of 1-10	
13	9-10
6	7-8
2	4-5

Table 10 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q8. What value did your mentor bring to your personal health and well being ? Scale of 1-10	
9	9-10
8	6-8
5	2-5

Table 11 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q9. What value did your mentor bring to leadership development ? Scale of 1-10	
15	9-10
6	6-8
1	3

Table 12 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q10. What value did your mentor bring to ministry maturity ? Scale of 1-10	
15	9-10
7	6-8

Table 13 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q11. What was the timeframe it took to see growth in your church from less than thirty (30) attenders to more than one hundred (100) regular attenders?	
14	0-5 year
7	5-10 year
1	15+ year

Table 14 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q12. Do you believe that you could have accomplished this growth without a mentor?	
21	No
1	Yes

Table 15 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q13. How often do [did] you meet with or speak with your mentor?	
13	monthly
8	weekly
1	annually

Table 16 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q14. Were the meetings with your mentor regularly scheduled or when counsel was needed?	
12	as needed
5	regular
4	semi-regular

Table 17 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q15. Were the meetings with your mentor structured?	
14	no, it was more conversational
5	yes, we had an outline

Table 18 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q16. How valuable have the the general question times with your mentor affected your ministry? Scale of 1-10	
15	9-10
7	6-8

Table 19 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q17. Was there a time when your mentor have your counsel that made a deep impact on your life and ministry?	
22	yes

Table 20 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q18. How valuable was the mentor in helping you in preparing you to pastor more effectively? Scale of 1-10	
15	9-10
7	6-8

Table 21 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q19. Have you had more than one mentor?	
18	yes
3	at times
1	no

Table 22 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q20. Would you recommend every pastor have a mentor in their life?	
22	yes

The following research questions (RQs) were asked throughout the interviews to determine emerging themes. Along with the three research questions, additional questions were asked to ascertain related experiences amongst the participants.

RQ1. What perceived effect did the use of a mentor have on a pastor's overall leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees?

RQ2. How did the participating pastors describe the value of having a mentor (coach, pastor, or mentor)?

RQ3. What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members?

The purpose of the first question was to discover the perceived value the mentor had on the pastor's leadership, the congregation's growth, the pastor's family, and the overall spiritual health of the pastor. Subquestions were used to better understand the role of the mentor's time, influence, and tenure as a pastor or coach. Open-ended subquestions were included but not

limited to the following themes: home life, weekend schedules, personal goals and dreams, spiritual health, hearing God's voice, advice received, and examples of the mentor's leadership.

The second question was open-ended to allow leeway for the mentored pastor to share stories and examples of how the mentor provided leadership and direction. Subquestions included how often they met together and how often they spoke on the phone. Additional themes were explored and were included but not be limited to the following: describe the journey from the first introduction to the present, motivations for staying with the mentor, examples of mentor's advice, an example of when or if the pastor had been corrected, and the top three strengths of the mentor.

The third question was to better understand what mentor models are used to assist and lead the local pastor. Subquestions included books assigned to the pastor, seminars attended, or small groups formed to facilitate growth among mentors and pastors.

Common Elements and Shared Experiences

Of the twenty-two respondents to the JotForm survey, all pastors answered "yes" to two of the twenty questions: "Was there a time when your mentor gave your counsel that made a deep impact on your life and ministry?" and "Would you recommend every pastor have a mentor in their life?". This overwhelming response led the researcher to ask subquestions to the participants.

Ministry Without a Mentor

To each pastor, the researcher asked, "what would you say to a pastor who is leading a congregation without a mentor in their life?", and the following were similar answers that were shared with this researcher. Below are highlights from the interviews that support this assertion.

Pastor 1: "why would he be so stubborn as to not seek out a mentor? who is there to help him decide if it is a good idea or a God idea?"

Pastor 2: "how many figs are on your branches?"

Pastor 3: "is it really good for man to be alone? I can't image leading our church without a mentor."

Pastor 4: "Let's take a journey together. Yeah, let's get you out of where you think you're at. I've even spoke with pastors that have got churches much larger than mine and said, hey, why are you walking alone? Why are you walking alone? Quit that. I know you got you and God is always a majority, but quit walking alone. We need each other in this fight. There's not near enough. We need that help. We need to be there. We need to help each other."

Pastor 5: "no mentor? Imagine the fear and reclusion he must feel and the time it's going to take to reach his goals. I think many times it's just our egos that stand in the way. We call it introvert. It's ego. It's not wanting to feel stupid or it's a weird kind of it doesn't sound like ego, but it really is like not wanting to be a burden on someone. But that's ego."

Pastor 6: "no mentor, can you survive, maybe, but go it alone? Maybe. Often Ego stands in the way, not wanting to be a burden or have accountability? Is there a fear of being open with a mentor?"

