

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS FOR
MULTIRACIAL MINISTRY RECEIVED BY BLACK PASTORS
GRADUATING FROM SOUTHERN BAPTIST SEMINARIES

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Timothy David Griffin

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2024

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perception of preparedness for multicultural ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity or Doctorate at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs). The theory guiding this study was Racial Formation Theory (Omi & Winant, 2014). This theory suggests race as being a socially constructed paradigm that is manipulated by political, social, and economic forces. The researcher convened an expert panel of black ministers who are part of a conservative Baptist organization. This panel was used to refine a list of questions that were the foundation of semi-structured interviews conducted with the aforementioned black seminary graduates who are current pastors. The researcher found that the experiences of the pastors at the seminaries, particularly as it related to practical and academic were not instrumental in training the pastors to minister in a multiracial context.

Keywords: White, Black, Church, Racism, Reconciliation, PWIs

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Dedication

First and foremost, this dissertation is dedicated to my wife Nicole. Thank you for giving me the time and space to spend so many years of our marriage on education. A quick calculation tells me that, for roughly 70 percent of our 22 years, I have been a student. Thank you for your combination of patience, tough love, and tender love -- especially at the end when I was truly running on fumes. I look forward to the doors that God will open now that I have this final piece of the educational puzzle. I also look forward to you wrapping your doctorate up in the next few years. You're more than halfway there!

Thanks to my boys, now two out of three -- men! I've been at this pretty much since you all were little guys. I hope my journey is an inspiration to you to pursue the heights of education. But do know, that of everyone that I have had or will have the privilege to teach, you remain my primary pupils. Timothy II, Caleb, Joshua -- you are the ones whom God has entrusted me with. In the words of Psalm 127, you are my heritage, you are my arrows.

Thanks to my parents, Rev. and Mrs. LeRoy Griffin. I am thankful for the foundations that you laid in my life and for always pointing us to God, not perfectly, but persistently. I love you both.

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List of Abbreviations

Baptist Fellowship Association (BFA)
Black Racial Formation Theory (BRFT)
Critical Race Theory (CRT)
Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Association (FBFA)
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
National Baptist Convention (NBC)
Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)
Predominantly White Seminary (PWS)
Racial Formation Theory (RFT)
Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)
Gateway Baptist Theological Seminary (GBTS)
Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (GGBTS)
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS)
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS)
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS)
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS)
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

In 1845, John O’Sullivan, founding editor of *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* coined the phrase, “Manifest Destiny”. The crux of this belief was “that America was destined to go from strength to strength in future years, and by its pure example, fulfill its God-given mission to overspread the entire North American continent” (Wilsey, 2017, p.2).

However, those people who were indigenous to America and those who were brought over on slave ships via the African slave trade did not share in this destiny. The forefathers of the country wrote a constitution that says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” (U.S. Const. pmb1). Yet, many of these very same forefathers owned slaves whom they considered to be less than people and consented to inhumane treatment of them that would continue for almost three hundred years of enslavement and yield to second-class citizenship beyond that. Jim Wallis writes, “most white people – the vast majority in both the South and the North, including our “founding fathers” – accepted slavery. Most white people, white Christians, and white churches tolerated slavery in North America for 246 years, from 1619 to 1865” (Wallis, 2017, p.37).

On January 1, 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln’s signature put in place the Emancipation Proclamation, the initial document that moved toward the freedom of America’s slaves. This proclamation was undergirded two years later by the passage and ratification of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution which says, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (U.S. Const. amend. XIII).

One hundred years later, on June 4, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson updated the state of the country, as he sounded out the words, "...freedom is not enough." Johnson continued, "You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please" (Patterson, 2012, p. ix). Yet, based on Johnson's words, for more than a century, that was the state of post-slavery blacks in this country.

Amid all the difficulty that African Americans experienced in this country, perhaps their one solace was the church. Throughout that history, many noted African American preachers concluded that the racial narrative that was being touted as being of God by supporters of slavery, was not in fact of God. Frederick Douglas – who was born into slavery (as the illegitimate son of a white master), learned to read, escaped to freedom, and who eventually became a pastor, orator, and abolitionist – wrote in his autobiography:

What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the slaveholding religion of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference – so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. (Sernett, 1985, p. 104)

Douglas wrote these words as an appendix to his autobiography in April 1845. That very same year – in fact, the very next month – the Southern Baptist Convention split from the Northern Baptists over the issue of slavery (Woods, et al., 2018).

As documented throughout scripture, tensions between man have existed throughout human history. But, also throughout scripture, God's narrative has been clear – all men are created in His image. Writing on the division between Jews and Gentiles, following Christ's death, Paul addresses this tension in light of the cross, saying:

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Eph. 2:14-18)¹

This researcher posits that what Paul wrote then remains true now. The researcher further asserts that this truth must be taught from the pulpits of churches that believe in the truth of the Word of God. Finally, this researcher holds that this will only happen if those who are standing in the pulpits are first taught the depths of this truth, similar truths, and further truths within the halls of Christian academia, that, while Jesus shared with people the good news of His living water, time and time again, He met their felt needs – from hunger to debilitating illnesses to societal injustices – before giving them that truth.

While speaking at the chapel for Dallas Theological Seminary in December 2016, Dr. Eric Mason, lead pastor of Epiphany Fellowship in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, shared a message entitled “Woke Church”. Mason introduced the sermon saying:

Woke is an urban colloquialism used by black nationalists and those who are in the black consciousness movement of being woke in the sense of the systemic sociological, economic and comprehensive disenfranchisement of African Americans. They utilize that term as a way for you to begin to utilize sociology in history as a way to be awakened to the reality that something’s wrong with systemic racism in our country and in our world. (Mason, 2016)

Mason went on to recount the story of a huge layoff at a particular company in the Philadelphia area where there was already high unemployment, low wages, and schools suffering from budget cuts. He said, “The question people are asking on the block is what in the world is

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Bible are from the *English Standard Version*. (2001).

the church doing?” (Mason, 2016).

In this phenomenological study, this researcher reflected on Mason’s question by looking practically at what the church is doing and how it is doing it, based on the lived experiences of current black senior pastors who matriculated to one of the Southern Baptist seminaries. Observation of these experiences examined the impact that specific seminary training had on the current ministries that the pastors oversee, as it relates to racial reconciliatory efforts in a multiracial context. For this research, the term “multiracial” refers to a congregation made up of multiple races, with a particular focus on black and white. This chapter shares the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose, and the significance of the study. Additionally, this chapter looks at the research questions, definitions, assumptions limitations, and delimitations.

Background to the Problem

In Matthew 22, a religious lawyer attempted to test Jesus and asked:

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 22:36-40)

Luke gave further details of the account in what readers have come to know as the story of the Good Samaritan. The lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus seized the opportunity to tell the story of a Jewish man who had been robbed and was in need. This Jewish man wasn’t helped by a priest or another member of the tribe of Levi. He was helped by a Samaritan man. Scriptures tell us that Samaritans hated Jews, yet it was this man who proved to be the neighbor who loved the Jewish man as he loved himself.

In the book *Don't Ever Give Up*, Robert Hunter, a black pastor, tells of his call to full-time home missions work in the late 1950s. His problem was finding a mission board. Hunter writes, "I contacted every Baptist fundamental mission board I could find, but everyone said that they were not accepting applications from black men to go to the mission field" (Hunter, 2011, p. 122). How was it that President Lyndon Johnson could recognize racial missteps and aim to at least address them but the Body of Christ, with the goal of winning people to Christ, totally missed the mark?

At about the time of Lyndon Johnson's speech, a new fervor for social justice was taking hold in the black community. While Martin Luther King had been an advocate for non-violent protest, he recognized that the temperature in the black community was heating up. In *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, King writes, "There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair" (King, 1994, p.11). King continued:

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. (King, 1994, p. 21)

Two groups pushing toward aggressive action were the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers. These groups helped usher in what became known as the Black Power movement. As it had done many times before, the black community called on the black church. In July of 1966, a group of black pastors called a meeting to discuss, as one pastor put it, "the hysterical reaction of some white ministers to black power, the way the slogan was being distorted by whites and bandied about thoughtlessly by blacks, and the obvious inability of King's SCLC to respond to the new situation" (Sernett, 1985, p. 465). The statement, which was published in the *New York Times* on July 31, 1966, addressed several groups including "white churchmen." To this group,

the statement said, “As black men who were long ago forced out of the white church to create and to wield ‘black power,’ we fail to understand the emotional quality of the outcry of some clergy against the use of the term today. It is not enough to answer that ‘integration’ is the solution.” The statement to white pastors ended with the challenge, “So long as white churchmen continue to moralize and misinterpret Christian love, so long will justice continue to be subverted in this land” (Sernett, 1985, p. 468).

Three years later, the National Committee of Black Churchmen issued a statement on what came to be known as Black Theology. The group stated, “This indigenous theological formation of faith emerged from the stark need of the fragmented black community to affirm itself as a part of the Kingdom of God. White theology sustained the American slave system and negated the humanity of blacks” (Sernett, 1985, p. 474).

James Cone is largely credited with laying the groundwork for Black Theology. Several years after the statement of the Black Churchmen, speaking at a conference in Atlanta, Cone expressed the difficulty of the black church to accept black power. Cone stated that the black church had the choice to “reject Black Power as a contradiction of Christian love (and thereby join the white church in its condemnation of Black Power advocates as un-American and unchristian), or accept Black Power as a sociopolitical expression of the truth of the gospel” (Sernett, 1985, p. 478).

In deciding to embrace Black Power, Cone continued with two further dilemmas. First, accepting Black power would be a visible break from Dr. King. Cone states, “We did not want to do that. King was our model, having creatively combined religion and politics, and black preachers and theologians respected his courage to concretize the political consequences of his confession of faith” (Sernett, 1985, p. 479). Cone continued:

The concept of Black Power presented a problem for black theologians and preachers not only because of our loyalty to Martin Luther King but also because many of us had been trained in white seminaries and had internalized much of white people's definition of Christianity...there was no formal theological tradition to which we could turn in order to justify our definition of Black Power as an expression of the Christian gospel. (Sernett, 1985, p. 479)

Cone's initial writings on this subject were not overwhelmingly embraced by the black community, as can be seen in a 2019 reflection:

Certain African American theologians and religious scholars have questioned the influence of the Western theological tradition in Cone's theological anthropology. In 1969, African American theologians Charles Long and Gayraud Wilmore, among others, were the first to question the extent to which Cone's concepts in Black Theology and Black Power were borrowed from Barth, Paul Tillich, and other white theologians. (Maat, 2019, p. 2)

Most interesting is the focus of the church at this point. This researcher would say that, in essence, black theology grew out of the silence of white theology. In the book, *Letters to a Birmingham Jail*, noted pastor John Piper quotes Carl Ellis who says, "White Historians had sold us a bill of goods by leaving Black folks out; Black secularists sold us a bill of goods by leaving God out" (Loritts, 2014, p. 68). According to Piper, what leaders in the black religious community (in particular liberal theologians) took from the dominant white culture is secularism.

Recalling the 1965 speech by President Lyndon Johnson it is worth noting for this research that the speech was co-written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan who, at that time, was the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor. The task of co-writing the speech came to Moynihan on the heels of a report that he had authored entitled, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. In the report, Moynihan said that the failure of the black family would not be economic, but the absence of the father in the home. The report in, conjunction with Johnson's speech, gave a lot for society and the church to consider (Moynihan, 1965).

Shortly following Moynihan's report and the speech given by President Johnson, the country's focus turned to the Vietnam War while the focus of the church, as previously mentioned, became concern by white pastors over black theology and concern by black pastors over white economic power. Black clergy, the group who seemingly should have had the greatest concern over Moynihan's report of the potentially fractured black family, almost totally ignored this conversation. Andrew Billingsley, a leading black sociologist of the 21st century wrote a book in 1968 entitled *Black Families in White America*. It was a rebuttal to the Moynihan Report. John Dilulio remarks that "Billingsley devoted less than two pages to discussing relevance of the black church as a support system for African American families" (Dionne & Dilulio, 2000, p. 125).

This researcher believes that the social ills of society can be addressed by the government but that the church must not fail to address them, as happened in this case. In Martin Luther King's autobiography, he says,

Above all, I see the preaching ministry as a dual process. On the one hand, I must attempt to change the soul of individuals so that their societies may be changed. On the other, I must attempt to change the societies so that the individual soul will have a change. Therefore, I must be concerned about unemployment, slums, and economic insecurity. I am a profound advocate of the social gospel. (King, 1998, p. 19)

In this statement, King suggests a both/and approach. However, throughout history, the church has seemingly leaned toward an either/or approach. Julie Park writes, "To many evangelicals, issues of race, diversity, and social justice are temporal, worldly concerns and thus irrelevant to faith" (Park, 2013, p. 51). Cone shares a similar, but heavier sentiment, writing "White theologians and philosophers write numerous articles and books on theodicy, asking why God permits massive suffering, but they hardly ever mention the horrendous crimes Whites have

committed against people of color in the modern world. Why do White theologians ignore racism?” (Robinson, 2012, p.7).

Evidence of a divide is found throughout society, but the religious community is not immune to this divide. There has been study after study and research project after research project suggesting that the most segregated places in America are church sanctuaries on Sunday mornings. In an August 1964 *New York Times* article, Kyle Haselden, then managing editor of *The Christian Century*, wrote:

The air is full of cliches which remind us that the religious community's old sin against the Negro remains its current shame. Everyone knows that 11 o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in American life. Everyone knows, to use the title of Jackie Robinson's book, that “Baseball Has Done It” — “it” meaning racial desegregation — and that the church has not done it. (Haselden, K., 1964)

Forty-one years later, in an article for *Religion News Service*, Cathy Grossman echoed these words, “Sunday morning remains, as King once observed, the most segregated hour in America. And, against a backdrop of increased racial tensions, new research shows that most Americans are OK with that” (Grossman, 2015).

In *Christianity Today*, Pastor Bryant Loritts admits to having his attention caught by a statement on the state of the church from noted author, Ed Stetzer. Stetzer found that in a society where diversity is an ever-increasing conversation, a majority of folks attending church have no problem with the fact that the churches are not diverse, even if the pastors are pushing for diversity. The parishioners are happy with the status quo. (Stetzer, 2015).

Today’s local American church, as it historically has been, remains racially divided. This division is not unlike what exists in society. However, is this a division that God has intended and ordained or is this something that society has perpetuated and which the church has not eradicated? Recent statistics show that, “Two in three (66 percent) Americans have never

regularly attended a place of worship where they were an ethnic minority, according to new polling analysis released by LifeWay Research” (Grossman, 2015).

Mason has a slightly different take on the segregated Sunday morning paradigm, stating, “For our church, Sunday really is the most ethnically diverse time. The challenge is outside of Sunday morning when it comes to the praxis of these things, where whites get to go back to the atmosphere of their privileges” (Mason, 2016).

Ohio State sociology professor Korie Little Edwards writes, “Multiracial churches often celebrate being diverse for diversity’s sake. They aren’t challenging racial attitudes that reinforce systematic inequality” (Edwards, 2021). Edwards also remarks on the leadership structure that often shows up in these congregations stating, “Over time, whites end up occupying the roles in the church with the most authority. Racial diversity without power equality is not good news for anyone, especially not for people of color” (Edwards, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

I John 2:15-17 reads:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

From the advent of the local church, the body has been called to live differently. Acts 2:44-45 says, “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

Prior to the beginning of the local church, Jesus modeled a method of meeting people’s felt needs as a means of introducing them to their real needs. However, the real need that was met was not limited to one group. After Jesus died, He made it clear that salvation was for everyone. In the book of Acts, the account of Peter’s vision of “unclean food” is given:

Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common. This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven." (Acts 10:9-15)

Peter ultimately understood that God intended that the gospel was available to both Jews and Gentiles.

The researcher believes that the racial division that exists in the local church is an overflow of what exists in Christian academia, as university after university and seminary after seminary have populations, faculty, and staff that are largely homogenous in their racial makeup. Pastors from both the white community and the black community must be trained in seminaries. But, statistically, black pastors are not going to predominantly white seminaries and, if they are going, there is limited education on matters that relate to social justice. Similarly, some seminaries exist that are historically black. However, this researcher posits that such institutions often tend to focus largely on black liberation theology and social justice with not enough emphasis on Christology, particularly the love of Christ that crosses all racial and socio-economic boundaries. The writers of the foreword of the book *Race and Theology* write:

One can be awarded a PhD in religion without ever having to know, understand, or even read any of the scholarship produced by scholars of color; nevertheless, one can never pass comprehensive exams without mastering the dominant Eurocentric canon. The quest for "academic excellence" operates as code-language for fluency in Eurocentric meta-narratives. (Robinson, 2012, p. 5)

At its 150th anniversary meeting in 1995, the Southern Baptist Convention issued an apology for its racist past. The statement said in part, "We apologize to all African Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our lifetime, and we genuinely

repent of racism of which we have been guilty, whether consciously or unconsciously" (Christianity Today, August 1995). In June 2017, at the annual convention, the SBC condemned the alt-right political movement. In December 2018, Southern Seminary released a 70-page report that chronicled the ties that the institution had to slavery and white superiority. There is and has been recognition that there is a problem, but continued recognition cannot be where the story ends.

In the book *Radical Reconciliation, Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism*, the authors – one a black South African and the other one a white American – explore a phrase that bears further research. The phrase, stated in the subtitle of their book, is Christian Quietism. The authors explain that Pietism as pseudo reconciliation that sounds like truth but that Christian Quietism happens when Christians “discover that what is happening, is in fact, not reconciliation, and yet for reasons of self-protection, fear, or a desire for acceptance by the powers that govern our world seek to accommodate this situation, justify it...” (Boesak & DeYoung, 2012, p. 1).

In essence, Allan Boesak and Curtis DeYoung (2012) qualify two types of ignorance -- ignorance where you truly do not know, and ignorance where you know, but choose to ignore what you know. It is the second type of ignorance that this researcher suggests is rampant within the church and seminary today. Months after Southern Seminary released its 70-page report, an African American student was taking part in a tour on campus that honored early leaders. She spoke up, saying, “These men did some very awful things and refused to recognize people who looked like me as actual people but viewed them as property, and we’re praising their names. That’s not a fair assessment of history” (Shellnut, 2019).

Research has shown that the Christian church is divided. Research has shown that Christian academia is divided. What research has not shown is the extent to which divided

Christian academia is a by-product of a divided church or vice versa or the extent to which a united academia can unify the racially divided church or vice versa. Researcher Megolzao Haralu, in a doctoral dissertation entitled *Minority Student Perception of Diversity Initiatives in a Christian Liberal Arts College*, writes, “The Christian church appears to lag behind secular institutions in addressing issues of diversity, inequity and injustice. The shortfall seems to be more noticeable in Evangelical Christian colleges and universities when compared to its secular counterpart” (Haralu, 2005, p. 11).

Looking back in academic history, one can find that Socrates taught Plato who, in turn, taught Aristotle. In a more recent paradigm, one can find that Martin Luther King attended Crozer Theological Seminary because of a pastor named Josephus Pius Barbour, who was a friend of King’s father. Barbour, the first black graduate of Crozer, also pastored a church in the Philadelphia area called Calvary Baptist Church which would serve as home to Crozer students - - Martin Luther King, Samuel DeWitt Proctor, and Rev. William A. Jones, all renowned pastors and activists who continued to interact in life and ministry in the following years. Barbour would be noted as one of King's strongest mentors. Though they do exist, such academic and pastoral trees, and mentoring relationships must be more readily established back and forth across racial lines. For this to be the case, initial connections must happen, as there can be no relationship without some initial connection.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perception of preparedness for multiracial ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs). The theory guiding this study was Racial Formation

Theory (Omi & Winant, 2014). This theory suggests race as being a socially constructed paradigm that is manipulated by political, social, and economic forces.

Research Questions

RQ1. How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?

This researcher posited that responses to the first question would look at the genuine relationships that were formed by students in their programs at the seminaries they attended. The mindset was that relationships that were built at this time were crucial and typically would provide friendships that last throughout life. Even in the absence of ethnic diversity, there was the potential for relationships built on Christlikeness.

RQ2. How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?

The researcher posited that opinions formed by people of other people are based on personal experiences. Many black students enter PWIs with limited experience with white students and vice versa. This question examined whether there were preconceived stereotypes of black students toward white students when they arrived at the PWI and how such opinions changed during the time that they were students.

RQ3. How did the training received by black senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they have rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?

The third question looked at the impact that the black senior pastors who matriculated at PWIs have had on their congregations. Some questions considered in the interview process were: Based on their experiences, how intentional are these pastors at diversifying their congregations and staffs? How likely are they to point their college-age members to PWIs?

RQ4. How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially, and emotionally and, if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?

This question explored John Wilson's suggestion that religion has the potential to minimize awareness of both class and conflict. This is done through two processes, the first being transvaluation, and the second being individuation. "Transvaluation is a process whereby a set of spiritual values are projected to supplant material ones. Individuation is a process where the importance of the individual is stressed while social structural concerns are avoided" (Rasor, 1993, p. 183).

Assumptions and Delimitations

In any research of this nature, there are typically personal or societal presuppositions that the researcher brings to the table. Similarly, there are limits that the researcher imposes on the scope of the research. For this phenomenological study, both parameters held true.

Research Assumptions

The following are assumptions that were made within this research project:

1. Though it is often not necessarily referred to as such, there is an existence of white theology. This theology has been developed by the body of European theologians that have been quoted and studied dating back to Calvin, Luther, and Armenian.
2. There is a body of work known as black theology. White theology and black theology are not derived from two different gospels. There is a singular divinely inspired and inerrant gospel that men of all backgrounds have been given. While no man will ever truly be able to rightly divide this Word, the goal is to continue to study to show ourselves approved.
3. The racial problems that existed in the church in the 1960s, prior to Civil Rights legislation, still exist today.
4. There remains a clear division between black Christians and white Christians in the United States both ecclesiastically and in academic institutions.
5. For this division to be removed, those standing in the pulpits must be correctly taught in the classrooms of a Christian academia that is more diverse in leadership, faculty and staff.

6. This idea was borrowed from ethicist, T.B. Maston who wrote in a 1946 study entitled *Of One*, “The Christian goal for race relations, and every other area of social life, will become clear and meaningful to the world only to the degree that [the ideals of Christ] are embodied in the lives of individual Christians and Christian groups” (Maston, 1946, p. 107).
7. The church and Christian academia have the potential to change the conversation on race in America. They must both operate in light of this potential.

Delimitations of the Research Design

John Creswell (1994) explained that delimitations detail how a study will be narrowed in scope. This researcher realizes that racial issues are not limited to America, but the focus of this research was limited to the United States. Similarly, this researcher realizes that multiple other ethnic groups make up this country including, most prominently, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans.

1. This research was delimited to the relationships between black Americans and white Americans.
2. This research was delimited to black senior pastors who earned the qualifying graduate degree from one of the six official Southern Baptist seminaries.
3. This research was delimited to black senior pastors who are currently shepherding congregations.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used within this research project:

1. *Black*: an identifying term that many Americans of African descent use to refer to themselves (Sigleman, et al., 2005).
2. *Historically Black College and University*: Institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to primarily serve the African-American community (Anderson, 1988).
3. *Marxism*: the system of thought created by Karl Marx which provides the main theoretical basis for modern socialism and communism (Sayers, 2021).
4. *Microaggression*: deceptive insults toward underrepresented people groups (Preston-Cunningham, et al., 2016).

5. *Multiracial*: involving groups from two or more different races interacting together, which differentiates from multicultural as the emphasis is on race (Kangiel, 2019).
6. *Nationalism*: is an idea and movement that holds that the nation should be congruent with the state (Hechter, 2010).
7. *PWI*: Predominantly white institution (PWI) is the term used to describe institutions of higher learning where White students make up a majority of the enrolled student body.
8. *Reconciliation*: Based on 2 Corinthians 5:18, is a joining back together with God through the power of Jesus and a joining with our fellow man based on the restoration to God.
9. *Racism*: a belief that one racial or group is superior to another because of specific differences, typically in physical appearance, but also often involves economics.
10. *White*: a term of race applied to people of light complexion, typically of European descent, opposite of the term Black (Bhopal & Donaldson, 1998).
11. *White Theology*: a way of studying God that has Eurocentric foundations where the ideologies emanate from white scholars.
12. *Woke*: Woke is an urban colloquialism used by black nationalists and those who are in the black consciousness movement of being awakened to their sense of the systemic sociological, economic, and comprehensive disenfranchisement of African Americans (Mason, 2016).

Significance of the Study

This study may help to assist Southern Baptist seminaries and, even more broadly, predominantly white institutions that are overtly Christian in broadening their appeal to a more diverse student body, allowing them to simultaneously serve as a training ground for churches that see a need to diversify.

Additionally, the findings of this study may be helpful for other researchers in further examining the church's opportunity to fulfill its mandate of loving neighbor as self and being the keeper of our brother – thus moving from a strictly intellectual knowledge of scripture to functionally carrying out scriptural mandates. The greatest significance of this research is to

address the problem from both an academic angle and a professional angle, with the professional represented in the church.

The researcher believes that the church must practice more awareness of its potential to affect change in the conversation of race in America. Similarly, the researcher believes that Christian academia must practice this same awareness. However, this researcher seeks to magnify the importance of these organizations doing this congruently, as they are inextricably linked. By way of example, an organization mentioned heavily in this research is the Southern Baptist Convention, along with its six seminaries. According to Southern Baptist Convention website (sbc.net), the Convention operates six seminaries designed to train men and women from service in Baptist churches and other ministries across the world. The convention has a cooperative program that allows students of its member churches to attend the seminaries at a per credit hour discount of between 50 and 59 percent. In 2020, those seminaries enrolled just over 25,000 students, with just under 20,000 of those students being members of Southern Baptist churches. Of those, just under 10,000 were full-time students. The total financial outlay for SBC students from the Convention was \$42,946,816. (Appendix A)

This is just one example of the linkage between one church organization and its educational wing. There are other national church organizations with similar educational structures. The point is that there is a significant linkage between the organized church and Christian higher education, with an opportunity for significant back-and-forth impact between the two.

Empirically speaking, this research provides firsthand accounts of the impact that seminary education has had on black pastors who attended Southern Baptist Seminaries, both while they were there and within their current ministry settings. Furthermore, the ages of the

seminarians provide a look into the mindset of pastors spanning two generations, as there is more than a thirty-year age gap between the oldest participant and the youngest. Similarly, the timespan in which the participants attended the seminaries also provides a snapshot across four decades, ranging from the early 1990s to approximately 2020. This is not unique, but this researcher did not find other studies that approached this subject in quite this way.

A recent study by Aabram Marsh (2022) examined the leadership of white theologians during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Names like Thomas Maston and Foy Valentine are prevalent in Marsh's study as individuals who, in many ways, served as a collective moral compass for the Southern Baptist Convention. While these same names and many of their contemporaries are found in this current study, the researcher feels that Marsh points a light for current white theologians to follow. While the current research also offers such direction, it does so from the perspective of the black pastor.

The researcher embraced Racial Formation Theory as a theoretical framework for this study. A thorough historical and practical examination of Critical Race Theory provides an opportunity for the reader to better understand CRT, if nothing more than for more informed conversations across academic and practical divides that have grown out of many unresearched opinions. As for Racial Formation Theory, while similar studies also followed this trail, the researcher focused more on deficiencies in RFT as it related to the spiritual dimension.

Summary of the Design

This researcher has several pastoral connections within an organization called Baptist Fellowship Association (BFA). Many of the BFA pastors have dual memberships in the predominantly white, Southern Baptist Convention. Following approval from the Institutional Review Board, the researcher used these associations to reach out to several of these pastors and

invited them to be a part of an expert panel. The researcher explained that the primary purpose of the panel was to finalize questions for semi-structured interviews for this qualitative study. This process netted four pastors who participated on the expert panel. The panel was conducted and recorded using Microsoft Teams.

After successfully conducting this purposively sampled expert panel, the researcher reached out to the alumni offices of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, asking them to either send out invitations on his behalf or provide a way of contacting black Master of Divinity graduates to participate in semi-structured interviews where they would share their experiences from their time attending the seminary as well as their current preaching ministry. This avenue was unsuccessful.

On the heels of this roadblock, the researcher subsequently posted on social media platforms, Twitter and Facebook. The researcher also joined seminary alumni pages on LinkedIn. Finally, the researcher was able to find a pictorial listing of alumni from all the seminaries. Using that listing and leads provided from contacts on social media, the researcher was able to line up interviews with 10 qualifying participants. While the original goal was to get three graduates from each of the six seminaries, the researcher was able to get at least one graduate from each of the seminaries. The interviews, which were conducted and recorded using Microsoft Teams, ranged in length from an hour to an hour and twenty minutes. Once the recorded interviews were transcribed, they were analyzed using Renata Tesch's eight-step coding process, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2018). This process is described in Chapter 3.

Chapter Summary

This researcher posited that the lived experiences of the black pastors who were interviewed would speak practically to the stated problems. Second, the researcher believed that

the subjects experiences would illuminate and give depth to the elements of the Purpose Statement. Finally, the researcher believed that the participants' experiences would ultimately undergird the elements of the literature review found in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

There is no shortage of conversation on the subject of reconciliation. The Bible repeatedly lays the groundwork for this idea, encouraging its readers to be at one with Christ and at one with each other. In this chapter, the researcher outlines specific biblical principles as they relate to this subject, alongside the comments of various scholars interacting with the biblical texts.

The researcher examined the theoretical possibilities to provide a framework for the study, looking first at Critical Race Theory, allowing for both the praise and the critique that have surrounded the theory in recent years, before moving on to a new theory on the landscape – the Theory of Racelessness, and then landing on the benefits of using Racial Formation Theory.

Finally, the related literature and the rationale for the study benefit from the rhetoric of a national election in the US that was completed near the beginning of this project. The climate of the university campuses at that time spoke to the microcosm of society which the researcher has posited that the university community is, as it relates to society. That conversation feeds into the gap in the literature.

Theological Framework for the Study

There is little debate today from those in theological circles that man has been created in the Image of God. Scripture affirms that all humanity was created in the Image of God. In Genesis 2, in an apparent conversation between the Godhead, God the Father says, “Let us make man in our own image.” However, the exact clarity of that image is unclear. The disciple John writes, “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). In mentioning this “we”, John references no specific people group. Writing later in the book of

Revelation, John says, “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). The reader only sees a faceless and raceless multitude. In the gospels, the reader sees the feeding of 5000 Jews. In another passage shortly after, the account is given of the miraculous feeding of 4000 Gentile men.

Moving forward to the book of Acts, after Jesus has ascended to heaven, Peter receives a vision from the Lord in Acts 10. Peter initially thinks that the vision is a reference to food. However, he ultimately understands the vision to be about people and summarizes the account by saying, “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34-35). Scholar Luke Johnson writes of this account that what is being implied is that all living things were created by God, declared clean by the same God, and are therefore not subject to human opinion. Within the context of the scriptures, this researcher sees clear evidence that God shows no partiality. However, the researcher is aware that, throughout history, man has specialized in partiality and conflict.

Biblical History of Conflict

From the beginning of the history of man, there has been conflict. The first conflict was between Cain and Abel, a result of Cain’s displeasure with Abel because God had accepted Abel’s sacrifice and rejected his. “The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it” (Genesis 4:6-7). Moving forward in the Genesis account, conflict existed between Isaac and Ishmael because Isaac was

the son promised to Abram. Genesis 21:9-11 gives the account that transpires between Sarah and her handmaiden, Hagar. Upon Sarah's blessing, Abraham sleeps with Hagar and she has a son. Sarah later perceives that Hagar is throwing this in her face, "So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac'" (Genesis 21:10). Abraham was not happy with Sarah's request but did it. Ultimately, God tells Abraham that not only will a nation come from Isaac, but from Ishmael as well. God specifically says of Ishmael, "He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen" (Genesis 16:12). Ishmael's descendants were the Arab nations and, indeed, there has been conflict between them and a plethora of nations throughout their history.

While the Jews were God's chosen people, it must be realized that the choice was based on God's favor and promise toward one man, Abram. It was because of Abram's faithfulness that God promised that he would have descendants like the sands of the seashore. Throughout scripture, the only specific time when God favors one particular people group is in passages that address the Jews in their role of being God's chosen people, through whom the promised Messiah will come. This Messiah would come to save the entire world. In Galatians 3, Paul clarifies the relationship of humanity with Christ following His death, burial, and resurrection, saying that, through faith in Christ, everyone is a son of God. He continues, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

While offering a high priestly prayer, Jesus passionately proclaims to the Father, "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21). Yet, in the centuries following

Jesus' proclamation, a different rhetoric with a different message is flowing through the pews of the church on any given Sunday. Tisby (2015) writes that, in the last half-century, while racial issues have improved through legislation and in day-to-day societal standards, there remains a significant racial divide. Tisby adds that visualization of the existing divide is quite pronounced in the local church.

Image of God

“Let us make man in our own image”. These are the words of God found in Genesis 1:27. Individuals from scholars to laymen and everyone in between have pondered the depth and breadth of that statement. Who is the “our” that God is talking to? And what is His image? Thomas Maston (1959) suggests that God may be speaking to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, He might also be speaking to Himself. The researcher suggests that, if this is God speaking, then His image is not visible because He is Spirit. Maston further suggests that the image of God involves personhood, which requires both knowledge of self along with moral responsibility. On the knowledge of self, Maston suggests, one cannot know self without knowing others and one learns more of others as they focus less on self. The researcher suggests that perhaps this selflessness, which otherwise displays the attribute of love, is the true definition of the image of God.

Maston suggests that this status as image bearer places man at the top of the chart as it relates to created things. With this status, God gives to man dominion over every other living thing. “He was created to dominate not to be dominated. Domination by his fellow man means pulling him down to the animal level” (Maston, 1959, p. 2). While there have been those in the history of mankind who have tried to dehumanize others based on the outer shell, the researcher

suggests that, if man is operating with the mind of God, importance is given inwardly, as God focuses on the heart.

Images of Man

Perhaps one of the more disheartening and divisive components of the Image of God discussion is the image that America has chosen to give to Jesus in the absence of an actual image. While scripture tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem – very much a Middle Eastern locale, geographically speaking – the image of Jesus that this researcher was confronted with in church after church while growing up was the blued-eyed Savior with long, flowing blond hair. Well-educated pastors knew this depiction was inaccurate, but many allowed such a visual farce to be readily displayed in their sanctuaries. In the introduction of *The Color of Christ*, the authors write:

By wrapping itself with the alleged form of Jesus, whiteness gave itself a holy face. But he was a shape-shifting totem of white supremacy. The differing and evolving physical renderings of white Jesus figures not only bore witness to the flexibility of racial constructions but also helped create the perception that whiteness was sacred and everlasting. With Jesus as white, Americans could feel that sacred whiteness stretched back in time thousands of years and forward in sacred space to heaven and the second coming. (Blum & Harvey, 2012, p. 8)

The researcher does not miss the depth of Blum and Harvey’s statement. The permanency of the visual impact of an image can be profound. Culture-driven interpretation of a word picture can also create a skewed visual image. Further, considering Jesus’ Middle Eastern birth, Kenneth Bailey (2009) debunks the story of the Savior’s birth in an inadequate facility. He writes that, while Western culture hears the word “manger” and immediately thinks of a stable in a dirty barn, this would not be the reality in a Middle Eastern village. Cross-referencing a similar use of terminologies found in Matthew 5:14-15 in an Arabic version of the New Testament, Bailey writes:

One of the earliest and most carefully translated Arabic versions of the New Testament was made, probably in Palestine, in the ninth century. Only eight copies have survived. This great version (translated from the Greek) records this verse as: “does not everyone of you untie his ox or his donkey from the manger in the house and take it outside and water it?” No Greek manuscript has the words “in the house” in this text. But this ninth-century Arabic-speaking translator understood the text correctly. Doesn’t everybody have a manger in the house? In his world, simple Middle Eastern villagers always did! (Bailey, 2009, p. 31)

In the 1982 blockbuster novel, *The Color Purple*, which examined concepts of faith among many other issues, Celie, one of the main characters gives her depiction of God. In a broken, deep southern vernacular, she says that He is old, gray-bearded, and white -- with blue eyes. That is the God that she sees when she prays (Walker, 1982). The setting of *The Color Purple* takes place beginning in the early 1900s in the American South. Considering what race relations were like during that time, the image that Celie had of God would not have endeared her to Him.

Noted evangelist C.I. Scofield was credited with producing a popular reference Bible in 1909. The Scofield Bible sold more than a million copies in the first twenty years after its publication. In the first fifty years, it became the most-known reference Bible in the English language. Scholar Todd Magnum compares the *Scofield Reference Bible* in the field of dispensationalism within systematic theology to Martin Luther’s *Ninety-Five Theses* in the Lutheran traditions (Rushing, 2011).

In this popular version of the Bible, as the reader is perusing Genesis 9, they clearly ascertain Scofield’s thoughts on the topic of the black man, as he relates to the Image of God. “In his note on the descendants of Noah’s three sons in Genesis 9, Scofield remarks, ‘A prophetic declaration is made that from Ham will descend an inferior and servile posterity’” (McKissic & Evans, 1994, p. 22). In response to Scofield, Evans and McKissic (1994) point out that, not only

is this incorrect, but it further perpetuates a Bible-based inferiority of the black race that is already present in the minds of white Bible students.

In the foreword to Wallis' *America's Original Sin*, Attorney Bryan Stevenson remarks that while the country was able to eradicate some of the obvious bigotry that was present in the 1960s, further work of understanding truth and pursuing reconciliation was not done, and this has caused other forms of racial subordination. Stevenson continues that the church's role in this paradigm undermines the testimony of leadership. Stevenson is saying that, if church leaders are leading, the expectation is that members will follow (Wallis, 2017). For this researcher, Scofield represented an ultra-popular theologian and leader in his time who, based on research, was responsible for fostering flawed ideas regarding race to legions of followers. However, that is a different paradigm than Stevenson puts forth, which ignores such conversations.

In the well-researched treatise, *Race and Theology*, Robinson writes, "If theologians do not address the question of race, the implicit message to church members and leaders is that race and racism are not theological or ecclesial matters" (Robinson, 2012, p. 10). Robinson continues, identifying the concept of white theology and saying that there is an opportunity to ignore the historical reality of racism within the theology or to reconstruct the narrative for the benefit of everyone (Robinson, 2012). Park (2013) echoes this sentiment, expressing that a lot of today's evangelicals can ignore race matters because they see conversations on issues such as diversity and social justice as worldly and thus having no part in the theological realm. They can separate these secular topics from spiritual matters.