Pastor 9: "no accountability? Who can tell you 'No'? it's important to have someone who can be honest with you about your dreams and visions"

Pastor 10: "without a mentor, well that's dangerous. I would ask him 'why', and then ask him if it is important, scriptural, who can you ask direction from? Well, I guess my delivery to him and my approach to him and his status, I would first want to figure out why. Do you know what I'm saying? I would want to know, what has led you to the point where you don't have one? Did something happen to your pastor or were you wounded? Were you hurt? What did you do? I would try to follow up with him with those type questions, because I don't want to beat his door down and then him walk away thinking that I'm trying to be a dictator or trying to promote an agenda to him. So, what I would do is I would try to break it down. Not break him down, but break the conversation down. And then I would try to elaborate to him the importance, and I would give him scripture. I would give him some direction, because I think I'm big with direction. Because the thing is, a lot of those guys that don't have a pastor or don't have a covering can become a loose cannon."

Pastor 11: "the value of accountability to 'someone' is important because it help you see your shortcomings, it gives you a pair of 'outside eyes', and helps you see 'blind spots', everybody's got to be accountable to somebody because we're all faulted. We all have our

shortcomings and there is not one person that thinks of everything that needs to be thought of or thinks about it correctly. Outside eyes are good because they help us hopefully steer clear of any issues that we might run into because we're blind sometimes into our own demise. We don't see things the same way that someone else might see them. And so you need that accountability."

Pastor 14: "I [would] just tell them, you need to have somebody in your life. You need to have at least one person that you can connect with. Find them. Chris Hodges said, find three people that are the best in the world at what you're doing and model after them. Don't be them, be you, but learn from. So, you know, I heard that probably the first time, I was well over halfway into my ministry as a pastor. But, I mean, I've always had that, and I'm introvert. That's why I didn't want to [be a] pastor. I was like, how am I going to get up in front of people and talk and do any of that stuff? That's way out of my comfort zone? But God has a way of showing you He knows different, doesn't He?"

Pastor 16: "Well, I would say that I'm introverted too, and in ways I've become a terrible friend because I'm not consistently, constantly reaching out. I'm not the loudest person in the room. In fact, most days, if I could find a hole to crawl in, that's me, I'm going to be that guy. Right. But I knew I couldn't do this by myself. Right. And the joy and I would say the inspiration, the heart of being able to have someone in your corner that can speak into your life is so paramount, such a must."

Pastor 17: "I just believe that most everything has to happen as a result of hunger. And so if I can share with them my story and then ask them, would you see the benefit of that? What have some been, some pitfalls? So I would like to ask them, I'd like to hear from them. Here's my story. Share your story and let's figure out. And I think from that standpoint, obviously there's the biblical blessings and benefits of it, but again, not trying to convince somebody, but just simply share my example."

Support and Accountability

The pastors who were interviewed all shared tremendous appreciation of the support each had received from his mentor through different periods and various times of his ministry. Twelve of the seventeen noted that through their survey the conversations with their mentor were "more conversational" which allowed them opportunities to speak more fluidly, freely, openly, and honestly with their mentor.

Pastor 8: a retired and 87 years old, spoke of his mentor who was formerly his pastor and remained his pastor from several states away. Pastor 8 had such high regard for the advice his mentor provided that he wanted his mentor's blessing over the young lady he was consider proposing to marry. His mentor flew down, preached for him, went out to

eat with the young couple and gave his blessing. Pastor 8 said that type of support and accountability kept him focused on his pastoral duties, his mission for his community, and focus on his family.

Pastor 9: felt the call to launch a church in Texas where the closest metropolitan area identifies as only 12% Christians. He shared the vision with his mentor who then told Pastor 9 to take more time to plan and delay the church launch until specific milestones were met. After four years of meeting with several people in his community, Pastor 9 met again with his mentor, and they both agreed the time was right. Pastor 9 started in his living room, moved to a larger facility, and had 286 people at his first church service. He accredited the support and counsel that his mentor provided for him through the church launch process.

Availability

The pastors were asked how often they were able to meet with or speak with them mentors. The JotForm results from the question, "*were the meetings with your mentor regularly scheduled or when counsel was needed?"*, and twelve of the twenty-two said "as needed" while five noted that he met regularly with their mentor, and the other four noted their interactions were more semi-regular.

Pastor 2: noted that his father was his mentor for the entirety of his ministry until his father's death. He recounted starting with a "house church" and growing to more than 100 members. He spoke of how his father (who was also his mentor) was available to answer even the simplest questions about pastoring and leading a congregation.

Pastor 13: was asked by his pastor to fill in as an interim pastor for a church that was more than sixty miles away from his home. This continued for several months until he and his family decided to relocate to be closer. He noted that his pastor became his mentor when he was installed as pastor. For reasons beyond his immediate knowledge, his pastor and mentor abruptly resigned, and Pastor 13 was left without a mentor for a year and a half. Through much prayer, he found a new mentor that was located in a contigous city, and the new mentor became the much needed guidance that assisted Pastor 13 to lead his church to more than 100 in regular attendance.

Research Question One

The desired outcome of the first research question was to determine the effect or perceived value a mentor had on a pastor's overall pastoral leadership and congregational growth

of regular attendees. This research question surfaced from the included literature and lack of

literature that addressed the need for mentors in the life of pastors who were planting a church or

transitioning to a fledgling church congregation with fewer than thirty members. This question

became clearer through the lens of asking each pastor throughout the interviews to share his

personal journey of church growth and mentorship.