Message of Reconciliation

Christiaan Mostert writes, "Theologically speaking, the church is both the recipient and the bearer of a message of reconciliation, the reconciliation offered to the world in the crucified,

risen Jesus Christ. Empirically speaking, the church's continuing divisions stretch the credibility of its claims.” (Mostert, 2010, p. 192). This researcher posits that the use of the word “empirical” should not be overlooked in Mostert’s statement. While recognizing that there is importance of a theoretical foundation in academic undertakings such as this, one should not miss what can be ascertained by honest and even simple observations. From such observations, one can delve into practical nuances. Mostert is attempting to provide clarity that the universal church as a body, as well as its individual members, have been reconciled or united to Christ. Sin separated those individual members, Christ reunited them. That reunion should function as the impetus for individual Christians being on the forefront of reconnecting others to Christ, through the practical example of first connecting to others on the base level of human to human. However, in Mostert’s statement, the division of the local church says, empirically, anything but reconciliation.

For this researcher, John Perkins nails the potential for practical application through empirical observation as he examines the dueling concepts of black theology and white theology. The researcher first referred to white theology in examining the work of scholar, Elaine Robinson. Perkins (2018) drives her premise home, saying that branches of theology based on race are, at a minimum, less than ideal. However, he adds that to have a separate white theology and a black theology and then to preface reconciliation spoken of in the gospels with an adjective -- in this case, racial -- is toxic. Indeed, throughout scripture, as Christ reconciles us to Himself, He never does it based on the look of a person; it is always the heart. As He encourages those that are His to love their neighbor, never is it contingent on what the person acts like or looks like.

More on Black Theology

In July of 1966, a group of black pastors called a meeting to discuss the alarming take of some white ministers on the slogan “Black Power”. For this group of ministers, the white pastors were misrepresenting the truth. Furthermore, the actions of some black individuals were not helping to clarify that truth and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was inadequately addressing the situation. The statement, published in the July 31, 1966, issue of the *New York Times* said,

As black men who were long ago forced out of the white church to create and to wield “black power,” we fail to understand the emotional quality of the outcry of some clergy against the use of the term today. It is not enough to answer that “integration” is the solution.” The statement ended with the challenge, “So long as white churchmen continue to moralize and misinterpret Christian love, so long will justice continue to be subverted in this land.” (Sernett, 1985, p. 468)

In 1969, the National Committee of Black Churchmen issued a statement on Black Theology, stating, “This indigenous theological formation of faith emerged from the stark need of the fragmented black community to affirm itself as a part of the Kingdom of God. White theology sustained the American slave system and negated the humanity of blacks” (Sernett, 1985, p. 474). James Cone, who is largely credited with laying the groundwork for Black Theology, spoke on the subject several years later at a conference in Atlanta. Cone talked about the difficulty of the concept because, on one level, the black pastors did not want to distance themselves from Martin Luther King. Similarly, many of the pastors had received their education in white seminaries and such a theological concept was not part of that training. So, black theology was, in essence, a break from the framework in which they had operated (Sernett, 1985).

For his part, King addressed the mindset toward unity in his 1967 book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* stating:

In the final analysis the weakness of Black Power is its failure to see that the black man needs the white man and the white man needs the black man. However much we may try to romanticize the slogan, there is no separate black path to power and fulfillment that does not intersect white paths, and there is no separate white path to power and fulfillment, short of social disaster, that does not share that power with black aspirations for freedom and human dignity. We are bound together in a single garment of destiny. The language, the cultural patterns, the music, the material prosperity, and even the food of America are an amalgam of black and white. (King, 2010, p. 54)

Many things were said about King by his white contemporaries regarding his agenda but this researcher finds that this is one of the clearest statements from King himself on the agenda of the movement in his eyes. Like Perkins speaking about two branches of theology, King equally decries two branches of supposed power as counterintuitive and destined for failure. He makes a plea for the uniting of the black man and white man moving forward together.

Russell Moore and Andrew Walker (2016) state that the essence of caring about racial reconciliation is not just knowing and believing that everyone is an image bearer, it is also envisioning that such a likeness entitles the bearer of that image to Christ's reconciliation. Perkins, Moore, and Walker further stress that the heart of the matter is not racial reconciliation, it is simply reconciliation. If the second is foundational, the first is not conditional.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul clarifies and defines the beauty of reconciliation given to believers, who are in turn to give it forward. Paul writes,

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

Christian academia must recognize that the issue being dealt with is bigger than the local church, is bigger than race, and is bigger than economics. These things are temporal. Souls are at stake and that is dealing in the eternal realm. Christendom runs the risk of alienating people from

hearing the gospel of Christ when those people cannot see that gospel in action. If the church is not operating in unity, it has missed the opportunity to offer a very tangible example of the power and desire of Christ's love to reconcile and unify.

Referencing former *Christian Recorder* editor, Richard Wright Jr., Mary Mathews (2017) shares that Wright calls out the flaw in mistreating a brother, with the mindset that a burnt offering presented to God will make things okay. Further, Wright shares that stellar churches and academic institutions, or even beautiful sermons are not foundational. What is foundational is loving good and hating evil. What is also biblically sound, according to Wright, is the social mission of the church. He points out that this is found in an Old Testament examination of the prophet Amos. According to Wright, the dominant religion has not wanted to and does not want to acknowledge the biblical presence of the social gospel. But, for Jesus and the prophets, it is the answer to not only the problems of the black community but for the whole of society. Paul speaks clearly in this writing:

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2:14-22)

Looking at Ephesians 2, ethicist T.B. Maston hones in on the words "in Christ". Maston finds this phrase to be essential to Paul's message throughout the Epistle. Maston states that the multiple concepts found throughout Ephesians are held together by the singular name – Christ. Maston further explains that this "in Christ" represents a union through which the child of God is provided with sustenance to live as a Christian. Once a person is in Christ, their orientation is redirected toward God. This orientation precipitates a vertical and horizontal reconciliation with

both God and man. In Paul's thinking, the vertical represents heavenly things and the horizontal, earthly. Maston discusses the enmity between man and God as the most pressing void that must be filled. For, if that relational enmity is overcome, the enmity that exists between men will also be overcome. It must happen in order. As man loves God, man loves people (Maston, 1959).

Theoretical Framework for the Study

This researcher analyzed various theories to give a framework through which to address reconciliation through an academic lens. One of the primary theories that surfaced was Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has been used in similar projects. This researcher found that, upon initial consideration, CRT also met the criteria for analysis for this present study. However, with the conflicts that have surrounded CRT in recent years, particularly in the religious realm, the researcher chose to look elsewhere. The researcher landed on the Racial Formation Theory, which is analyzed after a thorough look at CRT.

Introduction to CRT

As the researcher considered CRT, a factor that was deeply pondered was the foundation of the theory, with the thought that some historical perspective might allay some of the concerns brought forth by the religious community. Attorney Richard Delgado (2012) explains that CRT gained momentum in the mid-1970s through the work of a black attorney, Derrick Bell, and a white scholar, Alan Freeman. The men represented a cohort that felt that many of the reforms initiated by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s had not only stopped moving forward but were actually beginning to lose ground. This greatly concerned Bell and Freeman.

In the early 1970s, Bell had become the first tenured black professor at Harvard University, and also notably served alongside Thurgood Marshall as a civil rights attorney. He succinctly explained that "Critical race theory scholarship is characterized by frequent use of the

first person, storytelling, narrative, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of law, and the unapologetic use of creativity” (Bell, 1995, p. 898). In positing this theory, Bell took a theory commonly used in law circles and developed it in a way that it could be effectively used in social science research. However, researchers Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate IV are credited with shaping the theory into a tool to effectively discuss race in education. Leonardo (2013) writes that Ladson-Billings and Tate expressed that a more militant theory was needed to shake things up in the field of education, particularly in light of deeply implanted racism that was embedded within a mindset of White supremacy.

Another notable framer of CRT has provided six themes that define the movement:

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.
2. Critical race theory expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy.
3. Critical race theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law.
4. Critical race theory insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color.
5. Critical race theory is interdisciplinary.
6. Critical race theory works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression (Matsuda et al., 1993, p. 6).

Ladson-Billings and Tate “present an overview of CRT and include significant CRT themes as they apply to education, such as education policy and white privilege, interest convergence and segregation, affirmative action, stereotypes in the classroom, intersectionality (when one person experiences multiple types of discrimination, such as gender and race), and counter storytelling as a critical methodology” (Westbrook, 2016, p. 16).

Delgado, considered one of the foremost proponents and shapers of CRT, explains the theory as a movement comprised of both scholars and activists examining the interplay of power, race, and racism. This interplay is examined outside of the typical sociological lenses to include economics, history, class structure, and geographical and philosophical context. The purpose of the examination is not just for knowledge but for affecting change that improves society. CRT does not seek to make incremental change but looks to hit at the foundations of perceived order (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Criticism of CRT

While this researcher saw the benefits of using CRT to serve as a framework for the research at hand, the researcher was certainly not oblivious to the critical reception of CRT in multiple circles, including academic, political, and religious. Before his death, Bell himself considered -- with actual appreciation -- academic critics of CRT. Bell saw the critiques as a sign that researchers were recognizing the theory, but he also understood that, in their interest, they saw shortcomings of the theory. Two researchers that he considered were Daniel Farber and Suzanna Sherry who encouraged theorists to not just tell accurate stories but to analyze them and articulate their legal relevance (Bell et al., 2005). Bell also addressed the thoughts of Randall Kennedy, who pointed to theorists who often failed to adequately support claims.

For this research, the criticism from the white evangelical community is most noted. Those criticisms are largely levied toward a connection of CRT to Marxism. Tom Ascol, Executive Director of Founders Ministries writes:

CRT (along with every other Marxist ideology) cannot be reconciled with what the Bible teaches about sin and salvation. First, to view all relationships in terms of power dynamics requires that people be seen in terms of the powerful (privileged, oppressors) and the powerless (marginalized, oppressed). Apart from striking out against God-ordained hierarchies and authority structures (by evaluating them as oppressive power structures), this way of viewing the world

fails to evaluate people in their primary relationship, which is as creatures made in the image of their Creator (Ascol, 2020).

On the heels of Ascol's assessment, the presidents of the Southern Baptist Seminaries released a statement in November 2020, stating, "In light of current conversations in the Southern Baptist Convention, we stand together on historic Southern Baptist condemnations of racism in any form and we also declare that affirmation of Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and any version of Critical Theory is incompatible with the Baptist Faith & Message" (Gryboski, 2020).

Jemar Tisby (2020) counters, saying that there is no clear-cut answer as to why critics dismiss and disdain CRT. He suggests that the primary factor in this opposition seems to be the critical race theorists' suggestion of a white power structure that exploits and dominates other groups. Tisby, who serves as president of The Witness, A Black Christian Collective, suggests exploring extensive work that exists regarding fundamentalist Christian issues as it relates to CRT.

Adding to Tisby's thoughts, Kelly Hamren (2020), who wrote a dissertation on Russian poets who persevered under the elements of Marxist-Leninist oppression, agrees that Marxism definitely and deeply influenced CRT. As such, she realizes she will not fundamentally agree with significant portions of the theory. However, Hamren recognizes that as an image bearer of God that no thinker, including Marx, is totally wrong.

For this researcher, the pressing concern for people of faith should not be with the supposed political leanings of the theory. In saying this, the researcher ponders whether opponents have given life-like qualities to a theory. Instead, this researcher has observed that tenets of CRT have shown an alienation to the church on all levels. Brandon Paradise (2014) found that a majority of blacks in America are Protestant and, for that majority, they have leaned

on God's standard and religious tradition to clarify right and wrong. For this group, Christianity has had no significant undergirding of CRT. If CRT has not connected with the African American church, this researcher must consider how much more the disconnect would be present with white Evangelicals.

In this researcher's opinion, that answer lies in the thought of whether those in the dominant population can accept the legitimacy of the storytelling technique of CRT, but also simultaneously accept the foundational premises of CRT. Of the primary premises of CRT, this researcher identifies the two that most clearly relate to education are the interest convergence principle and the price of racial remedies. Regarding the first principle, Adrienne Dixon (2006) finds that success for black people only happens when their goals line up with the needs of the white majority. Similarly, looking at the second goal, Dixon posits that there will not be support from the white majority if they feel that policies will seemingly diminish their social upper hand. This researcher posits that the first premise would mean whites would have to be open to blacks defining their own goals based on their needs and further defining the tools of their protest. The second premise would mean that members of the white population must embrace that there has been systemic wrongdoing committed against those in the minority population throughout the history of this country. In light of the difficulty with terminologies, Pat Sawyer and Neil Shenvi (2023) suggest focusing on ideas as opposed to labels. Therefore, instead of trying to determine if something is classically definable CRT or Marxism, the determination is whether it is biblical or not.

While CRT may be disconnected in some ways from the African American church, the struggle of blacks in America has not been missed by these congregations. On the heels of the CRT conversation held by the six seminary pastors, several young black leaders in the SBC said

they had had enough. One of these leaders was Charlie Dates. Currently the pastor of the largest black congregations in the state of Illinois, Dates had been, at the time, courted by the Southern Baptist Convention. He had led his congregation at Progressive Baptist Church to join into a dual affiliation with the Southern Baptists. Even with swift pushback from some of his older members, Dates -- who before that point had been invited to preach at five of the Southern Baptist seminaries -- saw hope for meaningful relationships across race. But, amidst the hope, he began to see some things that concerned him over time, particularly political affiliations. Dates hung on, but it was the nixing of CRT that ended the desire for him to partner with the SBC.

In an opinion piece written for *Religious News Service*, Dates asked how an organization without one Black entity head could reject a theory that helped black people frame the race problems they face. Dates continued that he had to tell his church that he was wrong about partnering and that the god of the SBC was and is conservatism (Dates, 2020). The researcher asks, does Dates represent the elder side of a younger group of black pastors who, based on the times, are operating on a much shorter fuse in terms of what they are willing to endure?

Dates (2020) went on to acknowledge that there are some strong black pastors in the SBC fold and that SBC seminaries have hosted some of these pastors as guest faculty or guest speakers. However, he followed that acknowledgment with a more dire prognosis, saying that there are many white pastors who are in prominent positions in the SBC who do nothing to address the racism that is present in their own congregations. Through their lack of action, Dates opined that these leaders are fostering a climate that is allowing their youth to latch on to the same hatred that historically enslaved blacks in God's name. Further, Dates says that these same churches are readying to send their young people to seminaries that have not only held on to the same racist attitudes but continue to serve as an incubator for them.

Ultimately, this researcher saw multiple examples of the success of CRT in secular academia and found it a more than acceptable and useful theory for analyzing the facets of this current study in Christian higher education. However, in light of the controversy associated with CRT and with one of the underlying themes of this research being a push toward biblical reconciliation, the researcher decided to use a less divisive tool of analysis.

Theory of Racelessness

It was in the feedback of the defense-ready draft that the researcher was introduced to the work of Dr. Sheena Mason and her Theory of Racelessness. Mason's introduction of this theory came during the time that the researcher was conducting and analyzing interviews. While the researcher ultimately does not feel this theory would have been the route to consider as a theoretical framework for this undertaking, it is nonetheless worth discussing, as it provides an interesting departure from CRT.

In an interview with Dr. Preston Sprinkle on the podcast *Theology in the Raw*, Mason gives a very simple explanation of her theory stating that, to undo racism, one must undo what they believe about race. In suggesting things to undo, Mason provides three tenets for her theory: 1) race is not biological, it does not exist in nature, 2) race is not a social construct, and 3) everyone is raceless.

Mason (2022) continues, explaining that there are six philosophies of race which are grouped into two sets of three, with everyone subscribing to two of the six -- one in each pair. The first set encompasses what a person believes about race. The second set examines what a person wants to do with what they believe about race. The first set of three is: 1) naturalism, 2) constructionism, and 3) skepticism. The second set is comprised of: 1) reconstructionists, who want to change the current construct; 2) conservationists, who want to preserve the natural; and

3) eliminativists, who want to eliminate belief in race. Mason proclaims that she subscribes to skepticism and eliminativism, explaining that race is not a real thing and, because it is not real, it should be forgotten history. Providing further clarity of her position, Mason says that racism is a construction, but that race itself is not real.

Mason has perhaps posited one of the easiest and most clearly laid out theories to understand. However, the researcher simultaneously finds her proposition linguistically flawed. While it may be biologically correct to say that race is a social construct, that does not dismiss the fact that, ideologically speaking, racism is a visible reality which, in our society, is based on race. Race may not be the correct terminology, instead, ethnicity may be more appropriate. But, in this society, there does not seem to be a clear differentiation between the two. At this writing, this researcher was not able to find peer-reviewed material to speak specifically to Mason's research. However, the concept of racelessness is not new. Winant (HoSang, 2012) spoke on the concept, even as he co-developed Racial Formation Theory, stating that the U.S. is such a racialized land that to think of individuals with no racial identity would be akin to them having no identity. Winant further stated that the will to simply declare race as an illusion is not possible because of the way it has been ingrained in U.S. history.

Racial Formation Theory

Along with fellow researcher, Michael Omi, Winant developed Racial Formation Theory (RFT). The researchers define racial formation as:

the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed.” They attempt to chart a middle course between two extremes. The first extreme is an “essentialist” formulation that views race as “a matter of innate characteristics, of which skin color and other physical attributes provide only the most obvious, and in some respects most superficial, indicators” (Omi and Winant 1994:64). The other extreme is a view that trivializes the category of race, arguing that since it is a social construction, race will disappear if we simply ignore it (Alumkal, 2004, p. 196).

Racial Formation came on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement, which Omi and Winant posit was not a total success. This is in agreement with the assessment from Delgado (2012). Omi and Winant borrow Antonio Gramsci's term of "racial hegemony" to argue:

that while certain goals of the civil rights movement were met, the more ambitious goals of economic equality and political power for racial minorities (goals that Winant identifies with the "radical democracy" racial project were actively resisted. Political conservatives affirmed the principle of racial equality, but reinterpreted (or "rearticulated") it to mean the establishment of "color-blind" policies by government and other institutions and an emphasis on individual rights (Alumkal, p. 197).

One of the strengths that this researcher saw with the use of RFT was a framework that gives the ability to address the propensity for black students, or any minority for that matter, to forego their cultural norms to succeed.

One situation that the Christian university must be on guard against is what is referred to as the false paradigm effect. Adel Abadeer (2009) explains that, based on a combination of false perceptions and ignorance, the false paradigm effect is a belief by a dominant people group in society that their way is best because of an apparent superiority in their institutions. To combat this paradigm, Norman Peart (2000) suggests that Christian institutions do a regular inventory of their practices toward the goal of doing the things that they do even better, but also toward an understanding that their "way" is not the only way or the exclusive way that things should be done.

Considering these two paradigms, D.A. Horton (2019) writes on interethnic relationships saying, "I entered into evangelical Christian Higher Education to build such relationships because Christian higher academia was not pursuing my world or me. I patiently endured forced assimilation to gain trust, so my outsider perspective could be heard" (Horton, 2019, p. 151).

The aforementioned examples point to Christian settings, but the same scenarios are played out in secular environments. Amy Wilkins (2012) uses the term “moderate blackness” in describing a practical tool that black men in a university setting can use to make their personalities seem less threatening and their experiences more palatable. In clarifying the term, Wilkins writes, “Moderate blackness has three components: restrained, positive emotional standards; a temperate approach to black politics; and the ability to get along with white people” (Wilkins, 2012, p. 41). The researcher heard similar rhetoric as he spoke with an expert panel and later craftily posed questions to the research participants, intending to identify evidence of moderate blackness at work.

The researcher suggests that moderate blackness may inadvertently lead to moderate effort toward changes by the dominant group within an institution, because there is not a real pressure for them to go harder and deeper. Joel Perez (2013) speaks to this suggesting that secular and Christian institutions may lean toward quick fixes through programs that ultimately do not get to the heart of the issues and lead to real change. To effect lasting change, Perez encourages building a framework that is clearly and strategically linked to mission, history, and culture where forward progress can be visibly measured.

In looking at RFT and assessing the work of Omi and Winant, Sundiata Cha-Jua (2021) identifies five strengths of the theory as follows:

1. The researchers show that racial situations are based on situations and cannot be known beforehand.
2. Context plays a necessary role in the study of race relations.
3. The role of government is not overlooked in the conversation of racial formation.
4. There is an identifiable difference between the terms race from racism.

5. There is no doubt that societal agencies possess privilege which impacts the racial struggles defined in their research.

Weaknesses of RFT

While identifying these strengths, Cha-Jua (2021), who posits a similar theory called Black Racial Formation Theory, quickly points out several deficiencies of RFT, several of which are directly obverse to the aforementioned strengths. First, he states that Omni and Winant used broad strokes to posit their thoughts on racial formation without getting into case-by-case situations. Second, he finds that their research is too focused on the decade of the 1960s. Finally, they focus too much on the role of the state.

Religious Racial Formation Theory

Keying in on the thoughts of the role of the state, the researcher found that, even more relevant than Cha-Jua's thoughts on Black Racial Formation Theory, was a sub-theory posited by Sameer Yadav called Religious Racial Formation Theory (RRFT). Yadav (2019) writes from the perspective that, to understand American history as it relates to race, one must understand world history as it relates to race and that starts with an understanding of biblical history as it relates to race. Providing foundation, Yadav traces the history of Christianity -- most interestingly, exploring a theological movement from anti-Judaism to a race-based anti-Semitism. Ultimately, Yadav points out that a fundamental difficulty with RFT is its focus on political processes as foundational. Through his research, he completes the concept of RRFT with religion as its foundation. Hence, while the researcher found that the strengths of the RFT provided a satisfactory theoretical frame from which to work, the religious components of RRFT provided some thought-provoking academic and scientific components which the researcher addressed in Chapter 5.

Related Literature

In considering that theoretical framework, as the researcher looked at related literature; one of the key components, based on Cha-Jua's deficiencies, was a review that considered historical literature as well as more recent material. The researcher desired to approach this subject as it related to the church and Christian academia. Simultaneously, the interplay of these groups as they operate in society as a whole was paramount. As such, the review of related literature considered these three perspectives.

There was an abundance of literature dealing with the subject of reconciliation. Some of it was spiritual, some practical, and some of it political. There was often not a clear-cut method for examining the subject, as most researchers look at the topic from more than one angle because it is difficult, if not impossible to separate the different paradigms.

The Church Atmosphere

John Perkins, a foremost advocate of reconciliation says that the difficulty with overcoming the lack of reconciliation in both our country and in our churches is the minds of man. Man is trying to scheme ways to tackle an issue that is too big for him outside the power of the Holy Spirit. Referencing G.K. Chesterton, Perkins continues that to move toward a solution, man has to first acknowledge that there is an actual problem (Perkins, 2018).

McMurtrie (2016), in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, looks at the problem through a slightly different lens. In examining how scholars of religion see race, she comments that black and white evangelicals diagnose the problem of racism in significantly different ways. She says black evangelicals see a systemic issue and whites see the issue as marked by individual behavior. Because of this vantage point, it leads to different conversations on race and justice in society. McMurtrie adds that, as black

evangelicals hear white evangelicals speak of racial unity in oneness rhetoric, it hinders discussion because the black Christians find it dismissive of their different experiences. McMurtrie's thoughts are echoed by Joel Perez who takes an in-depth look at diversity as a mission. Perez says that how the church and Christian academia have approached race has often been unproductive toward meaningful dialogue (Perez, 2013).

The question that this researcher posited was, if this is indeed an accurate assessment of the state of the Church, what has been the training and nurturing of the would-be Christian college students in terms of racial reconciliation before they matriculate to college campuses across the United States? And what effect did their education have on pre-conceived notions?

The Recent University Climate

According to reports, colleges and universities reported 1,250 hate crimes in 2016. That number marked an increase of nearly 300 crimes over the previous four-year average. Among those numbers, the most prevalent crimes reported were those connected to race, which accounted for 40 percent of the hate crimes that were reported. Another statistic related to this study is the fact that 19 percent of the hate crimes were connected to the victims' religious affiliation (Bauman, 2018).

While it is interesting to consider the atmosphere that exists for Christian students on secular campuses, for this research, it is an understanding of the Christian campus that is key. A recent article entitled, "The Countercultural Idea of a Christian University," captures the conflicting paradigms of the secular and spiritual lanes of academia. In summarizing the secular university, McAllister and Yuengert (2019) write that universities have been forcefully tied to a centralized power of states which has resulted in homogeneity. In the authors' estimation, the secular university has lost its reason for existence and has been rendered into an institution

specializing in conformity. They express hope for transformative Christian institutions that operate against the grain, developing mature individuals who represent and foster an alternate ideological reality.

As it relates to race issues on campus, particularly between blacks and whites, historian Edward Carson (2015) writes that conversations of color should start in the classroom, being facilitated by faculty who reflect the student body. Carson continues, reflecting that after the civil rights movement, secular universities immediately began developing and introducing courses and programs in African American studies. However, though many white evangelicals recognized there was an error in relationships between blacks and whites, they were unwilling to address the divide in Christian academic settings. Abadeer (2009) agrees, stating that Christian schools should address and celebrate diversity because it is a purposeful part of God's design.

Best Literature Sources

The most comprehensive work that this researcher found that speaks to the same issues that the researcher is addressing is a book entitled, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Civil Rights 1954-1995*. The work was derived from a dissertation by Southern Baptist Seminary graduate, David Roach. In the book, Roach does a thorough job examining the early history of the Southern Baptist Seminaries, as well as situations that may have prevented more success as it relates to integration and minority matriculation, particularly as it relates to black students.

In back-to-back chapters, Roach addresses: "The Experiences of Southern Baptist Seminaries and Colleges" and "African Americans and Southern Baptists." In the former chapter, Roach highlights the work of T.B. Maston, who encouraged Emmanuel McCall, one of the black trailblazers for the SBC in the 1970s, to use the SBC's mantra to his advantage. Maston

writes, “As you know, there isn’t anything more convicting to Baptists, black and white, than “Thus saith the Bible”” (Roach, 2021, p, 76).

Roach then takes the reader down a trail, examining early attempts at addressing race relations in the seminaries. Roach reveals that it was Southwestern Seminary, with an early interest in social gospel concerns, that led the way for the SBC with Maston as the most influential person in that arena. Southwestern began educating black students in a night school program in May of 1941. Southwestern offered only extension classes originally but, in November of 1950, the trustees of the seminary voted to approve admission for graduates of senior colleges. Southwestern graduated its first two black students in 1955. While this is encouraging, the reality is that, in 1959, almost twenty years after the first black student matriculated to Southwestern, the entirety of the six Southern Baptist seminaries only had 21 black students.

Meanwhile, Southern Seminary offered the first race relations course of any of the Southern Baptist seminaries in 1918, admitted their first black seminarians in 1942, with Garland Offutt completing his Master of Theology degree in 1944. The black students initially attended separate classes but, in 1951, began attending the same classes with the other students -- albeit from the back of the classrooms. In the mid-1960s, Southern hired a full-time staff person for the specific role of recruiting black students. This activity went on for two years and increased Southern’s black population from about 15 to between 25 and 30. Southern’s president at the time blamed the small increase on competition with northern seminaries that were offering students full scholarships as opposed to equality in admissions.

Beginning in 1969, Southern started conversations with Emmanuel McCall about establishing a program for black church studies. In 1970, McCall became a visiting professor for

black church studies. That morphed into a five-class rotation. By the 1980-81 academic year, Southern had fifty black students. Southern's enrollment remained strong until the mid-1990s, when Roach attributed a drop in numbers to the cutting of the African American scholarship program and perceptions of racist administrators by the black community (Roach, 2021).

In the chapter entitled "African Americans and Southern Baptists", Roach examines this attitude from the vantage point of the black students and staff. T. Vaughn Walker, who was hired as the first full-time black professor in 1986, recalls his time as a student in the mid-1980s. At the time, Walker says there were a couple hundred black students on campus. In 2008, he said there was a tremendous decrease. Walker did not attribute the decrease to a theological difference in association with the conservative resurgence of the SBC. In fact, he felt that many of the black students, who were theologically conservative, were a bit worried about the liberal theological leanings that they saw. Instead, Walker attributed the enrollment decrease to political factors such as inappropriate ties to the Republican Party as well as economic factors such as the scholarship decrease, which in conjunction with other seminary opportunities caused many black students that were not part of the SBC to seek more attractive financial situations (Roach, 2021).

One other relatively recent work that speaks to several of the components of the current research is *Removing the Stain of Racism from the Southern Baptist Convention*. The book is edited by two black scholars, Jarvis Williams and Kevin Jones, who both have a connection to the Southern Baptist Seminaries. The work itself is a combination of essays by seminary presidents, pastors, and professors -- both black and white. A strength of this work is that it is current in both its publishing date as well as the issues that it confronts.

The work begins with a collection of 21 of the 31 resolutions on race that have come forward in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention. This is a reminder that the

conversation of race has been front and center in the convention, not only in its founding but throughout its history. This book is most interesting because of the raw biographical truths of the contributors. As it relates to this research, Williams shared the difficulties of growing up bi-racial in small-town Kentucky. There were many unfortunate incidents that he experienced. Yet, it was in the midst of a tragedy that resulted in the loss of a friend, that a white Southern Baptist Church was instrumental in not only leading Williams to Christ but discipling him. Knowing where people come from helps to speak to where they are and what they bring to the table (Williams and Jones, 2017).

As it relates to this research, the chapter by Kevin Jones, who taught at Boyce College on the campus of Southern, is most closely related. In his chapter, Jones offers 11 educational steps toward removing the stain of racism. Those steps include: reading books by black and brown writers, being aware of black scholars, reforming the seminary curriculum, and funding scholarships for minority students (Williams and Jones, 2017).

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Another necessary component of this research was examining how Christian universities were faring beside their secular counterparts. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) is a group made up of 110 evangelical colleges. Based on analysis from *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, a trend of black students shunning such schools seemed to be changing, as several Protestant colleges recorded marked increases in black student enrollment over a 10-year period from 1997-2007 (Redden, 2008).

Among the schools chronicled specifically was New York City's now-defunct Nyack College, where the 10-year gain was 20 percent. David Turk, Nyack's Provost and VP for Academic Affairs at the time, attributed the initial explosion of the black student population to

opening a campus in New York City. But Turk found that the trend expanded beyond the initial explosion and that black students had matriculated to Nyack from across the country because of their reputation. That number in 2017 was holding steady at 30 percent (Redden, 2008).

Among other CCCU schools, there was an improvement overall. From 2007-2008, the enrollment of black students was 9.73%. That number increased to 11.05% in 2017-2018, according to the Spring 2020 edition of the CCCU magazine. However, that number was still behind the 12% black student enrollment in public universities at the same time (Nam, 2020).

Ultimately, the researcher suggests more in-depth studies examining how minority faculty numbers influence student numbers and, vice versa, how student numbers affect faculty numbers. One Pew Research study shows that only 5% of all postsecondary faculty members were Hispanic in 2017. This is compared with 20% of Hispanic undergraduates. The numbers for black postsecondary faculty members versus the black undergraduate population were worse at 6% vs. 14% respectively. The same study shows a similar imbalance in K-12 public schools (Davis & Fry, 2019). If this is the case, the researcher posits that studies and programs encourage minority university students to more strongly consider educational fields. Pete Menjares, Senior Fellow for Diversity for the CCCU, declares a need to make the multiculturalism mindset a philosophical mission that is not something the schools do but ultimately who the schools are (Longman, 2017).

Before closing, Nyack College had become known as one of the most diverse colleges in the country -- that also happened to be Christian. Turk detailed the infancy stages of that transformation which began with the 1989 hiring of a Latino admissions counselor. That counselor began recruiting black and Latino students in New York City which ultimately fostered the aforementioned reputation for diversity at Nyack that drew minority students from

across the country. When all was said and done, including that recruiter being promoted to director of admissions, Nyack was 15 percent Asian American, 30 percent black, 30 percent Hispanic, and 20 percent white. (Longman, 2017)

Turk made it clear that the transformation did not come without some setbacks, but five principles helped to provide the guardrails for the change. Those principles were: leading, engaging, linking, partnering, and assessing. These terms all have their own definitions but, for this study, “partnering” is the principle that most resonated with this researcher. This partnering looked like an immersive connection between the school and the church community. Turk shared how Nyack’s partnering program involved connecting with four New York City churches. That connection was not just Turk talking about the vision; the entire Nyack leadership team showed up at vision-casting luncheons hosted by those churches. This partnership not only provided diverse students but also provided diverse faculty recruited from the church community (Longman, 2017).

Rationale for the Study

Reflecting on the arrival of 20 African slaves at Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia on August 25, 1619, Bishop Claude Alexander, Jr. remarked in 2019 how sobering it was to consider how long that racism has been a part of the fabric of this country. Alexander calculated that this landing of slaves predated the birth of George Washington by 113 years, meaning that Washington and other founding fathers were born into a country that was already steeped in slavery. Beyond that, Alexander continued giving weight to the significance of racism, and calculated the number of years since the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, pointing toward the shortness of this period to explain why the residual effect of racism continues (Alexander, Jr, et al., 2019). For this researcher, Bishop Alexander’s assessment of history and the present

adequately summarizes the educational paradigm in which the nation currently finds itself.

However, as Alexander makes clear, this is not a point at which American education arrived overnight.

Educator Daniel Payne was born in 1811. Early in his life, Payne concluded that access to knowledge was the difference that existed between the slave and the master, but that education was the leveling factor. Armed with this information, Payne began to pursue education at age 19. Payne, who would become a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal church remained true to that educational calling, becoming a founding trustee at Wilberforce University in Ohio (Sernett, 1985). In reminiscing on the school's opening, Payne said it was for "the Christian education of a race, a race then enslaved and ostracized by Christians in a so-called Christian land, and that, too, in the name of Christianity" (Sernett, 1985, p. 248).

Payne's sentiment was echoed nearly 50 years later by historian Carter G. Woodson.

Woodson opined:

In schools of theology Negroes are taught the interpretation of the Bible worked out by those who have justified segregation and winked at the economic debasement of the Negro sometimes almost to the point of starvation. Deriving their sense of right from this teaching, graduates of such schools can have no message to grip the people whom they have been ill trained to serve. Most of such mis-educated ministers, therefore, preach to benches while illiterate Negro preachers do the best they can in supplying the spiritual needs of the masses. (Woodson, 1933, p. 9)

In light of Woodson's words, the researcher contemplates whether those thoughts are historic or indicative of a 21st-century paradigm.

Gap in the Literature

For this researcher, the primary gap in the literature relates to the fact that, while many scholars in the Christian community are willing to address the historical difficulties that existed as it relates to race relations, many of the same miss the elements that suggest this remains a

contemporary issue. In late 2017, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Al Mohler, commissioned a report that would come to be called the *Report on Slavery and Racism in the History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*. Shortly after its publication, Emory University professor Alison Collis Greene was asked to give her thoughts on the report. Greene (2019) recalls giving a quick cursory response to the reporter who had reached out to her but, after reading the entire report, she wrote a 24-tweet thread. This series of tweets led to her doing some in-depth research. Before getting into the core of her research, Greene took time to recount her deeper connection to the story. She recalled her father being the bi-vocational pastor of a small Southern Baptist Church and, while in seminary, her parents had left a white church because members had padlocked the church playground to keep the blacks in the community out.

In assessing the Southern Baptist Seminary report, Greene feels that the report ends abruptly. She explains that, while the report does a good job of confronting the real history of the SBC and Southern Seminary, it is presented in a way that expresses a distance between that history and the present. She says that the report is an indictment on the founders but relieves the current administration of any responsibility. The question Greene is asking is, how close is Mohler to James Boyce -- founder of the seminary? Greene points out “that Mohler ascended to the presidency in 1993 and immediately reinstated founder and enslaver James P. Boyce’s Abstract of Principles as a test of faculty orthodoxy. Mohler either fired or pushed out faculty who failed to live up to Boyce’s legacy” (Greene, 2019, p. 50).

Most recently, as elaborated on in the Theoretical Framework of this chapter, Mohler was at the forefront of leading six SBC seminary presidents condemning CRT. To this, Rev. Marshal Ausberry, first vice president of the SBC and president of the National African American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention responded:

Especially for those of us who have experienced the brunt of systemic racism in our daily lives, our seminary presidents are good men and they had good intent, but the optics of six Anglo brothers meeting to discuss racism and other related issues without having ethnic representation in the room in 2020, at worst it looks like paternalism, at best insensitivity. The only outcome can be from their life experience, which ignores the broader family of Southern Baptists. (Banks, 2020)

Ausberry's assessment is not unlike similar assessments that the researcher heard from the participants in the study.

For this researcher, the gap in the literature is most clearly framed by Alan Willis. In his book, *According to God's Plan*, Willis' stated goal is to "pursue Southern Baptists and racism from the missionaries' perspectives" (Willis, 2005, p. x). Willis communicates that he was raised in a family that was very much against racism but, while he was not naïve to the fact that racism existed, he was not often in contact with either racist individuals or overtly racial environments until he matriculated to Emory University in Atlanta. There, the author would do an independent study that led to his master's thesis on Georgia Baptists and desegregation. That thesis led to his dissertation and ultimately the book (Willis, 2005).

In the penultimate chapter of his book, Willis tells the story of a church in Florida. The year was 1962 and the church's membership was struggling with the thought of integration. In light of the conflict, one church member shared that she had grown up with a prejudiced mindset which she directly attributed to what she was taught by her parents. She had decided that she did not want to be responsible for her children learning racist tendencies (Willis, 2005).

Interestingly, this lady connected the stance that the church would take with being capable of not only influencing her children but also teaching them. She realized that though she may not espouse such views in her home, the ideological education her children received could also come from the philosophy of the church they attended.

Willis gave another account of John Jeffers Jr., who graduated from Auburn University in 1965. Jeffers, who like Willis, grew up in a home that did not espouse racism, stated it was his responsibility to have his “mind and heart in tune with God and look to Him for guidance rather than follow the leadership of the crowd” (Willis, 2005, p. 184).

Jeffers’ father, also named John Jeffers, pastored First Baptist Auburn from 1958 to 1986. In an article published in the *Auburn Villager* shortly after the elder Jeffers’ death, the writer shares several accounts of how the elder Jeffers operated as both a pastor and a teacher. One account discussed how he handled the time that one of his sons chose to serve as a student leader in the anti-Vietnam movement on Auburn’s campus. Jeffries supported his son while also supporting Auburn’s president who was for the war and also a member of his church. The writer wrote of John affirming women in ministry in the SBC and being a vocal supporter of African Americans in the convention. In numerous conflicts in the convention, the writer identifies John as one who educated his congregation (Flynt, 2008).