Each participant took time to share his struggles of leading a small congregation either

from just a few members in addition to their family to assuming the role of pastor with only a

few church members. Pastors shared experiences of taking counsel from their mentor when

building projects started, staffing issues arose, and the periods of time when attendance would

fluctuate below expectations. Of the twenty-two respondents to the JotForm online survey,

fourteen of the pastors said their congregations grew from less than thirty members to more than

a hundred attenders in less than five years, six answered that it took five to ten years, and one

answered that it took more than fifteen years.

> Pastor 11: spoke with his pastor and shared the desire to launch a new church near his hometown that was 115 miles south within the same state. The pastor was supportive and made himself available to Pastor 11 when needs arose or when counsel was needed. When Pastor 11 found a location and had his first afternoon church meeting, his mentor made the drive to support the his protégé. This continued for several months until Pastor 11 told his mentor how much he appreciated the sacrifice he was making, however, he felt comfortable enough to take the lead and carry the responsibilities. Pastor 11 continued mentor meeting with his pastor as needed. Within in a few months their congregation grew to around seventy members, and the building was full. Upon counsel from his mentor and church elders, Pastor 11 purchased 18 acres and built a new facility. Currently, they have more than 120 faithful members.

Research Question Two

Research Question Two was similar to Research Question One, however, this researcher

sought to uncover the personal perceived value of a pastor having a mentor in his life. With each

of the participants, a mentor was presumed, provided, or suggested from a family member. The

JotForm answers that showed that of the participants, eighteen found and utilized a mentor early

on in their ministry, one had a family member as a mentor, and another one assumed a mentor

upon the counsel of another pastor.

> Pastor 12: described his ministry journey as assisting a pastor, and upon feeling the call to launch a church several miles north in an adjoining city, his pastor gave Pastor 12 his full support. Part of the mentorship process that Pastor 12 experienced was seeing his pastor work with the drugs courts to help individual work through a diversion program with a biblical foundation. When Pastor 12 started his ministry in the adjoining county, he implemented what he saw from his mentor and was able to break the 100-member congregation barrier within three years.

All of the pastors interviewed shared varying experiences of how their mentor had

impacted their personal life, ministry, family, and church structure. The JotForm survey showed

that fourteen of the twenty-two pastors said the value of their mentor in leadership development

was a 9-10, six gave their mentor 6-8, and one gave his mentor a 3. The overwhelming majority

were pleased with the leadership development, either through advice, counsel, or example their

mentor provided.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three sought to uncover any facts associated with mentor programs

and models available for pastors with smaller congregations. Participants shared books they had

read, resources their mentor had shared, and conferences they had attended, however, much of

what they learned was through experience and counsel from their mentors.

> Pastor 5: shared a similar experience that others had shared. He left his home and relocated his family to the New York area to plant a church. At first, he was bivocational working in the community along with his wife who also worked in an effort to survive and reach their neighborhoods. After see slow growth, he and his wife attended a conference in Birmingham, AL that provided their resources and guidance for leading a growing congregation. He found mentors within the ARC (Association of Related Churches) model by seeking out other pastors who had seen similar growth using the simple model shared at the GROW conference. Along the way, Pastor 5 had several mentors who encouraged him and gave guidance with implementing the ARC model that

focused on four elements: weekend worship, growth track for new members, small groups for members, and a dream teams for leadership. After several location changes due to continued growth, Pastor 5 was able to secure a closed theatre that he and his staff converted into a church sanctuary with classrooms and offices where they have a congregation of more than 300 members.

Pastor 16: left his home in the south to start a church in the Maryland area. He and his wife started with 10-12 in their basement and were able to lead their church to around 100 members within six years. Pastor 16 was offered an invitation to participate in a "round table" with pastor Chris Hodges (who pastors a megachurch in Birmingham, AL) was to discuss church growth. Pastor 16 embraced the "principles of growth" that were introduced. He shared, "I hooked our wagon to him and to some of the coaches that were available to us during that season. And we're still living those principles today. Today, we're a church of 4200 people."

Evaluation of the Research Design

This qualitative study with a phenomenological design was chosen to gather information and data to establish the relationship and value of a mentor in the life of a pastor who was pastoring a smaller church and had a vision to lead a church to more than one hundred members. The researcher served as the instrument for the research, and study participants were free to share openly how they perceived the value of a mentor in their life.

A strength within this research design was the ability to interview participants to determine shared experiences within the pool of pastors. Pastors were chosen from around the United States from varying backgrounds, ages, and years of experience. This allowed the data to be collected to ensure additional experiences to be bracketed and blocked. Organizing the data was fundamental for the researcher, and one way to accomplish this was through what Moustakas (1994) coined as *horizontalizing* the information.

This horizonalization process included analyzing answers, bracketing comments, and highlighting statements made by the participants in the interviews, comparing them narrowly, and building toward a wider meaning (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). The highlighted areas were then

segmented and used to create clusters of similarity and significance (Creswell, 2013). Because

horizonalization is a tool used to analyze data systematically, the goal was to identify similar

themes that surface from the participants' shared experiences (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Comparing

answers and identifying similar comments from participants allowed the researcher to bracket the

similarities into specific themes that a majority of the participants shared.

A weakness in this study might have been the low number of participants in this pool.

With more participants, additional shared experiences could have surfaced allowing for

additional information surrounding the value of a mentor in the life of a pastor.

Research Design Strengths

The information collected from Survey Monkey and JotForm were deemed valid and

accurate. This method was used to capture information via the internet questionnaire, thus having

the "advantage of cost and time efficiency in terms of reduced costs for travel and data

transcription" (Creswell, 2013, p. 159). Additionally, the online format provided the pastors

amble time and ease of comfort to complete the survey (2013).

The researcher made every attempt to follow the interview patterns detailed in Creswell's

Compendium of Data Collection Approaches in Qualitative Research (p. 160). The face-to-face,

phone call, and Zoom interviews included "unstructured, open-ended questions" while the

researcher took notes and recorded the Zoom interviews (p.160). A journal was kept that

included the time, location, personal information of participant, and notes from the answers

given. The Zoom calls were transcribed to allow the research to review the questions and

answers to determine shared themes among the pastors.

Research Design Weaknesses

The researcher discovered several weaknesses within the research design. The first came from the recruiting process along the lack of responses and respondents from the initial Survey Monkey to determine qualified candidates. This researcher contacted the Chairman of the Apostolic World Christian Fellowship (AWCF) to request that an email be sent out to all the pastors and minister. Chairman Luke Smith sent out the email to over 500 members of the AWCF, and only four responses were received via Survey Monkey. Of those four received, none met the qualifications. The researcher contacted the staff of the Indiana Southern Baptist Convention, the Association of Related Church (ARC), and Faith Ministry Alliance to obtain a list of pastors' names, and, unfortunately, no help was provided.

The second limitation to the recruitment process was the process of acquiring qualified candidates for this research. As the researcher continued to contact religious and ministerial organizations, pastors would think and say, "how about contacting Pastor…" This allowed the researcher to leap frog from different individuals and ask if they would be open to participating in this research. If the answer was in the affirmative, an email was requested, the JotForm sent, follow-up email requesting an interview, and finally, scheduling the interview.

The third weakness came with participants who agreed to participant in the research, filled out the JotForm, but chose to ignore the request for an interview. The process of finding qualified individuals continued until the minimum of fifteen pastors was fulfilled. Because the researcher wanted to collect as much data as possible, two pastors contacted the researcher before the completion of the interview, and the research added them to total the number of participants to seventeen.

Summary

Chapter four included a comprehensive summary of the data collection process, the data results, and the breakdown of the data needed to address the research questions. The data collected for Research Questions One examined the perceived effect and value a mentor had on a pastor's overall leadership and congregational growth of regular attenders. The data collected for Research Questions Two examined the overall value the participating pastor placed on having a mentor in their life. The data collected for Research Questions Three examined the types of coaching or mentoring that is available for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members.

The role of a pastor who has led a congregation of less than thirty attendees to more than one hundred regular attenders is multifaceted, complex, and complicated. Without the guidance, assistance, and counsel of a mentor, the participants interviewed believed it would have taken longer or may not have even happened. The study's primary objective was to determine the value of a mentor in the life of a pastor, and although the sample size was smaller than other studies, the research showed the exceptional appreciation from each of the participants toward different mentors that directed their journey.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

OVERVIEW

Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine and investigate the perceived value of a mentor for a person in the role of a church pastor. The relationship and interactions between pastor and mentor largely depended on the understanding and fellowship between the two individuals. For a mentor and mentee relationship to be effective and successful, there must be trust or rapport established between both parties (Thompson, 2019). Thompson (2019) described rapport as "a harmonious liaison between people who feel they have a sense of connection" (p. 27).

In general, the purpose of this qualitative research with a phenomenological design was to unearth the participant's perspective and seek to explain in detail what it was like to experience the phenomenon that is being researched (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Three major value categories were considered. First, the study focused on the influence the mentor provided on the pastor, the pastor's family, and the congregation. Second, the study sought to determine what leadership qualities were perceived to have been gained by pastors who had a mentor. And third, the study sought to understand the perceived value of the role of mentoring among pastors who oversaw the growth of a church of fewer than thirty members to more than one hundred regular attendees.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) were asked throughout the interviews to determine emerging themes:

RQ1. What perceived effect did the use of a mentor have on a pastor's overall leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees?

RQ2. How did the participating pastors describe the value of having a mentor (coach, pastor, or mentor)?

RQ3. What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

The heart and passion of pastors who were interviewed for this research showed a love for their community and a desire to share the good news that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Each set out to do it differently, but the value they placed in their mentor was evident. Each felt it was necessary to regularly remind their congregation of the Great Commission. Maxwell (2011) noted that "good leaders constantly communicate vision of the organization… clearly, creatively, and continually" (p. 140). The shared experience was seen in each of the participants.

This study was able to identify the need for pastors with smaller congregation who were at different times in their life and ministry to reach out to a senior pastor, leader, fellow pastor, or mentor to assist with crucial decisions and general support. Fifteen of the seventeen pastors who were interviewed saw a tremendous benefit of having a mentor in their life. Two pastor shared stories of counsel they had received that was not beneficial and were glad they had not heeded their advice.