While Willis looked at race and the Southern Baptist Convention through the eyes of their mission program, this researcher suggests that there is a dearth of research on the effect of education on racism, particularly to examine the impact that intentional Christian education could have on racism. In the last few pages of his book, Willis makes the point that the Southern Baptist Convention’s reputation for its racially conservative nature during this era was not deserved. Willis explains that, while the congregations themselves were conservative, the denominational leadership and the missionaries were much less so. As a possible explanation, Willis writes, “some can be explained by pointing to the higher levels of education among the leadership. The leadership held a more global view of events and ideologies than many in the congregations” (Willis, 2005, p. 197).

This researcher suggests that there have been programs and initiatives that might lay the groundwork for research or further programs, such as the 1995 apology issued by the Southern Baptist Convention and the 2018 report commissioned by Southern Seminary on their racist past. However, it seems that actual programs or tangible follow-ups at the seminaries are lacking. This researcher posits that the gap in the research that needs to be filled are studies that explore what happened within evangelicalism in the era following Civil Rights legislation and the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

There were white voices who spoke biblical truth to racism, like Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor T.B. Maston. Maston is a name that is revered and celebrated in Southern Baptist circles for the work he did through Southwestern Seminary toward racial reconciliation in the lives of students and the church. Maston (1959) was not unaware of the mindset that existed around him, nor was he unwilling to call it out. He wrote of those who tried to use Bible passages to keep the black man permanently submissive to and inferior to the white man in both humanity and societal status. Similarly, Maston's contemporary, Frank Stagg wrote,

It is possible that future historians may declare the irony of ironies – that in the middle of the twentieth century, fight promoters and baseball managers did more for emancipating the Negro than did the churchmen. To say that these have done it for money removes none of the sting. For it is a humiliation if a pagan for money affects good which a Christian fails to affect for love. (Stagg, 1955, p. 124)

At the same time, there were black conservative voices like John Perkins and Tom Skinner saying many of the same things. Perkins and Skinner felt that if evangelical Christianity operated correctly, it would speak to issues of racial justice and, in so doing, connect with those inside and outside the evangelical camp (Alumkal, 2004). The problem has been a gap in the joining together of these voices. Tom Skinner has passed. Perkins, still fighting the fight, is now in his nineties. Maston, perhaps the greatest voice of reason within the SBC in the twentieth

century, was ultimately silenced before his death by those who did not agree with his message. In a review of a recent work on the life of Maston, Nathan Finn (2022) writes that Matson was pushed into an early retirement because of his racial views.

This writer would posit that not much, if any, has been written or researched on the educators that took the mantle from Maston. There were those who immediately followed Maston or his contemporaries whom he directly influenced, including Henlee Barnette, Foy Valentine, and Clarence Jordan. But were there people in Southern Baptist circles that pushed or continued to emphasize the biblical side of the fight in the aftermath of the national legislation that affected or was implemented to affect secular change?

If not, what is the effect on the culture of Christian nationalism, patriotism and heightened political partisanship -- not just in the church, but on the racial culture of the Christian university and seminary campus? While this research was more directly focused on theological culture and teaching at these locales, this researcher posits that the day-to-day relational component of the seminary experience is a subset of the holistic person that cannot be separated. There has been a growing body of literature on this recent phenomenon, but this researcher posits that the dots have not been connected to make the point that this culture has existed for quite some time. If such a culture has existed, at what cost has it been to black students at Southern Baptist Seminaries specifically?

Profile of the Current Study

Throughout this work, the researcher has viewed conflicts between people that have been present since the beginning of time. The researcher has documented biblical conflicts between Isaac and Ishmael, the Egyptians and Israelites, and the Samaritans and Jews. In this offering, the conflict examined is between blacks and whites, but more specifically between black Christians

and white Christians. Biblical scholars have discussed this conflict – as have secular scholars — regarding the races as a whole with both offering solutions. However, the divides remain. As such, because there is still a problem, this researcher would posit that there is still a need for research to be conducted that addresses the problem and offers solutions.

This study examined two existing partnerships, one that has been quite successful and one that has floundered and continues to flounder. The first is a partnership between the local church and Christian academia. The second partnership is between black pastors and those same academic spaces, specifically Southern Baptist Seminaries.

According to Jason Allen (2015), the SBC's *raison d'être* from its founding was its missionary efforts. But a close second to that goal was theological education and fathers of the convention pushed for a common theological institution. In an 1856 address at Furman University, James Boyce called for a paradigm in Christian education that would produce a significant number of well trained, theologically sound pastors. Southern Seminary was founded three years later and, for the next 50 years, was the only Southern Baptist seminary. The second seminary that emerged was Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Southwestern emerged as a byproduct of Baylor University. In the ensuing years, Southwestern's success, enrollment and influence rivaled that of Southern. Meanwhile, from 1945-1960, the four other seminaries came on board as follows: New Orleans (1946), Golden Gate (1946), Southeastern (1950), and Midwestern (1957).

Not unlike the reputation of universities in general, Allen says that Southern Baptist Seminaries fell victim to liberalism and increasing divides developed between the seminaries and the churches in the convention over various areas of doctrine. However, in Allen's estimation, a period known as the Conservative Resurgence, which started in 1979, was responsible for

righting the ship of not just the convention, but the seminaries. This resurgence saw Adrian Rogers elected as SBC president and ultimately saw the adoption of the Baptist Faith and Message. Allen fast-forwards to 2015, stating that “theological education in the SBC is in many ways where it started in 1859, with uniformly conservative seminaries serving the convention’s churches” (Allen, 2015, final para.).

While Allen’s article is very positive and speaks quite knowledgably to the organizational body studied in this work, what Allen does not address is the conversation of race in the historical and present day-to-day life of these seminaries. The current study looks at the lived experiences of black seminary students who attended these schools between 1990 and 2020. The study examines professor-to-peer relationships, peer-to-peer relationships, and general day-to-day experiences while at the seminary and how those experiences have played a role in the pastors’ lives following the seminary experience. It was not important to the researcher that the pastors interviewed be pastors of Southern Baptist churches. What was important was their lived experiences and how those experiences shaped and continue to shape their ministry.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter looks at methodology, research instruments, and techniques that were employed for this dissertation that focused on the potential for black pastors who matriculated to predominantly white institutions to positively speak into the issues of reconciliation that exist in Christianity in America today, particularly as it relates to the local church and Christian higher education. The study looked at the pastors' past experiences at Southern Baptist seminaries and examined how those day-to-day experiences, personal and academic, affect their present ministry.

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Today's local American church, as it has been historically, remains racially divided. The researcher hypothesized that the division that exists in the local church is an overflow of what exists in Christian academia, as university after university and seminary after seminary have populations -- as well as faculty and staff -- that are largely homogenous in their racial makeup.

Beginning in the late 1960s, a number of African American evangelicals came forward with what they saw as the solution to the racial problems plaguing the United States. Their main argument was that only through the common lordship of Christ was reconciliation between races possible. Proponents of this theology drew upon New Testament passages proclaiming that Jews and Gentiles had become one body in Christ (e.g., Ephesians 2:11-22 and Galatians 3:28) and argued that the same unity was possible for blacks and whites. (Alumkal, 2014, p. 198)

The researcher posited that the problems which existed in the 1960s still exist today. This researcher believes the key to any tangible answers is through the church and Christian higher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perception of preparedness for multiracial ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs). The theory guiding this study was Racial Formation Theory (Omi & Winant, 2015). This theory views race as being a socially constructed paradigm that is manipulated by political, social, and economic forces.

Research Questions

RQ1. How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?

RQ2. How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?

RQ3. How did the training received by black senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they've rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?

RQ4. How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially, and emotionally and if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?

Research Design and Methodology

The researcher conducted a qualitative study with a research design that was phenomenological. Qualitative research has its foundation in examining methods that are not statistical, but instead provide analysis of phenomena that are social in nature. A core component of qualitative research is its various forms of social inquiry. Immy Holloway (1997) suggests that, at the core, qualitative research is the interpretation of individuals'

social reality. While there are many avenues one might take within qualitative research, the usual factors that are interpreted include behavior, perspectives, and experiences.

While researchers pursuing a qualitative approach can lean toward hermeneutical, sociological, or phenomenological techniques (Malterud, 2001), this research employed phenomenology. Linda Finlay's (2012) thoughts on phenomenological research communicate this researcher's goals. She states that the phenomenological researcher desires to tangibly understand what has been experienced by the participants of a given study. She further delves into the essence of phenomenological research stating:

that the essence of the phenomenological research approach encompasses five mutually dependent and dynamically iterative processes: (a) embracing the phenomenological attitude, (b) entering the lifeworld (through descriptions of experiences), (c) dwelling with horizons of implicit meanings, (d) explicating the phenomenon holistically, and (e) integrating frames of reference. (Finlay, 2012, p. 172)

The researcher employed semi-structured interviews and an expert panel. Semi-structured interviews, according to one duo of researchers, provide many useful opportunities. Melissa DeJonckheere and Lisa Vaughn (2019) state, that the nature and model of the method allow the researcher to get beneath the surface of the data that is collected and hone in on participants' feelings and beliefs on the subject being explored. The researcher often has an opportunity to mine some deeply held personal thoughts.

Setting

The setting for this study was virtual. The virtual expert panel was recruited from a group of pastors who are part of the Baptist Fellowship Association (BFA). These pastors are primarily physically located in midwestern, eastern, and southern US states.

The second group of participants was black senior pastors overseeing congregations across the United States. These pastors were graduates of six Southern Baptist Seminaries. Again, because of the flexibility afforded by the medium, these interviews were all conducted virtually.

Participants

The BFA is a predominantly black church organization with national headquarters in the Midwestern United States. The organization was founded in the early 1960s by a group of black pastors who had graduated from PWIs and were not welcome for fellowship in theologically similar white fellowships. While there was theological agreement with the white pastors, the founders of the BFA attributed the inability to connect with predominantly white fellowships to race. Meanwhile, the pastors of the BFA faced an inability to connect theologically with similar black organizations at the time. This paradigm is akin to what the researcher posited might be articulated by many of the participants in this study.

The second and primary group of participants were black pastors who graduated from one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries. Those seminaries listed alphabetically are:

- Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (Mill Valley, CA)
- Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Kansas City, MO)
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (New Orleans, LA)
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Wake Forest, NC)
- Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY)
- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Fort Worth, TX)

To serve as interview subjects, these former students needed to be black, have attained at least a Master of Divinity, and be currently serving in the role of a senior pastor. The researcher's

desired sample size for this purposefully sampled group was three per seminary for a total of 18. Palinkas et al., (2015), referencing Patton and Creswell, explained that purposeful sampling is often used in qualitative studies with limited resources. The sampling involves identifying specific individuals who have knowledge of or experience with a particular phenomenon. While the researcher hoped to get 18 participants, he was ultimately able to achieve 10. However, the 10 participants were inclusive of all six of the seminaries.

Though the researcher did not achieve the desired number of participants, based on the evaluation and analysis of the interviews that were obtained, saturation was reached. The researcher based this on the explanation provided by Fuss and Ness (2015), who first stated that smaller studies achieve saturation quicker than larger studies. According to the researchers, saturation is achieved when coding of additional information is no longer feasible because the new information is saying the same thing as the existing information and therefore continually replicating existing codes.

Role of the Researcher

Any dissertation brought forth is not done so in a vacuum. There is always going to be an individual behind the research that is the driving force. This researcher resonates with the mindset that, “For any researcher, the starting point for research must be articulation of his or her research worldview” (Austin & Sutton, 2014, p. 437).

The researcher worked as a professional journalist for ten years and developed the ability to listen to responses to questions and then feed the responses into more meaningful follow-up questions from the given responses. The researcher believed that this skill, in combination with existing relationships with a few of the expert panel participants, would allow for deep conversations which, in turn, could deliver a great research instrument.

As it relates specifically to this topic, the researcher is an ordained pastor who has worked in the field of higher education for the last eleven years, after serving on the staff of a church of about 700 members for 10 years before that. The researcher's life experiences have given him the mindset that racial differences need not limit or define human interactions, particularly within the body of Christ, if we are operating with the mind of Christ.

At the time of this project, the researcher served as one of the directors of spiritual student leaders on the campus of one of the largest Christian universities in the world. As such, he had a keen awareness of the spiritual, racial, and political climate that existed on the campus. As made clear in the problem statement, the researcher felt that the issue of racism in America is deeply embedded in both the church and Christian academia.

While research bias is possible in any context, in light of his personal experiences, the researcher was keenly aware that there was a heightened need to be on guard against sharing personal difficulties with the respondents and presenting leading questions in an effort to steer the conversation toward a desired end.

Research Bias

One technique that the researcher employed to guard against such bias was bracketing. Bracketing is used in qualitative research to control the effects that might surface through possible preconceptions. Effective bracketing also allows the researcher to do a deeper dive into all areas of the project, thus allowing for more substantive findings (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Practically speaking, the researcher was aware and was reminded of the potential for research bias and took multiple steps to avoid this very real phenomenon. Once someone becomes involved in a field for any length of time, whether that is professional, academic, legal, or – as in this researcher's case -- spiritual, they begin to find that the field shrinks considerably.

It does not take long in a casual conversation with a previously known or newly acquainted peer to start finding that there are other people in the field that are common to each other. With the length of time that the researcher had been a part of pastoral ministry, this was the case. As such, the researcher thought it important to first limit, as much as possible, interviewing participants that he knew relatively or very well. Of the ten participants that were interviewed, the researcher only knew two of them beforehand and only one relatively well.

Second, the researcher made use of the expert panel to refine the questionnaire instrument. While the researcher knew three of the four panel participants quite well, in this case, the researcher did not see this as a problem. The researcher trusted that the pastors had shared similar experiences and could help him craft an instrument that got to some root issues on the subject. The researcher went through the entire instrument with the panel, asking them all the questions. While none of this group of pastors had been to Southern Baptist seminaries, three of the four had been to PWIs, so they had familiarity with the day-to-day life of education in these spaces. The panel answered the questions but then gave feedback on how to clean up a few of the questions for better conversations. While this was a semi-structured interview and while the researcher gave himself leeway to rephrase questions or switch question order for conversational purposes, the researcher stuck to a prepared script during the participant interviews. Because the researcher had gone through this script with the expert panel to help remove any material that leaned toward potential bias, sticking to the questions helped to maintain that integrity.

Finally, the researcher believed in the extreme relevance of addressing this topic, as it has plagued our country since before its inception. The researcher had a team of people praying for him regularly, that this was not or did not become research that was about him, but research that was about furthering the kingdom of God. The researcher took time to update this team and, on

occasions, vent frustrations to them. More importantly, the researcher took time to do some journaling sessions as a way of getting with God. These sessions allowed for decompressing and refocusing.

Ethical Considerations

In *Designing and Managing a Research Project*, the book authors suggest six ethical areas to consider as a researcher: voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, the potential for harm, and communicating the results (Polonsky & Waller, 2004). The first factor that this researcher considered as it related to the pastors in this study was the potential for harm.

The researcher realized that some of the pastors may have experienced some difficult interactions in their seminary experience that they had never addressed. Similarly, this conversation may have highlighted the difficulty that some of the pastors were currently dealing with as they processed the state of race relations in this country and perhaps even things that they were dealing with in their congregations. Understanding the possible psychosocial impact on the pastors, the researcher had specific counselors to refer the pastors to as needed.

In terms of the interviews with the pastors, the researcher made it clear that they were not anonymous, as this is not a possibility in a face-to-face interview setting. However, the researcher gave clarity before the interviews of the steps that were taken to protect the subjects' confidentiality. This included giving a pseudonym to each of the pastors who were interviewed.

Similarly, with the pastors who were part of the expert panel, the researcher made it clear that the name of their organization would be used. Though the pastors would not be identified individually for their role on the panel, the pastors were reminded and understood that it was a small organization and that they might be identified as ones who were a part of the expert panel.

All of the aforementioned concerns and opportunities for the participants were dictated by the terms set forth by the university's research procedures. Before contacting any potential participants, the researcher went through a rigorous multi-layered approval process with the university's Institutional Review Board. A copy of the interview questions (Appendix B) as well as a copy of the informed consent (Appendix C) was submitted as part of these materials. These documents, which the recipients saw beforehand, included all information on safety protocols as well as detailed information on their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time and detailed information on the steps taken to secure their data and the participant's identity.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

As this researcher was looking to examine the effects that attending predominantly white Southern Baptist seminaries had on the future ministry and personal relationships of current black senior pastors and, having examined the different types of assessment opportunities available, this researcher landed on using a phenomenological approach. This paradigm, particularly as it relates to human science research, noted psychologist Clark Moustakas states phenomenology is concerned with looking at a situation from many sides to gain a singular vision. Similarly, it looks for meaning and understanding through analysis of experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Similarly, Finlay (2012) states, that phenomenological research begins with a researcher's passion or desire to know. This, in turn, is developed into a question which is presented to participants whose experiential responses give the researcher a better understanding of the original question.

In this study, the researcher used a purposeful criterion sample to identify potential pastors. Using this technique, "the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they

can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The researcher specifically searched for black master’s degree graduates of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries.

Collection Methods

As previously noted, this researcher has had the benefit of exposure to numerous black pastors that make up the theologically conservative Baptist organization, BFA, which represents churches across the U.S., though predominantly in the Midwest and South. Each July, the member churches as well as pastors and some of the congregants of these churches come together for an annual meeting. The original goal of this researcher was to send an announcement to the president of the organization, asking him to read it to the pastors in one of their group sessions. Once the researcher received IRB approval, that initial announcement was to be followed up with written invitations to each of the pastors to participate in a virtual focus group. Because of the delay in getting IRB approval and with the timing of the annual conference coming and going, the researcher decided to instead do an expert panel with four pastors from the organization. This expert panel convened virtually in October 2021.

For the second group, the researcher depended on the alumni offices at each of the Southern Baptist seminaries, agreeing to send out an e-mail announcement to alumni that met the desired criteria. The interviews for those who agreed to participate were to be conducted virtually and be semi-structured. The researcher planned for the interviews to last approximately 60-75 minutes each. With previous consent from the pastors, the interviews were to be recorded digitally and also transcribed simultaneously.

Instruments and Protocols

For this qualitative project, the researcher employed the use of interviews and an expert panel. The actual panel was convened virtually. The format was semi-structured, with the researcher using the proposed questions for the semi-structured seminarian interview to steer the conversation.

The researcher believed that there was a benefit in having known three of the pastors as either contemporaries or in mentor-type relationships. The researcher further believed that a familial relationship from the outset encouraged the pastors to participate on the panel. Though there was an existing relationship, the researcher believed that the information that was given in requesting participation on the expert panel made clear the professional nature of the conversation and the weight of the subject matter. The researcher also gave preliminary guidance at the beginning of the panel that affirmed these details.

Interviews

After meeting with the expert panel, this researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the seminary pastors after their consent had been provided. Dr. Irving Seidman writes:

If the goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry. Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. (Seidman, 2005, p. 11)

The initial questions for the interviews were developed by the researcher individually and modified slightly as suggested by the expert panel that was conducted with a group of pastors from the Baptist Fellowship Association (BFA). The researcher believed that his background as a professional journalist would play well into the semi-structured interviews, allowing him to

listen well and to build in unscripted questions that flowed with the responses that were given by the pastors. (Appendix B)

Procedures

Before any research, all required documents were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. (Appendix C) With IRB approval came detailed consent forms. A form was emailed to each participant, and they were asked to give verbal consent to the form on the recording before each of their interviews commenced.