Spiritual

The spiritual elements between the pastor and mentor were mentioned in every interview between this researcher and the pastors. At one point or another, either through a question from

the interviewer or an expansion of an answer provided, each pastor voiced his appreciation for

the prayer and "covering" his mentor provided.

> Pastor 10: "So for two years before we moved out of that building, I was lost, bro. I felt like there was such a vast element in my life missing, because it's like I could hear from God, I could pastor my people, but there was a dimension in my spirit that I could not reach. And so, I begged God for two years, what do I do about a pastor? I need a covering. I need a mentor. I need somebody to help me, because I felt like I was in the wilderness all by myself, but trying to make the best decisions that I could." Through the advice of an evangelist who had preached for Pastor 10, he allowed the evangelist to use his phone to call an older pastor in a southern state. Pastor 10 thought it was a long-shot that the older pastor who even consider mentoring him or be a prayer covering for him. "I had went to the altar, and I had prayed about three things that happened just like this. I prayed about three things. I got up from the altar, going all the way down the hall in the other building to my office, and the phone goes off, and it was [him]." Pastor 10 said further that the senior pastor who later became his mentor had also been praying that morning. Pastor 10 answered the phone and asked the senior pastor how he was doing, and he said "Well, I'm fine, son. He said, I was praying this morning, and the Lord said that you were asking him three things and he gave me the answer to all three things. And I said, Bishop, that's amazing because I asked him this morning about those three things. When he gave me the schematic of what I had been asking God for, it was like a million pounds was lifted off of me because I knew then God heard me. He heard me.

Encouragement

The element of encouragement was noted by most, if not all the pastors during the

interviews. In different ways, the pastors described seasons of loneliness and discouragement

that at times seemed overwhelming. Pastor 16 recounted to this researcher that his mentor and

pastor sends him regular text asking about his well-being and a note of encouragement. This

simple act of kindness was the fuel that kept him going.

Pastor 1 described a time when he preached for a church of about twenty members, and

when the vote was taken, the district superintendent said he was the "preferred candidate" of

choice. Later, when he spoke individually with the original twenty members, he could not find

anyone who had voted for him. Later, he met with the district superintendent who said, "well,

you were *my* preferred candidate, and I have the final say." Pastor 1 was blessed to lead that church from around twenty members to more than one-hundred and twenty.

Ability to Grow

Pastors were asked to explain why mentoring was important to them throughout the growth of their congregation and what aspect or role the mentor played in their personal development. Several spoke of the encouragement the mentor provided along with a spiritual covering in prayer and fasting. This understanding of their mentor's faith in their ability to succeed and to see their church congregations grow allowed them to be grounded in their leadership role as pastor.

Pastor 1 noted that when he was installed at a church on the southside of Indianapolis, his mentor encouraged him to cast the vision for growth regularly. Pastor 2 was inspired by his mentor to start a house church from scratch and concurrently have a radio program to share the gospel. Pastor 12 said, "one of the things that I've learned is that there's a transition from being just a son in the gospel and then from the transition to pastoring, and now our relationship has evolved, if you will, over the years".

An overwhelming theme that arose from the participants interviewed was the inner belief that their mentor cared about them and wanted to see them succeed. This, in turn, allowed them to take risks, rent buildings and school theatres, put up tents for outdoor services, hold meetings in coffee shops, place Facebook prayer ads, and together they celebrated the wins.

Friend, Confidant, and Partner

As mentioned above pastor have seasons of loneliness and are often in need of direction and encouragement. The need for a friend and confidant with whom to share personal struggles is critical for any leader. Because many pastors depend on the church salary for their sustenance

and provision, this may cause they to pause before sharing something that would cost them their livelihood.

Absence of Openness

One pastor shared with this researcher his struggle with sexual sins and said that it took him years to finally open up to his mentor. After opening up to his mentor, he was open with his church staff. Also, he spoke of how "freeing" it was and how other men in his leadership and congregation came to him privately saying they were struggling also. More than seventy-five percent of the pastor shared stories of how they had confided in one way or another with their mentor and how they had benefited from their openness. Author Pastor Whitcomb of the Agape House Ghana noted that the "cost of concealment is always greater than the cost of confession" (Whitcomb, 2023).

Of all the participant interviews conducted by this researcher, one left the researcher broken-hearted. It was from a pastor who ignored the questions and refused to heed the guidance of his mentor. Pastor 14 spoke openly of a moral failure that not only disrupted, but destroyed his role as lead pastor, husband, father, and friend. He began as a church planter in the Midwest and began pastoring in his twenty's. The church grew quickly, a new location was found, a building was remodeled, and new church positions were created and filled. Pastor 14 surrounded himself with local pastors, one who served as his mentor, and elders from his location congregation. After only a couple of years in ministry as lead pastor, one of his mentors joined him at a local megachurch conference and asked him specifically if anything was "going on" with him and a female staff member. Pastor 14 denied any wrongdoing because the relationship had not yet become physical. He said that he "started with about twelve people in our apartment, and then three years later, we were running about 700. And things were just going amazing, except my

marriage was deteriorating, and I ended up having an affair with my wife's best friend". He told this researcher that even though he met with his mentor every week, he lamented "that's what was so devastating, I think, about the affair is I had all these people in my life, all these guardrails that were in place to help me, and I didn't take advantage of it". After several years, Pastor 14 was restored, his marriage is stronger, and his openness about his moral failure is helping others through counseling others. He and his wife now travel throughout the United States ministering at churches, telling their story of brokenness and healing, and helping others who have experienced similar situations.

Openness and Transparency

The data and conversations from the participants of have a trusted mentor who also serves as a confidant was overwhelmingly apparent. When the conversation steered towards being able to discuss issues openly, most felt like they had that type of relationship. When asked how the mentor had an influence on the pastor's personal life that included marriage, family, quality time, each participant expressed warm regard for having someone in a leadership role that cared.

Pastor 13 relocated to another city to take a fledgling that had seem some growth but who had lost several members continued to take counsel from his pastor and talked with his mentor about issues when they arose. Without warning his mentor resigned his role as pastor, and Pastor 13 spent the next year and half searching for a replacement. Much to his amazement, he found a pastor in a neighboring city that took on the role of mentor and confidant. This allowed Pastor 13 to share ideas and request guidance about new church location and other concerns. Eventually, Pastor 13 led his church congregation to more than two hundred and forty (240+) in regular attendance.

Research Conclusions

      The information and data collected from the Survey Monkey, JotForm, Zoom interviews, face-to-face interview, and phone interviews were successful in answer the aforementioned research questions. The researcher took time to thank each participant and was more than pleased with the findings. Each pastor shared stories of struggles, victories, hardships, and admiration for the mentors who accompanied them on their journeys.

Research Question One

      The desired outcome of the first research question was to determine the effect or perceived value a mentor had on a pastor's overall pastoral leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees. This research question surfaced from the included literature and lack of literature that addressed the need for mentors in the life of pastors who were planting a church or transitioning to a fledgling church congregation with fewer than thirty members. This question became clearer through the lens of asking each pastor throughout the interviews to share his personal journey of church growth and mentorship.

      The findings showed a wide range of shared experiences from the participating pastors. Each pastor shared unique experiences and ways their mentor provided valuable feedback and counsel at critical times in their pastoral leadership. The JotForm below detailed an overwhelming majority of the pastors appreciated the value his mentor contributed to his ministry maturity.

Table 23 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q12. Do you believe that you could have accomplished this growth without a mentor?	
21	No
1	Yes

All of the pastor except for one answered that they would only have been able to accomplish their personal growth and the congregational growth with the help and direction of a mentor in their life.

Table 24 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q12. Do you believe that you could have accomplished this growth without a mentor?	
21	No
1	Yes

Research Question Two

Research Question Two was similar to Research Question One, however, this researcher sought to uncover the personal perceived value of a pastor having a mentor in his life. With each of the participants, a mentor was presumed, provided, or suggested from a family member. The JotForm answers that showed that of the participants, nineteen found and utilized a mentor early on in their ministry, one had a family member as a mentor, and another one assumed a mentor upon the counsel of another pastor.

Table 25 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q4. At what point in your pastorate did you utilize a mentor?	
18	early in my ministry
1	my mentor was a family member
2	upon the counsel of another pastor or minister
1	none of the above

From the open-ended questions, the researcher discovered that pastors fully believed that God had orchestrated the placement of a mentors in their life. Many said that it was through prayer, fasting, and counsel from others that a mentor was placed in their life.

This researcher found that less than half full believed their mentor brought value to their personal health and well-being. Most saw their mentor as someone who helped them with larger issues like construction projects, family squabbles, spiritual direction, and church government. The JotForm and open-ended questions showed nine of the twenty-two respondents giving a 9-10 on personal health and well-being.

Table 26 – JotForm Question and Answers

Q8. What value did your mentor bring to your personal health and well being ? Scale of 1-10	
9	9-10
8	6-8
5	2-5

Research Question Three

Research Question Three sought to uncover any facts associated with mentor programs and models available for pastors with smaller congregations. Participants shared books they had read, resources their mentor had shared, and conferences they had attended, however, much of what they learned was through experience and counsel from their mentors.

The data collected from the interviews with the pastors found that most did not understand the full value of a mentor until they were a year or two into their pastoring. Those who used their previous pastor realized the value he provided once they were solo pastoring their own congregations. Research Question Three revealed a void in leadership development for pastors who are starting a new church or assuming the leadership role of an existing congregation. Even pastors who were graduates of Bible colleges or seminary were not aware of the value a mentor could provide in critical times of leadership.

Pastor 15 described the process in detail the process of his mentorship program prior to launching his church. He complimented the rigorous steps required to determine a qualified person to launch a church.