The BFA pastoral expert panel was allotted an hour and a half. The first few minutes were just casual conversation, thanking the pastors for participating. In the next few minutes, the researcher chronicled the journey that had brought him to this point. The remainder of the time with the expert panel focused on walking through the proposed questions that the researcher had generated for the semi-structured interviews.

As it relates to the interviews with pastors who are seminary graduates, all interviews were treated as professional appointments by the researcher. Care was taken to respect the respondents' time, by entering the virtual meetings on time for interviews, prepared and with all necessary equipment checked and ready. Each of the interviews lasted approximately 60-75 minutes. With previous consent from the pastors, the interviews were recorded digitally using the Microsoft Teams platform. The interviews were simultaneously transcribed by the Teams collaborative tool.

Care was taken to maintain the privacy of all respondents. This was done in numerous ways. First, the respondents were provided with pseudonyms before the interviews began. Second, in all documentation thereafter, the respondents were referred to in this manner. Finally, all data collected by the recipients was stored on a password-protected computer.

Data Analysis

In considering the analysis of the interviews obtained in phenomenological studies, researcher and consultant Stan Lester states:

The ‘problem’ for many researchers with phenomenological research is that it generates a large quantity of interview notes, tape recordings, jottings or other records all of which have to be analysed. Analysis is also necessarily messy, as data doesn’t tend to fall into neat categories and there can be many ways of linking between different parts of discussions or observations (Lester, 1999).

On the heels of ten interviews that each ran for no less than one hour, the researcher found Lester’s assessment very much on point, as the interviews yielded an enormous amount of data that required transcription, coding, and analysis.

Analysis Methods

The researcher used Tesch’s eight-step coding process (Table 1) to analyze the data.

Table 1

Tesch’s Eight-Step Coding Process

1. Read all the transcriptions carefully. Get a sense of the whole. Jot down ideas as they come to mind during reading.
2. Pick one document (i.e., one interview)—the most interesting one, the shortest, the one on the top of the pile. Go through it asking, “What is this about?” Do not think about the substance of the information but its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.
3. After completing this task for several participants, make a list of all topics. Cluster together similar topics. Form these topics into columns, perhaps arrayed as major, unique, and leftover topics.
4. Now take this list and go back to the data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. Try this preliminary organizing scheme to see if new categories and codes emerge.
5. Find the most descriptive wording for topics and turn them into categories. Look for ways of reducing the entire list of categories by grouping topics that relate to each other. Draw lines between your categories to show interrelationships.
6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.
7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.
8. If necessary, recode existing data.

(Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 196)

The researcher listened to each of the interviews multiple times. Typically, just after initially doing the interview, the researcher would take some notes in addition to notes that had been jotted down during the actual interview. Using the guidance from Tesch's step 2, after all the interviews had been done, the interviewer went back and chose the first interview conducted and listened to it, with the question of "What is this about?" in mind. The researcher next had the transcriptionist transcribe each of the seven interviews where transcription approval had been given by the participant. For the three interviews where approval was not received, the researcher handled transcriptions.

Transcription was not a ground-up process, but rather a cleanup process, as Microsoft Teams produced an initial transcription of the interviews. The researcher used another program called Podcastle that provided for further clarity and cleanup. Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher went through each one more time to make sure transcriptions were accurate.

The researcher initially considered using software to pull codes and did this for one interview, using Atlas.ti. The researcher found that it was not a very intuitive process. After trying to incorporate a second interview through the software process, the researcher decided that he had enough familiarity with the material to go through a process of hand coding. The researcher used the codes generated by the software as the springboard to the coding process.

The researcher then set up the transcription for all the interviews as if they had been conducted in a roundtable discussion; the transcription for all ten participants was divided up so that each interview question had the transcribed answers for the ten participants. Once the answers were in this format, the researcher completed the entirety of the coding for each of the questions. Ultimately, the researcher triple-coded the interviews for reliability.

Trustworthiness

In this qualitative study, the researcher used the standards of credibility, confirmability, and transferability to establish and show the trustworthiness of the research. According to Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985), having creditability, dependability, transferability, and confirmability incorporated in the research is key to a strong study. Throughout the study, the researcher used various strategies to ensure that trustworthiness is maintained.

Credibility

The first way that this researcher instituted credibility was by piloting the research interview questions with an expert panel prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews. This allowed the researcher to test the reliability of the questions through four pastors with similar backgrounds. The second step toward achieving credibility was by using a transcribing program and an actual transcriptionist for seven of the ten interviews where permission was granted. This allowed for two sets of eyes and ears to be used in verifying the content of material that was already transcribed. The third level of credibility was spent in the time with the pastors. Several pastors desired a conversation prior to the actual interview to get full clarity on the interview that would take place. The researcher readily accepted such conversations. The researcher also allotted ample time for each of the interviews, letting the pastors know up front to expect 60-75 minutes. Several of the pastors exceeded this time because of their desire to give honesty and depth to the conversation. Several of the pastors also verbalized their desire to give depth to the researcher, as they realized the importance of the subject being discussed. Finally, the researcher spent time in the analysis of the conversations, listening to each of the interviews in their entirety at least five times. Lincoln and Guba state, "If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304).

Dependability

Dependability is concerned with how stable the researcher's data is over time and how it translates to different conditions. In ensuring this dependability, it is important to clearly communicate the criteria used in selecting participants to allow future researchers to better consider transferability (Elo et al., 2014). Care was taken by this researcher to consider these parameters. For instance, though the researcher personally knew several pastors who fit the criteria to serve as participants, only one such pastor was chosen. The researcher believes that this kept the conversations on a more professional level and potentially offered richer responses. Another factor that the researcher considered was age. While it was difficult getting the number of participants needed, the researcher was mindful of having a general idea of the ages of pastors that were contacted, so there was a possibility of a good cross-section of ages. Third, the researcher determined that participants had to be found and interviewed from each of the six Southern Baptist seminaries. While this significantly lengthened the research process, it was non-negotiable for the researcher, as he found it important to test the research questions across the entire body of SBC seminaries.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the level of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not biased by the researcher's motivation or personal interest (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This can be seen as akin to objectivity as it relates to qualitative research. For further study on this topic, as well as clarification of various components of this study, this researcher will readily make available the data from this study for review by other researchers. Requests can be made via e-mail to the researcher at:

txxxx@xxx.xxx. Any limitations on availability will be communicated to those requesting on a case-by-case basis.

Transferability

This researcher posits that the results of this study allow for a significant amount of transferability. First, the pastors that were interviewed are serving at churches in every geographic area of the United States. Second, these pastors matriculated to seminaries in every geographic region of the country. Third, the pastors themselves come from or were raised in various areas of the country. The researcher also believes that this study allows for generalizability. Englander writes:

generalizability of the results is the goal, and generalizability need not rely upon statistics. Now, if one can achieve the goal of representativeness and generalizability from a small number of research participants, then a qualitative method such as phenomenology can meet this general scientific criterion as well as a statistically-based approach. (Englander, 2012, p. 20)

Finally, the pastors interviewed represent a diversity of ages which provides an opportunity to explore cross-generational dynamics that were present for the sake of similarities and differences.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three gave an overview of the research design used to give an understanding of the reconciliatory impact of black pastors who graduated from Southern Baptist Seminaries. Interview questions are explained in detail later, particularly as to how each lined up with specific research questions. Additionally, information was given on the setting of the study and the participants involved. The primary content of the chapter detailed methods used to collect the data as well as how this data was protected and analyzed. The chapter ended with detailed

thoughts on the trustworthiness of the data, examining credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perception of preparedness for multiracial ministry of current black senior pastors who had attended seminary-level PWIs. The seminaries were one of the six officially recognized institutions of the SBC that are administered by and receive funding from the convention. The study participants had to have obtained at least a Master of Divinity and currently be serving in the role of senior pastor at a church in America.

The researcher conducted a qualitative study, featuring semi-structured interviews with participants meeting these criteria, believing that their first-hand education, as well as day-to-day experiences in the institutions, would speak to the effectiveness of the training they received toward future multiracial ministry while at the seminary.

Four research questions provided the framework for this study:

RQ1. How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?

RQ2. How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?

RQ3. How did the training received by black senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they've rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?

RQ4. How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially and emotionally and if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?

The remainder of this chapter provides compilation protocol and measures, as well as the demographic and sample data, data analysis, and findings before wrapping up with an evaluation of the research design.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

In this section, the researcher first chronicles the steps taken in conducting interviews. This includes scheduling, follow-up, setup, and content. Next, the researcher walks through a detailed description of the transcription process, including information on the use of a transcriber. Finally, the researcher gives detailed information on the coding protocols.

Interviews

Once the interviews were scheduled, the researcher followed up with a confirmation email invitation that included a copy of the consent form (with the instructions to read it before the interview), and a link to the scheduled Microsoft Teams interview. At the designated interview times, the researcher personally conducted each of the nine interviews via Microsoft Teams. One interview was conducted via Zoom, as the participant didn't have Microsoft Teams on his computer. For each of the interviews, the researcher's location was either his professional office, home office, or bedroom. There was never anyone present with the researcher when interviews were conducted.

As each interview began, the researcher made the statement that he was now recording. Next, the researcher asked the participants to state their names and to give verbal confirmation that they had read the consent form and agreed to do this interview. This represented a slight tweak from the original methodology which stated that the participants would sign and return the consent form. However, after first talking with his dissertation chair, the researcher had this

change approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). All interviews were recorded on the researcher's password-protected computer.

The researcher attempted to make the interview atmosphere as comfortable as possible, typically starting each of the interviews with a light banter to provide a personal introduction and to get to know the subject a little more. Beyond the light banter, the first three questions narrowed down the participants' age, and their college experience before seminary and confirmed their SBC seminary experience. From there, using a semi-structured format, the researcher generally asked 21 more questions. The researcher was flexible in the order in which the scripted questions were asked, sometimes moving to a question that was very relevant to a prior answer by the participant. The researcher was also mindful of participants' answers that would sometimes bleed over into other prepared questions. In such cases, the researcher would not re-ask this question or perhaps ask it in a way that provided further clarification, if necessary. The interviews generally lasted between 60-75 minutes. While the researcher was respectful of the participants' time and tried to stay within the timeframe that was originally proposed, the researcher never sought to curtail the more talkative participants.

Transcription Protocol

As mentioned, the researcher used Microsoft Teams for the interviews. Conveniently, Microsoft Teams offers an option for not only recording the interviews but creating a transcription as well. The researcher chose this option. Unfortunately, the researcher later found that the time necessary to clean up the transcriptions was excessive. Upon approval from the university's IRB, the researcher was able to acquire the services of a student transcriptionist to clean up the transcripts generated by Teams. Per the university's IRB, the researcher reached back out to the participants via e-mail to get approval for the use of a transcriptionist. Approval

was granted by seven of the ten participants (The researcher completed the transcription process for the three who did not respond). The transcriptionist was required to sign a confidentiality form (Appendix K). Once in place, in addition to using Microsoft Teams for transcribing, the transcriptionist suggested that the researcher download and use a software called Podcastle. This was done by the researcher. Podcastle provided a cleaner transcription from the beginning, with less cleanup necessary on the back end.

Qualitative Coding Protocol

The researcher conducted this study using a purposive sampling design. This design was pursued through multiple avenues, including alumni websites for the Southern Baptist seminaries, pastoral websites geared toward black Southern Baptist pastors, LinkedIn groups associated with the seminaries, social media posts on Facebook and Twitter, referrals from participants and friends, and – finally – personal contacts. Once potential candidates were identified, the researcher emailed them information explaining the personal criteria necessary to take part in the research project. Candidates were allowed to respond via e-mail, though some preferred an initial phone call for a few more details. Once potential participants accepted, interviews were set up via e-mail. Consent forms were attached to the invitations with directions to read the forms before the interviews. The screening and invitation process ultimately netted ten participants. These participants proved to be a large enough group as saturation was achieved.

Demographic and Sample Data

The table immediately following provides an overview of the demographics of those pastors who participated in this study. Below the table, the researcher provides a more detailed summary of each of the participants. Names given here and used throughout the remainder of

this document are pseudonyms for the pastors' actual names. Respecting the individual seminaries, the researcher also has assigned pseudonyms for each seminary below. These pseudonyms are used throughout chapters four and five whenever a seminary is specifically referenced by one of the participants.

Table 2 –

Participating Pastors Demographics

Pastor	Age	Location	Seminary	Degree(s) Earned
Sangier	55-73	South	SBCSem1	M. Div
Royal	55-73	South	SBCSem2	M.Div
Potter	55-73	Midwest	SBCSem6	MDiv, DMin
Smart	20-38	Midwest	SBCSem2	MDiv
Trip	39-54	Midwest	SBCSem6, Sem1	M.Div, DMin
Hansen	39-54	Midwest	SBCSem1	MDiv, PhD
Lewellyn	55-73	West	SBCSem4	MDiv, DMin
Bienemy	55-73	South	SBCSem3	DMin
King	55-73	West	SBCSem4	DMin
Carol	20-38	South	SBCSem5	MDiv

Ten black pastors were interviewed for this study. The interviews took place between November 29, 2021, and May 27, 2022. At the time of the interviews, the pastors ranged in age from 28-64 years old. Each of them was currently serving as senior pastor of their congregations. Each of the pastors was a graduate of one of the six recognized SBC seminaries. Of the ten

pastors interviewed, six of them had completed two graduate degrees from a Southern Baptist Seminary. A brief biographical introduction for each pastor is given below.

Participant 1: Pastor Sangier is the oldest pastor this researcher interviewed. He grew up in the Southwest and remembers not getting a new textbook until middle school. Before then, his school did not get “new” things until the white schools were done with them. He entered SBCSem1 based on knowledge that he had gained while being a part of a local church while working in the area.

Participant 2: Pastor Royal grew up in the Southwest. Before his time at SBCSem2, he attended a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). The guidance of a relative who was in ministry led to him attending a Southern Baptist Seminary. He currently serves as senior pastor at a church in the Southeastern U.S.

Participant 3: Pastor Potter grew up in the Midwest. Potter’s reason for attending a small Bible college after attending a state school and then matriculating to SBCSem6 was for a change in what he had seen in church settings. Potter says, “I grew up in traditional missionary Baptist circles, which I knew. I didn't agree with any of that stuff they were doing ... all that whooping and hollering, running around, all that.” While Potter didn’t know a lot about the Southern Baptist traditions, proximity and SBCSem6’s move toward a more conservative ideology attracted him at the time.

Participant 4: Pastor Smart is the youngest pastor this researcher interviewed. Smart grew up in the South. After attending an HBCU, like many of the other participants, Smart ended up at a Southern Baptist Seminary partly because of relative proximity to his home at the time, but mostly because of the recommendation of mentors that he respected and trusted.

Participant 5: Pastor Trip was the one pastor interviewed by the researcher who obtained degrees from two different Southern Baptist seminaries. He grew up in the Midwest in a family that could be described as both spiritual and political. Trip believes he tore down a lot of barriers while at SBCSem6.

Participant 6: Pastor Hansen attended SBCSem1. Before that, he describes his undergraduate school as a PWI. Hansen matriculated to SBCSem1 from the Southwest. He says that at the advice of mentors, he moved to SBCSem1 – “not to the city, to SBCSem1.”

Participant 7: Pastor Lewellyn, who attended SBCSem4, stated that he wanted to go to Howard because he wanted a black experience. However, he states that “going to SBCSem4 was providential. It was what God wanted.” Looking back, Lewellyn says, “I feel like I lost and I missed out on a lot because I was in such white spaces that I did not know, understand some things that I should have... but it is what it is.”

Participant 8: Pastor Bienemy grew up in the Midwest before relocating to the Deep South and later matriculating to SBCSem3. When asked about his seminary choice, Bienemy states, “I was compelled by the Spirit to go to SBCSem3, because when I got the gumption (the Spirit told me it's time for me to educate myself -- to be qualified for my calling), I initially wanted to go to an African American Seminary.” Bienemy says he would have been much more comfortable with people that looked like him and talked like him. However, in the end, he says, “the Spirit told me, I didn't call you to be a black pastor. I called you to be a universal pastor.”

Participant 9: Pastor King attended a private college to obtain his undergraduate degree. His decision to attend SBCSem4 was largely connected to the fact that he was attending a Southern Baptist Church at the time, so the tuition benefit was very attractive. However, King

greatly appreciated that “the curriculum was geared or tailored, really for the students, and it wasn't so much busy work.” King found SBCSem4 to be a great school.

Participant 10: Pastor Carol, who grew up in the Deep South, describes his undergraduate school as a Christian PWI. He said that he chose SBCSem5 because of its proximity to family. However, one of his undergraduate professor’s academic connections with the seminary also played a part in his decision. Ultimately, while Carol did not know a lot about SBCSem5, he knew who the seminary president was and that was a final drawing card for him.

Data Analysis and Findings

The researcher gives the steps undertaken for analyzing transcripts and shares findings in this section. This begins with Table 2 which matches research questions with the interview questions posed during the semi-structured interviews.

Table 3

Research Questions (RQs) with Corresponding Interview Questions (IQs)

RQ1. How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?
IQ5. What was your experience like from a social perspective?
IQ8. Do you feel like you left seminary with a better understanding of white people?
IQ9. Did you make friends with students in the MDiv. program that you still connect with today?
RQ2. How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?
IQ4. Why did you go to that seminary?
IQ6. What was your experience like from a spiritual perspective?
IQ15. Do you believe there is/was a race problem at your seminary?
IQ16. What do you believe is the foundation of that race problem if you believe there is one?
IQ19. What was the political climate of your seminary?
IQ20. How did that affect you then and now?
RQ3. How did the training received by black senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they’ve rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?
IQ10. Did you have a black professor at the seminary?

IQ11. Did you have a class that focused specifically on multi-cultural ministry?
IQ12. Do you believe there is a racial problem in the American church today, if so, how are you addressing it and how is your church addressing it?
IQ13. What is the foundation of the race problem in the American church, if you believe there is one?
IQ14. Do you believe that the education you received at your seminary helped prepare you for those problems?
IQ17. What does the phrase, race is a social construct mean to you?
IQ18. There is a common statement that Sunday is the most-segregated hour in the U.S. Why do you believe this is the case?
RQ4. How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially and emotionally and if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?
IQ7. Do you feel like you left with a better understanding of who you were as a person and as a Christian?
IQ21. Do you feel like you had to hide or minimize your cultural norms to fit in?
IQ22. Describe your upbringing as it related to race.
IQ23. Describe the church that you attended growing up.
IQ24. Without leaning toward the uber-spiritual answer, if you had it to do over again, would you attend this seminary? Why or why not?

The researcher started off using Atlas.ti, a positively-reviewed coding software, to help frame the analysis. One interview was coded using the software. Following this, the researcher thoroughly assessed the tool's usefulness for his particular research and did not feel that it effectively captured and connected the essence of the conversations from a technical standpoint. Upon further prayer, in-depth consideration of other available tools, and taking into consideration how the interviews played out, the researcher ultimately decided to hand code the project.

As part of this initial process, the researcher created a short-answer spreadsheet (Appendix L) which allowed him and the reader an opportunity to look at every pastor at a glance and get a snapshot of the answers given. This also allowed the researcher to do a quick comparative analysis of the pastors as it related to things like age, school chosen, and the specific

time they were at the school – though to help ensure anonymity, this information is not shared in the chart.