> Pastor 15: There's two parts to this process. Number one is going through the assessment where they assess just your temperament, your abilities, your skills, all of that to say, can you plant a church? And then once you get through that, and say, yes, you can do this now it's where. And so the assessment process had Nexus and other people involved, other voices involved in that process. But then after that, we got the go ahead. We were going to work with Nexus, and they're the ones who connected with other churches in different regions. And so we looked at a couple of different regions in which they had some connection. And [state removed], especially specifically [city removed], the central part was one that had already been like, there was money set aside already to start. There was other churches that the infrastructure around it was already there. And so then around [city removed], we looked at a couple different places, [cities removed]. And both were small but growing communities. We wanted to go into a place that was growing that didn't have a Christian church presence. This is where the coaching really came in, because this was where the process of starting something from scratch is not something I'd ever done as far as a church goes, other things and the philosophy of Nexus, at least at

that time. I don't know what it currently is. I imagine it's similar, but it was to draw the church out of the planter.

Research Implications

The literature review chapter two detailed the multiple reasons why a mentor is pivotal in the life of any aspiring leader. Additionally, the benefits of a mentor bring value to the personal life, family life, leadership, church government, and crucial decisions.

Pastor 17 noted that his mentor found him in Bible college and impacted his life, ministry, and future.

> Pastor 17: So anyway, got to Bible College, and one day, the president of the Bible College came up to me and he said, how long have you been in church? And I said, a little over six months. And he said, oh, Jesus. He said, all right. He said, well, I'm going to disciple you. I'm going to be your mentor. I'm going to take you under my wing. He said, you've not been taught. He said, I know you're at Bible College to be taught and you're going to pick that up. But he said, I want you to be personally accountable to me. I don't know. I don't know if he wanted to be my mentor, if he just felt like I needed some really special oversight that started a relationship that really, interestingly, will play into us coming to [city removed] to plant the church here. So I met my wife there. She is a pastor's daughter. She was at Bible College because she was struggling in her walk with God. And my wife's like, I don't want to go to Bible College.We met there later, got married, and Moved to [state removed], where her father pastored. And that was the first time in my life that I really had a pastor. Really, to be honest with you, it was the first time that I had sort of a pastoral relationship, even though it was my father-in-law. And he really, honestly served the role of more than a pastor for me.

Research Limitations

At the onset of this research and throughout this study, there were no dangers or risks to the participants, and the only hinderance was the ability to schedule enough time for each participant to speak freely. All meeting were scheduled for ninety minutes except for one that was limited to sixty minutes due to the schedule of the subsequent participant's availability. A further limitation within this research may have been the in-person interviews that were used with two participants. One was in a restaurant in the pastor's hometown, and the other was in a

pastor's study. Both interviews exceeded the ninety-minute recommended allotment, however, neither pastor voiced any concern with this timeframe.

Further Research

More research is needed to identify the value of a mentor or coach in the life of any leader who is has a heart to lead others to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. Several of the participant pastors in this research voiced a desire to see more training for young pastor or pastors who are bivocational and covocational.

This research was conducted through the lens of the pastor and mentee, and it was conducted to reveal the value of a mentor through the different stage of a pastor's journey to lead a church to more than one hundred members. The shared experiences bring value insight into the need for additional research to be shared with pastors of smaller growing churches. In further research, it may be a possible to compare pastors who have worked in teams to encourage and assist one another with direction and guidance. Given the busy schedules of pastors who are full-time and those who are bivocational or covocational, it would be advantageous to study patterns and schedules to ensure mentorship is a priority for pastors who are both independent and within a religious denomination.

Large organizations whose focus it is to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ may consider focusing resources on the local level to support pastors of smaller churches to reach their communities and neighbors. Training and mentorship for small church pastors may benefit the pastor's family, the neighborhood, and the organization.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine and investigate the perceived value of a mentor for a person in the role of a church pastor. The relationship and

interactions between pastor and mentor largely depended on the understanding and fellowship between the two individuals. This research studied the shared experiences of pastors who had a mentor during their time of leading a church of less than thirty members to more than one hundred regular attenders.

Using the phenomenological approach, this research was able to bracket and highlight shared experience these pastors shared and the value they placed on their mentor or mentors. This research concluded that the mentors were not able to provide all the necessary answers and direction, however, when crucial time and decisions were needed, the mentor was able to provide wisdom for the pastor to consider. Furthermore, the support provided to the pastors was invaluable and difficult to quantify except through the experiences shared with this researcher. Although this research fills a crucial gap in discovering the value of a mentor in the life of a pastor, future researchers may seek to determine additional resources that pastors and mentors can use to develop additional leadership elements in the role of a pastor.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Screening Process

Screening Process for Selection of Pastor for the Study

Recruitment emails were sent to large evangelical religious organizations throughout the United States requesting individuals to reply who met the requirements.

Additionally, suggestions were made from pastors who knew of other pastors who met the qualifications, and they were emailed with a recruitment letter.

Qualified individuals were sent a consent form and asked to complete a JotForm survey prior to the person-to-person interview.

Appendix B: Participant /Pastor Invitation Letter

Date: _____

Dear Pastor,

Hope this correspondence finds you well. My name is Reggie Horner, and I am a student in the doctoral program at Liberty University, and I am conducting research as a part of the requirements for the Education Doctorate (EdD) in Christian Leadership. I am studying the value of a mentor in the life and ministry of a pastor. You have been identified as a pastor who has been blessed to have a mentor.

This research hopes to benefit pastors with smaller congregations as a research for understanding shared and lived experiences of mentored pastors. Additionally, all information collected with remain confidential, and you will see the results of the completed study. At no time in the study will your name be associated with the information given.