Themes, Codes and Grouping

In considering how the interviews played out, the researcher reflected on the positive nature of the conversation with the expert panel and subsequently organized the 10 pastors' answers to each of the 21 questions into 21 separate documents. The researcher treated the interview content as if he was present with all of the pastors in a roundtable conversation where each pastor had a chance to answer each of the questions. The researcher believes this offered a few benefits, one of which was an organizational scheme that allowed evaluating the answers against each other for very expedient, but in-depth comparisons and contrasts. Whereas Appendix L gives snapshots, each of these documents allowed the researcher to look at responses head-to-head. The researcher followed Tesch's eight-step process in coding the interviews and creating themes. However, instead of the double coding that this process called for, in another nod toward trustworthiness, the researcher triple-coded.

In the following portion of this chapter, the researcher provides a question-by-question analysis, with groupings of questions and answers presented when applicable for better flow. Themes and codes are provided for each question in Tables 4-17.

Why This Seminary?

After the question of which seminary did they attend -- which the researcher was already aware of -- the first question of meaningful depth for the research at hand was "Why did you choose to go to that seminary?"

Four themes emerged for this question, including Relational, Theological, Spiritual, and Financial. Of those, the one that was most prevalently seen in coding was Relational. Of the

responses given, four said pastoral mentors (in two cases that was a father and a grandfather), and one said an undergrad professorial mentor. Two had a friend who was at the seminary. The student whose grandfather compelled him to go to SBCSem2 did so with the knowledge of a friend that he had there, as well as other pastors he knew who had sent their people to the seminary. Regardless of race, this researcher points to the importance of legacy, friendship, and connections as it relates to matriculating to a particular institution.

Table 4

Why This Seminary Themes and Codes

Theme 1 - Relational
Mentor recommended
Best friend(s) was there
Admired T. Vaughn Walker
Admired Danny Aiken
Theme 2 - Theological
Heard school was becoming conservative
Connected with my convictions
Felt it would push me
Theme 3 - Spiritual
Compelled by the Spirit
Theme 4 - Financial
Geographical Convenience
SBC discount

In many cases, the conversations with the mentors that led to these students attending were tied to the Theological theme. Pastor Hansen, who in the early 1990s left Texas, with SBCSem2 in his backyard, to go to SBCSem1 recalls:

“I came here to go to school because both of my mentors in Dallas -- Manuel Scott, Sr., Caesar Clark, advised me to go to SBCSem1, as opposed to going to SBCSem2 and DBU and Bright Divinity and other places, because all the stuff that was hot at that time that we were reading was coming from SBCSem1 scholars.”

Pastor Bienemy was one of two pastors who represented the overtly Spiritual theme. Bienemy, who was born and raised in Detroit, said he wanted to go to an African American

seminary, where his people were. However, Bienemy recalls, “I was literally compelled by the Spirit to go to SBCSem3.”

Social Experience

Bienemy’s end at SBCSem3 was different from his beginning. Though he was “compelled by the Spirit” to go to SBCSem3, by his account, he would not necessarily have been the best person to run across in his early days there. The second question that he and the other pastors were asked was about their social experience at the seminary. To this question, Bienemy said, “I went with the expectation or the leeriness of everything transpired because I was a black man surrounded by a whole bunch of Southern Baptist white folks.”

Bienemy went on to discuss his demeanor and encounters and ended by poignantly stating “I realized the most racist person that I encountered in my first year on campus was me.” Bienemy shared that, once he let his natural personality come out, he ultimately became someone that white students and professors gravitated to. Bienemy’s experiences at SBCSem3 represent three of four primary themes that emerged with this question – isolation, self-isolation, and camaraderie.

Table 5

Social Experience Themes and Codes

Theme 1 - Isolated
Lack of diversity in thought
Lack of diversity in background
Culture shock
Very few African Americans
Often only black in the room
There wasn’t a lot of socialization
Theme 2 - Undercut Prejudices
Ignorance
Jealousy
Intellect bothered them
Sly talk
Obtuseness by white students
Some discrimination

Some professors refused to learn, say my name
Theme 3 - Camaraderie
Black brotherhood
Wonderful African American fellowship
Some great professorial mentors
One of my best friends was already there
Didn't feel discriminated against
Black core worked together
Others reciprocated friendliness
Theme 4 - Self-isolation
Older student, didn't interact
Basically went to class
Get in and get out
Tunnel Vision
Theme 5 - Political
Shift with leadership change

Though he started by isolating himself because of his preconceived notions, not unlike several of the other pastors, what Bienemy first and continually noticed on campus was ethnic isolation because of the actual lack of black people. Pastor after pastor gave the same account. Pastor Royal uses the words “culture shock” to describe arriving at SBCSem2 in the late 1980s and being one of thirty-eight black students out of a 4500-member student body. Only once in his years there did he have more than two blacks in a class, and that number was three. The pastors who spoke on this isolation presented codes such as lack of diversity in thought, and lack of diversity in background.

Other pastors chose to self-isolate because of where they were in life. Pastor Potter who finished at SBCSem6 in 2003 remarked:

“From a social perspective, I basically just went to class, did what I needed to do, and went to my office at the church, after class, or in the library. Didn't have a whole lot of interaction with students. I was a little bit older than most of them, family, children, a little bit older, very much involved in ministry.”

His words echoed Pastor Lewellyn who finished at SBCSem4. On his Self-isolation, Lewellyn said, “I was one of two blacks in that program. So not much socialization, especially at

the age that I was, and experience that I had coming into the seminary. I was often on the go, you know, running in, running out.”

Bienemy’s initial experience of Self-isolation became a theme of camaraderie once he showed himself friendly. However, the way that camaraderie played out and the brunt of his matriculation was much different from Sangier’s time at SBCSem1. Sangier, who was at SBCSem1 in the early to mid-'90s said, “We had about 80 African American students, and so we had a wonderful African American fellowship.”

The final theme that emerged from responses to this question was Undercut Prejudice. Pastor Trip who was at SBCSem6 during the same years that Sangier was at SBCSem1 recounts, “It was only like three black students at SBCSem6 at the time. And so, you dealt with the prejudices in a very undercut way. And because I excelled at SBCSem6, I had to deal with a bunch of little sly talk.” Trip and several other pastors presented codes like Ignorance, Obtuseness, and Discrimination. An interesting account by Pastor Royal was that several professors in his first years refused to call him by name, even when all of the students had name cards on their desks. He said there were those white students that they were able to call by name early on, even without looking at their name cards, but “if we raised our hand to talk. They say, ‘Yes, sir.’ You know, that’s what they would say, ‘Yes, sir.’ But they would say, ‘Yeah, Jim. hey, Sally. But, yes, sir.’”

Spiritual Perspective

Typically, the next question presented to the pastors during the semi-structured interview was their experience from a spiritual perspective as it related to the seminary. From their responses, four themes emerged. Those themes were: Inconsequential, Difficult, Meaningful, and Disturbing. The codes that emerged to form those themes can be seen in Table 6. In terms of

detailed analysis, the first two themes did not lend themselves to codes that need deep analysis. However, there were a few meaningful codes within the other themes that would benefit from analysis here and further thoughts in chapter five.

In observing the list of codes that showed up under the theme meaningful, there were 21.

Table 6

Spiritual Experience Themes and Codes

Theme 1 - Meaningful
African American fellowship
Maintained culture within culture
Active in local church
Helped me to understand the Word better
Challenged me to grow spiritually
Better Hermeneutics
Able to study more faithfully and accurately
Able to unpack some emotional issues through counseling
It was great
It was helpful
Benefited from the school and focus
Every classroom, Great Commission classroom
I learned the mission of God
Classroom like church
Ministry and reaching people kept central
It was moving
Professorial mentors were good
Helped me minister in my context
It impacted me
Chapel was helpful, hearing different speakers
Challenged the school to be more ethnically diverse
Theme 2 - Inconsequential
Southern – wasn't a whole bunch of interaction
Spiritual devotions and disciplines already strong
Theme 3 - Difficult
Marriage the same year I went, was tiring
Serving as a youth pastor was tiring
Sometimes tired or overwhelmed
Not a lot on urban ministry concept
Light momentary affliction – I had to grow through it
Everyone was Caucasian
Theme 4 - Disturbing
Went there suffering mentally because of upbringing
Many more clinically focused than spiritually

Many Anglo friends had not preached trial sermon
Reconciling differences
Don't know that learning or studying theology increases spiritual walk

This, by far, outdistanced the other themes which were either neutral or negative in nature. The codes included phrases like “challenged me to grow spiritually”, “Great Commission classrooms”, and “better hermeneutics”. A quick observation of the list of codes falls in line with what was observed in the first question of why the pastors chose these seminaries. There is good theology. The Word of God is present. In fact, throughout the conversations, there is never any hint that the Word of God is absent. What does emerge is a connection with God or the application of that connection.

This first appears in the discussion of social experiences as Pastor Trip discusses underlying prejudices. In considering the white seminaries' assessment of black students, Trip says, “I think white seminaries have always had the concept that blacks were more into the feeling, the cardio versus the intellect. And so, I think a lot of times when they saw that I was more intellect than cardio, it did something to them.”

A very pensive Pastor Bienemy reflecting on his spiritual experience at SBCSem3 stated, “It was moving to me, but I was surrounded by people in the master's program that was more clinically focused on seminary than they were spiritually.” Elaborating on this thought, Bienemy was highly animated as he talked about the number of his Anglo brothers who had never preached a trial sermon. He recounts a mentor telling him “Before you go to school, make sure you get your burning before you get your learning. He said, don't go to seminary looking for Christ. Make sure you got Him before you get there.” For Bienemy, the black pastors in his circles always had been called to the ministry before going into the classroom. This prior calling

was a clear division he saw in what he called the clinical approach of many of his white classmates.

Better Self Understanding

In terms of leaving the seminary with a better understanding of self, four themes emerged -- Ministerially, Spiritually, Practically, and Inconsequential.

Table 7

Better Understanding of Self Themes and Codes

Theme 1 – Ministerially
Better understanding of ministry challenges
Clarity on ministry vision
Left with better understanding of what ministry was all about
Theme 2 – Spiritually
Definitely who I am as a Christian
Helped stabilize Christian beliefs
Left with the wonderful knowledge of how ignorant I am
Clarity on theological convictions
We were able to access great scholars
Affirmed my belief system
Left with better understanding of Christianity
It helped me spiritually
Theme 3 – Practically
I was better for the seminary environment
Affirmed my ability to excel academically
Met and engaged people who helped me become a better person
I also left with questions
Theme 4 - Inconsequential
I was pretty established
Theological pinnings were pretty much set
I had worked in church actively for six or seven years
Didn't create better awareness at deeper level

Responses leading to the Inconsequential theme came from pastors who said they were pretty established from the perspective of age or from having worked in a church actively for many years. None of the pastors alluded to being worse off in terms of understanding of who they were. However, the seminary experience did not add to that understanding.

For the other themes, many spoke of clarity, whether it was of ministry vision, theological convictions, or simply their ability to excel in such a space. A thought-provoking response came from the pastor who, practically speaking, thought he received clarity about who he wanted to be in ministry. However, he said he left with “a lot of questions too.”

Better Understanding of White People

As the researcher followed up, the response from this pastor, who was the youngest interviewed, flowed into typically the next question asked, regarding a better understanding of white people. Smart shared that, growing up, his family was one of the few black families in his neighborhood, so he had experiences with white people there and in his public schools, though he says those two experiences were different. However, what he faced in those spots and what he experienced at SBCSem2 left him with a lack of clarity. Smart shared that being at SBCSem2

...particularly space that's sensitive to people's hearts and minds, being a space of faith, those were somewhat new encounters and raised new questions for me about how white people process things, etc. in terms of their faith. So, I left with a lot of questions about some of the gaps I felt like I saw.

Similarly, Pastor Lewellyn thought he had gained a better understanding of white people, particularly white Christians when he left the SBCSem4, but he said the racial encounters of the last few years left him feeling resoundingly different. Lewellyn, probably more than any other pastor, very passionately communicated:

I will say that I really came to understand white people during the pandemic and during the civil unrest and during the protests George Floyd, BLM. I thought I knew. Oh, man, I thought I knew. I didn't know. I know now. I know better now. Because during times of crisis, during times of very difficult circumstances and situations, people's real beliefs, what they think, what they think about you, it comes out. They can't even hide it. And so, it wasn't during seminary. I thought people were who they were. I thought I knew who they were, but I ain't know nothing. I know now.

Bienemy added further perspective to this thought saying “I learned that the greatest nemesis in the Southern Baptist Convention is ignorance. They really do not know that what they

think of black folks or some of the things that they say about black folks, they really don't even visualize it being inappropriate.”

Pastor Trip shared with disappointment that one would think that, when you have a spiritual connection that there would be more spirituality with those in seminary, but discovered that they are really no different than a carnal person because of the way they act/receive. Similar sentiments were shared by other pastors.

All of those responses were an example of the theme, *Negatively*, that was observed by the researcher. To this point in the interviews, this question solicited the most heartfelt and even theatrical responses from the pastors. Two other themes the researcher noticed were *Respectfully* and *Marginally*. The few whose answers represented *Marginally* were very short and matter of fact.

Table 8

Better Understanding of Whites Themes and Codes

Theme 1 – Respectfully
Indeed
We had safe space conversations
Good discussions along lines of race
I gained their respect
I visited their churches, learned them
I was privileged enough to look into their house and see some good
Not all people of white descent are against us.
Don't judge the book by the cover. Look at the table of contents.
We ran into guys who were legit, they were remorseful and repentant
When they get to know you and, it opens their mind to some things
Theme 2 – Marginally
I thought I knew. I didn't know. I know now. I know better now.
I didn't learn anything new
Theme 3 – Negatively
Some hated to see me excel
I can't say I had a better perspective
Puzzling situations on inability to relate
Understanding came in the pandemic and civil unrest around Floyd
They're no different than a carnal person
I had a better understanding of them

They didn't have a better understanding of me
Truly there are some bigots in the midst
They need to be broader in who they're asking guys to read
Everything that's talking about Jesus ain't about Jesus

Codes under the last theme, Respectful, included phrases like: “We had safe space conversations,” “Not all people of white descent are against us,” and “good discussions along lines of race.” Sangier was the pastor with the most positive responses relating to his experience. Interestingly, Sangier was a product of the most-black support while he was in seminary, as he recalls a fellowship of 80 black students. Sangier elaborated that his headspace was such that he and several of his friends pondered their understanding of white people while they were in the environment.

The researcher found this was the case for many of the responses throughout the interview, that the pastors, without foreknowledge of any specific questions beforehand were able to speak quickly, deeply, and passionately about most of the questions. It was clear from the depth of the responses that, not only had they thought about many of the scenarios posed while they were in the environment, but they had continued to consider their experience beyond their time in the seminary.

Maintained Friendships

Two themes arose for the question of maintaining friendships. Those themes were Inconsequential or Ongoing. The pastors were split nearly evenly on these themes. One pastor coded with a flat-out emotionless, “No.” Several referenced loose relationships and one of the pastors who repeatedly spoke about being in a different season of life said his friendships were with professors, several of which he does continue to interact with.

Table 9*Maintaining Friendships Themes and Codes*

Theme 1 - Inconsequential
No
I don't think I made meaningful friendships
Professor-wise, yes
There was one, but we eventually lost touch
In terms of loose relationships and connections
Theme 2 - Ongoing
There are a couple, I still connect with today
I preach for them, we talk several times during the year
I do have a good friend, we have joint services
Yeah. And I have gained some more since then
Absolutely, I did. The cohort kind of forced that
One of my good friends, but other than him, didn't connect

In terms of ongoing friendships, several pastors spoke of interactions they have with fellow grads, where they will preach in each other's churches from time to time. Pastor Lewellyn, who matriculated to SBCSem4, says that his cohort kind of forced relationships, but he elaborated on how helpful that small group was for his confidence, as he had entered the seminary with doubts as to whether or not he could make it. But, Lewellyn said that the cohort provided him encouragement and support.

The most interesting response came from Pastor Hansen. He has friends that he maintained at the seminary and said that he has made more since. Whether it was pastors he knew from the seminary or white pastors he met professionally is unclear. What seems possible is that the foundations for such a relationship were made because of his experiences in the seminary or because he went to the seminary, and this provided some comfort for what happened during a recent racially charged national situation. Hansen recalls:

I had two guys man that have come to me after Brianna Taylor got that situation blew up. They came and said, hey man, we know that it's not right. But we need a brother that we can trust to hold us accountable and to be friends with, to help us help ourselves. In fact, I just had lunch before getting on here with you -- just had a two-hour lunch with one of

the guys. We meet every month, once every month, at least all three of us, man. And they just talk to me and I talk to them.

In several less academic and more sermonic offerings, this researcher has spoken of individuals praying for friends – or at the least acquaintances – with whom they can be real and have tough conversations and even agree to take personal prayer requests, offering them to the same God, be interceded for by the same Spirit, and trust that the conclusions given will be the same. The account that Hansen shares speaks directly to such an encounter.

Conversely, returning to the Inconsequential theme, Dr. Royal elaborated on a phenomenon not unfamiliar to the researcher. Royal shared that, as it came time for a few students to graduate from the seminary, on more than one occasion, guys he had never really connected with during their time in the seminary came asking to have lunch. Over lunch, they shared that they had been called to churches in towns and realized the racial divide was real and also realized they did not have any black pastoral friends. These white pastors literally pitched kind of a last-minute attempt to befriend him. Royal said with the first one, he was gracious, but on the second, he said:

You know, I think you and the Lord gonna have to navigate this one, because if you didn't make any friends prior to going, then maybe you need to make a friend once you get there, but I'm not going to be on your resume. And that began to really start me to say, okay, something's wrong with this, and why does that become an issue after the fact?

In what Royal saw as an offensively negative situation, he said it did set him on an unsuccessful quest for some authentic friendships and relationships.

Black Professors, Multiracial Classes, Trained for Issues

As has been previously addressed, there were several questions that the researcher was able to code and subsequently analyze in groups. A few of these groups were considered beforehand. One set of two questions became so clear during the interviewing process that the researcher found they were not necessary to code because the answers were in essence “no”

across the board. Those questions in summary were if the pastors had: any black professors, any classes focused on multiracial ministry, and the seminaries' role in helping the pastors to address race issues that exist in the church today.

Three pastors answered positively to having a black professor but, for each of them, the professor was specific to what was termed I-term classes which lasted one week, or J-term classes which lasted four weeks. For two of these pastors -- at two different seminaries --, Dr. T. Vaughn Walker was mentioned as that professor. A few pastors were aware of black professors specific to black studies programs. Finally, Pastor Sangier fondly remembered grading for black professor, Gayraud Wilmore. Ultimately, none of the pastors had a full-term black professor. Pastor Hanson's initial reaction was, "You're killing me!" Pastor Lewellyn met the question with outright laughter.

Similarly, across the board, none of the pastors had classes that focused on multiracial ministry. Pastor Bienemy, who came the closest to an affirmative answer, also gave the most extensive response, stating:

I had a class that had a topic, but no class that was targeted. And I say you can't expect them to teach that, which they have no idea. They are trying to do it now at the seminary with a brother there that I helped to get there. But you can't teach -- I ain't gonna say you can't -- you shouldn't teach. They always try to include that in the discussion, but they can't teach where they've never been.