If you are able to participate in this research, I plan to have a one-on-one interview with you (virtually or in person) that will be recorded for further review. The interview should last 45-75 minutes and can be completed at your convenience.

As part of the process, please review the attached consent form which contains additional verbiage about my research. You can respond by email, and I will reach out to you and we will can plan time for an interview.

God's best,

Reggie Horner
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix C: Consent

Consent

Title of this Project: A Phenomenological Study of Pastors who were Mentored and the Perceived Value of the Mentor Relationship

Principal Investigator: Reginald "Reggie" Horner, Doctoral Student, Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old, a pastor who has had a mentor, and grown a church of less than thirty to over a hundred regular attendees. 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.

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

The purpose of this study is to explore how pastors who have grown a congregation of less than thirty regular attendees to more than one hundred attendees describe the value of a coach, pastor, or mentor.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to the participating in this study, I will ask you to do following:
1. Complete a 20 question survey that provides answers as yes or no along with a scale from one to ten.
2. Participate in a one-on-one interview via Zoom or a similar platform that will be recorded for later review, and it should last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Benefits of this research include help for new pastors, seasoned pastors, and pastors who wish to become a mentor for younger pastors.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. The finding and the final published document will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant in this subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Should a focus group be convened for further research, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed within a focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Data and recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer. The researcher and his doctoral committee may request access and will be granted access to these recordings. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Reggie Horner. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ or ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Rusty Small at ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

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 IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

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

Your Consent

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

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

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

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

Appendix D: Recruitment Email

Dear Pastor _____,

Hope this correspondence finds you well. My name is Reggie Horner, and I am a student in the doctoral program at Liberty University, and I am conducting research as a part of the requirements for the Education Doctorate (EdD) in Christian Leadership. I am studying the value of a mentor in the life and ministry of a pastor. You have been identified as a pastor who has been blessed to have a mentor.

As a Doctoral Student at Liberty University's John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, I am conducting research to explore how pastors who have grown a congregation of less than thirty regular attendees to more than one hundred attendees describe the value of a coach, pastor, or mentor.

Can you answer the following questions to ensure that you are eligibility in this research study?

- I am or have been a pastor who has worked with a mentor
- I am or have been a pastor who has seen the growth of a current or pastored a congregation from less than 30 members to more than 100 regular attendees
- I am a person 18 years old or older
- I am or have been a pastor from an evangelical background

If you are selected, you will be asked to

1. Complete a 20-question survey (see jotform link below) that provides answers as yes or no along with a scale from one to ten.
2. Participate in a one-on-one interview via Zoom or a similar platform that will be recorded for later review, and it should last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

Names and other identifying information may be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed. To participate, please click the link below to complete the initial screening survey and read the attached consent document. If you meet the participant criteria, I will contact you to schedule an interview, and we will work with you to schedule a time for an interview. (https://form.jotform.com/█████████████)

Attached is a consent form, and it contains additional information about my research. Because participation is anonymous, you do not need to sign and return the consent document unless you would prefer to do so. After you have read the consent form, please click the button above to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Sincerely,

Reginald Horner

Doctoral Student

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Central Research Questions:

What effect or perceived value does (or did) the use of a mentor or coach have on your overall pastoral leadership and congregational growth of regular attendees?

How did the participating pastors describe the perceived value of having a mentor or coach?

What coaching or mentorship models exist for pastors who lead a congregation of fewer than thirty members?

Sub-Research Question 1: Are mentors available within your organization?

Sub-Research Question 2: How accessible or easily found are pastoral mentors?

Sub-Research Question 3: How were you paired with a mentor?

Interview Questions on JotForm.com:

1. How long have you pastored?

2. What or who lead you to seek a pastoral role?

3. Did you start your church ministry from the ground up or did you transition from another pastor?

4. At what point in your pastorate did you begin to utilize your mentor?

5. What value did the mentor bring to your weekend message preparations?

6. What value did the mentor bring to your church government and structure?

7. What value did the mentor bring to your family structure?

8. What value did the mentor bring to your personal well-being?

9. What value did the mentor bring to your personal leadership development?

10. What value did the mentor bring to your ministry maturity?

11. What was the timeframe it took to grow your church from less than 30 members to more than 100 regular attendees?

12. Do you believe that you could have accomplished this growth without a mentor?

13. How often do [did] you meet with or speak with your mentor?

14. Were the meetings regularly scheduled meeting or just when you need counsel?

15. Were the meetings with your mentor structured?

16. How valuable have the general question/answer times with your mentor affected your ministry?

17. Was there a time when your mentor have your counsel that made a deep impact on your life and ministry?

18. How valuable was the mentor in helping you in preparing you to pastor more effectively?

19. Have you had more than one mentor?

20. Would you recommend every pastor have a mentor in their life?

APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 8, 2023

Reginald Horner
Rusty Small

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1490 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PASTORS
WHO WERE MENTORED AND THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE MENTOR
RELATIONSHIP

Dear Reginald Horner, Rusty Small,

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

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in
which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

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

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your
Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study
details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the
bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study
documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

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, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office