Bienemy's response feeds into the mindset of the pastors on the final question of this group, which focused on the pastors' seminary education preparing them for addressing the race problem in the church. The researcher did find the themes Inconsequentially and Technically, but these were two flowery ways of saying "no." Smart's response to this question was a very clear, "Oh no, not at all." He went on to share that his ability to deal with the issues he now faces came from the churches he grew up in and pastoral mentors in his life.

Table 10
Seminary Helped Address Themes and Codes

Theme 1 - Inconsequentially
Pragmatically no
Oh no, not at all
I won't say that's true
Theme 2 - Technically
Made me aware at surface level
I had never worshiped in an Anglo church before
It prepared me for what we're talking about

Three codes fall under the theme, “Technically”. For these responses, the pastors attempted to be gracious, with one saying, “the seminary gave surface level awareness,” and another saying it prepared them for “what we’re talking about.” It was Bienemy who again gave the most detailed response. He said that matriculating to SBCSem3 was the beginning of his understanding of becoming all things to all people as, before that time, he had never worshipped in an all-white setting.

Racial Problem in American Church

The next question in the interviews was typically, “Do you believe there is a racial problem in the American church today, if so, how are you addressing it and how is your church addressing it?” For this analysis, the researcher looked at that question along with the question that typically followed, which asked about the foundation of the problem. First, it should be noted that all of the pastors answered the question affirmatively. In combining the questions, the researcher identified five themes. The first two themes specifically address the fundamental issue present in the problem as the pastors answered either from a spiritual perspective or a practical perspective. The third and fourth themes examine the approach to the confirmed problem, with themes again being, spiritual and practical. Finally, the fifth theme, Root, examines the foundation of the problem.

Table 11*Church Race Problem/Addressing/Foundation Themes and Codes*

Theme 1 - Spiritual Problem
We teach justification, but we don't teach sanctification
Disharmony in the Body of Christ, particularly with church
Knowing God intellectually, but not transformatively
Theme 2 - Practical Problem
Lack of diversity in thought
Positioning of the race with power, privilege, and prestige
Racism is a power structure and that has happened in churches
Because of history, blacks have no reason to trust white people
People like to be around people like them
Black performers, white power holders
Ignorance
Theme 3 - Practical Approach
Compelled by Spirit within to build a church that looks like the Kingdom
If we seek to build the church, it will be multicultural
Teaching that there is one race
Intentional staffing
Theme 4 - Spiritual Approach
Teach the scripture in context – multiethnic ministry is prevalent
Relationally - Model friendships with a diversity of people and believers
Try to appeal to all ethnicities
Address misteaching, misunderstanding, and some biblical hypocrisy
Pulpit must model diversity
Intentionally multiethnic
Theme 5 – Root
Sin problem
Preconceived notions
Superiority of whites, not understanding plight of blacks

In looking at the problem spiritually, multiple pastors leaned in on the lack of sanctification. Pastor Potter expressed this most clearly, stating:

We teach justification, and we should, but we don't teach sanctification. Meaning what you were is not what you are now. And the characteristics you demonstrated when you were in the first Adam are not the characteristics you demonstrate when you're in the second Adam.

Pastor Lewellyn similarly stated that there is an issue in the church of knowing God intellectually but not transformatively. For these pastors, salvation should produce heart change.

Speaking practically, Pastor Trip stated, “It's just a whole homogeneous unit to the point that people like to be around people like them.” Trip went on to share, however, that in his experience, black parishioners were a lot more willing to crossover to predominantly white churches than whites to predominantly black churches.

Pastor Lewellyn started off by answering the question, “I do think there's an ignorance about it, but I do believe that it's there.” This language of ignorance is a realm that the researcher has delved into on multiple occasions, so he pushed for clarification of whether Lewellyn found this ignorance willful or inadvertent. Lewellyn pondered briefly and concluded both forms were present, ultimately characterizing them as microaggressions.

For this researcher, the most interesting code shared, relating to the issue from a practical standpoint, was from Pastor Hansen. Hansen spoke of a mentor who shared with him some years prior about the dynamic of the power structure in the supposed multiethnic church. Hansen stated with some disgust that the mentor pointed out that time after time, it is the whites that are in the primary leadership staff positions at these churches, while the blacks are in visible, but powerless spots like the worship leaders – in essence, performers.

A practical approach to combat this performance paradigm was offered by Pastor Royal. Royal first clarified that he would not by any means consider his congregation multiracial. However, he thought that a way forward to addressing the problem of race in the church must be through staffing. His church currently has a white secretary, but he stated that all positions should be on the table. Royal's thoughts were echoed similarly with the codes: teaching there is one race and compelled by the Spirit to build a church that looks like the kingdom.

Pastor Sangier offered a solution that was both spiritual and practical. He stated:

If we seek to build the church, it will be multicultural. I think in saying, I'm going to build a multicultural church, that we end up focusing on symptoms and never get to the real issue, which is basically the hearts of person, be they black or white.

As pastors spoke to the foundation of the issue, codes like Preconceived Notions and Superiority Complexes arose. However, more than anything time after time, the pastors offered some version of the words, "It is a sin problem". In recognizing this, the pastors often visited the earlier conversation of the need for sanctification.

Seminary Race Problem

In pursuing this study, the researcher has posited that the strength of the local church is Christian academia, and the strength of Christian academia is the local church. If this is indeed the case, then it would be a reasonable assumption that the problems that exist in the local church will also manifest in the seminary. The question of a race problem in the local church was met with an overwhelming "yes" from the pastors. Similarly, the question of a race problem in the seminary was also met with an overwhelming "yes."

This question was asked in three parts: Was there a problem? Is there a problem? What is the foundation of the problem? In analyzing these questions collectively, the researcher observed four themes describing the problem. Those themes were: Ambivalence, Imbedded, Ongoing, and Blatant.

Table 12
Seminary Race Problem Themes and Codes

Theme 1 – Ambivalence
There's a knowledge, but denial
No intentionality about diversity
Limited scope in curriculum
White people don't understand black people
They don't understand there's a problem
What they have done for decades has worked, been beneficial to them.
Theme 2 - Imbedded
There's a system at work
Seeking to maintain gap

Exists on all levels
Foundational in the schools' founders and leaders
Theme – 3 Ongoing
The issues faced in the 60s are no different than issues we're facing today
There's a system at work
There was, but they're trying
There's a problem, but not with the leader
Not was, there is!
Theme 4 – Blatant
Hated black success
Old-line evangelical thought
White is superior, more intellectual, more intelligent

Most of the codes associated with the theme Ambivalence, can be combined with the descriptor, unintentionally. One pastor put it simply, that white people just don't understand black people. He followed with the thought that blacks don't understand whites either, but they understand whites better than whites understand blacks. Beyond the unintentional situations, in two cases it seemed like the ambivalence could be combined with an "it is what it is" mentality. While several of the pastors currently have limited interactions with the seminaries that they attended, some are still either geographically close enough to be well informed or have made it their business to stay up to date. One of those is Pastor Sangier, who considered the presence of a racial problem and said:

I believe there was, but there was an effort to make it better. Presently, it's worse, because I think now there's a knowledge of it yet a denial of it. And in the effort to identify with its conservative base, which is paying the bills, I don't expect to see that change under the present leadership.

Speaking on SBCSem6, Pastor Potter said you could go to the school and, in fact, were invited to go, but there was no intentionality toward diversity.

Sangier and Potter's thoughts were closely related to those pastors who coded under the theme, "imbedded". For these pastors, they saw their seminaries as places where there was a

system at work on all levels. This was another question that solicited some very passionate responses. SBCSem2 graduate, Pastor Smart commented:

At every level from the very beginning, similar to America, there has always been a problem. There have always been leaders, influencers who affirmed rather openly or quietly -- white supremacy. And because it's so embedded within its foundation, in truth they can't help but have a race problem -- from a limited scope in its curriculum to the required reading, to some of the heroes that are heralded before us.

Pastor Bienemy drove home the theme of Ongoing. As he did many times throughout his interview, he launched into a booming preacher voice, as he said, “Not was, there is!” Bienemy quickly continued with a remark that pointed back to the theme of Ambivalence – perhaps a combination of Unintentional” and the idea of “it is what it is”. He stated, “They don't understand there's a problem, because what they have done for decades has worked, has been beneficial to them. It has been profitable to them.”

One of Pastor Lewellyn’s thoughts highlighted the theme, Blatant. As Lewellyn considered the scholarly material that was embraced at the white seminary, he said it pointed to an intellectual superiority. Though he immediately recognized the theological challenges, he mentioned the brilliance of James Cone. Lewellyn went on to say if there was ever a black writer that was introduced, it came from one of the black students because there was no desire or attempt to do it from within the seminary structure.

Throughout these interviews, this researcher found that amid speaking truth, passionately, authentically, and even with irritation, the pastors, time and time again, also were willing to recognize sources or examples of hope. Pastor Carol’s reflections made that point on this question. Like the other pastors, while he recognized an ongoing racial problem at SBCSem5, he was quick to point out that, in his opinion, the problem did not lie with the seminary president. Carol expressed the personal hurt that he had endured because of a particular family dynamic.

Not only was there hurt, but Carol said there was anger. But, he explained, that he still associates with the SBC today because of the way that his seminary president poured into him and walked him through what could have been a negatively defining moment in his life.

Political Climate

For several of the questions that the researcher asked in the semi-structured interviews, the themes were Positive, Negative, and Neutral. However, throughout the analysis in this chapter, the researcher has given more specific flavoring to core themes and, looking at the political climate of the participant's seminaries, this is again the case.

Table 13

Political Climate of Seminary Themes and Codes

Theme 1 - Amicable
The politics was not played up
There was an atmosphere where you could be different
There was room for dialogue.
They weren't on the Trump train at SBCSem5
Theme 2 - Tense
I was outnumbered, didn't feel it would be prudent to have discussions.
I just kept my head down to getting the degree.
It was a predominantly Republican concept, good old boy mentality
People's desires to keep certain systems in place made them morally blind
During OJ trial, you could cut the tension with a knife
It was pretty much clear that it was them and us.
Barack is wicked. Barack is going to taking our country down.
It was more racial than it was just politics.
Republican without question
They believe their political position is most in line with God's teaching.
Such blatant hypocrisy
Mentalities that think certain people are supposed to be in certain boxes
Theme 3 - Neutral
One or two instances I recall my classmates ever bringing up politics
Never a conversation that I had with anyone while I was going to seminary

Reflecting on the responses to all the questions asked, time and time again, the researcher found the pastors honest, but largely gracious. This question, more than any other, drew the collective ire of the participants. Additionally, for many of what the researcher would consider

deeper or potentially more divisive questions, there were always at least two pastors giving codes that reflected the more positive theme. For this question, only Pastor Sangier's responses were coded under the positive theme, Amicable.

Sangier recalls that, when he arrived at SBCSem1, the atmosphere was such that someone could have a different perspective, whether it was theological or political, and they would not be alienated. He also recalls that there was room for dialogue.

A couple of the other pastors who coded under the theme Neutral, either altogether ignored conversations of politics while at the seminary or just honestly did not recall instances of political conversations or issues arising.

Tense, however, was the overwhelming theme that arose on this question. As Pastor Hansen and the researcher rounded into this portion of the conversation, the subject of O.J. Simpson's trial came up. Hansen recalled, "The tension at SBCSem1 seminary during the week of the trial, and even more as they started deliberating -- you could cut it with a knife, bro. And it was pretty much clear that it was them and us."

Pastor Martin experienced the presidency of Donald Trump while at SBCSem2 and saw not just the political side of that, but how it affected spiritual dispositions. He shared, "What became clear was how people's convictions or desires to keep certain systems in place made them morally blind, and how that happened on several levels -- from a presidential level to a student level to instructor level."

The other side of the political spectrum saw Pastor Lewellyn at SBCSem4 during the Obama presidency. The rhetoric he experienced was, "Barack is wicked. Barack is going to take our country down. Every negative thing that you can think of -- not really a citizen and everything you can think of negatively that could be said about him was said." Pastor after pastor

expressed phrases like, “Republican without question,” and “good old boy mentality.” Lewellyn, like many of the other pastors, claims no loyalty to either party, ultimately tied his present thoughts up with words that summarized the vocalized feelings of many of the other participants, “it hurts today because there is such blatant hypocrisy.”

Hide Culture

The next question asked of the pastors was whether they found it necessary to hide their cultural norms to fit in. This was a simple question where only three themes could emerge. But the key in these questions and the corresponding questions was the post-response (what came after yes or no) A couple of questions, like this one, could have been perceived or taken as yes/no questions by the respondent and perhaps the researcher would have had to follow-up with, “Can you elaborate?” But this was not the case. In formulating the questions, based on personal experience, the researcher felt that the respondents would be comfortable enough, -- even desirous -- to elaborate without prompting. This proved to be the case. None of the pastors withheld sentiments on this question, time and time again discarding politically correct euphemisms.

Table 14

Hide Cultural Norms - Themes and Codes

Theme 1 – Inconceivable
Never have. Never have. Never will.
My culture is who I am.
Never really controlled by what other people thought.
I stayed me. They respected me for it.
Theme 2 – Necessarily
Initially, I did
There were absolutely times
Particularly in the classroom in order to pass the mustard
Seminaries sometimes want you to have groupthink
Points of view outside of the conservative belief not accepted
Absolutely with a capital A. Come on, man.
You lose culture trying to fit into in a shoe that doesn't fit
You learn to be quiet and then you learn to listen

Theme 3 – Unnecessary
I had strong ties to local church
I was close to my pastor
I was not on an island
Went to school later, I was comfortable with who I am
I was able to be myself

The strongest response to this question was from Pastor Bienemy, who spoke of a particular conversation he had with some of his white counterparts regarding pastors they attempted to send to the black community to do ministry. Bienemy spoke of black families that had left the black neighborhood and made it a point to worship with whites and live among whites and who, subsequently, felt a call to ministry. He explained the first thing the whites want to do is send them to the black neighborhood. Using the term “negroes” to capture the white mentality and black folks to capture his own, Bienemy said, “You cannot send negroes to minister to black folks.” He continued, speaking passionately about black individuals acting white and white individuals acting black and how neither race wants that. This was probably one of the deepest thoughts in any of the interviews conducted. Counter to the often safe nature and academic dialect that defines the researcher, the researcher found the interview with Bienemy the most raw, authentic, passionate, and truthful.

Pastor Miles was not so raw, but every bit as passionate and truthful recalling a specific account he had at SBCSem6. Miles states:

I never forget when I was at SBCSem6 and one guy asked me when I was getting ready to graduate, he asked me was I going to do the singing that black preachers do at the end of my sermon now that I have a master's degree. And I told him, man, you lost your mind. That's part of my culture. I never walk away from my culture. My culture is who I am. I said, SBCSem6, just let me define my tools. But SBCSem6 did not make me a preacher.

While not limited to these two individuals, the researcher did find it interesting that the two pastors who most strongly spoke to the theme, Necessarily, were the two youngest pastors interviewed. They both began their response with the adverb, “Absolutely.”

Racial Upbringing

In almost all the interviews, the researcher rolled from this question of cultural norms into a discussion of racial upbringing, including a discussion of the churches that the pastors grew up in. Across the board, each of these pastors grew up in black churches, including four that were pastored by a father, grandfather, or uncle. There was only one who grew up unchurched.

One of the themes that emerged was Spiritual. Not surprisingly, because of the number of participants growing up in pastors’ homes or attending churches of close relatives, many of the interviewees spoke of being saved at quite a young age. Several of these pastors, who alluded to a theme of segregation in terms of upbringing, recall that though they were largely in black neighborhoods and subsequently black churches, they were taught early and often that salvation was for all.

Table 15

Upbringing and Church Themes and Codes

Theme 1 - Financial Difficulties/Poverty
Country boy off the farm
First new book in school in 7 th grade
Lived in projects
Mother was on aid and there couldn’t be a man in the house.
First college grad
Theme 2 - Segregated
Very racial-sensitive community
Riots with full integration
Church was typically all black
Conditioned by my parents to understand I was a black boy
You had the Detroit riots after King’s death
I was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, in the hood.
Didn’t experience or understand race issue growing up

Born in hood, parents from Deep South
Early on, very little exposure to whites after dark
Growing up in LA, didn't see many whites because of the white flight
St. Louis Inner city until 12
Church was 100% African American
Theme 3 - Dysfunctional
My mom and my dad, even though they weren't together, were really about education
I came from a very broken family
I had an experience with God when my stepfather came into the picture
Stepfather very verbally abusive, mentally, emotionally abusive
Parents divorced when I was twelve, I never really healed from that.
Theme 4 - Spiritual
Saved early
I was drug to church
Always black church
Saved in AME church
Started in SBC as a teen
National Baptist
God providentially snatched me out of harm's way, brought me into Body of Christ
Theme 5 - Diverseness
I always had good relationships with everybody. I was always cool with everybody
Moved to all-white neighborhood
I could count the black people on one hand when we moved to a white neighborhood
Very black environment to very white
High school – bussed integration

Two other themes that appeared and that often went hand-in-hand were Poverty and Dysfunction. One pastor mentioned the difficulties that he experienced in his adulthood because of the divorce of his parents when he was twelve. In his words, he, “never really healed from that.” Another pastor spoke of his parents splitting and of his life experiences growing up with an abusive stepfather. His time at the seminary allowed him to get counseling which helped him to move forward in some areas of his life.

One other theme that emerged on this question was Diverseness. As has been alluded to several times in this analysis and as can be readily seen on the quick-view spreadsheet, several of the pastors interviewed are in the same age range. Several of these pastors experienced bussed integration, as well as parents who moved from very black neighborhoods to very white

neighborhoods in search of better economic opportunities. Many of these pastors equated this dynamic with their ability to function without much difficulty and even thrive in the white seminary spaces that they found themselves in years later. At the same time, several shared the initial shock as kids of going from a black space to a white space overnight and the adjustments that were required on their parts.

Attend Again?

As the researcher considered what for most of the participants was the last interview question, the prevailing themes that emerged in response to whether they would go to the particular seminary again were Relational, Theological, and Ideological. Two of these three themes mirror why the participants originally chose their particular seminary. The question only provided two base answer choices, “yes” or “no”. But, again, this was a question where the researcher did not need to prod the participants to elaborate on their answers.

Table 16

Would Attend Again Themes and Codes

Theme 1 – Relational
Absolutely not today’s SBCSem1
I would, but with hope for a different experience
I had some fantastic teachers
I really wanted a black experience
It was a great school
Theme 2 - Theological
Teachers helped make me solid
It was what God wanted
Theme 3 – Ideological
I tore down barriers
The temperament, times and people have changed
You got to have a drum major somewhere

Across the board, the prevailing theme of why they would not go to this school is “ideological”. Nine of the ten pastors were asked this question. For four, the base answer was “yes”. For three,

the base answer was “no”. Two answered “yes”, but through an uber-spiritual lens, stating that their attendance was providential.

For the other four pastors who answered “yes”, the primary reason they would still go continued to be theological. Based on the interview conversations, the researcher concluded that, in the years, since most of the participants matriculated to their seminary, the seminary’s theology has remained firm in its biblical standards. However, their responses communicated that theology had not informed the ideology or the relational aspect. Sangier voiced clearly what several loosely alluded to in saying, “SBCSem1’s great on Bible, but on practical stuff, they’re not geared towards our community. Those seminaries, predominantly African American, that are geared towards our community, are not as strong on Bible and some are just plain liberals.”

Sangier, along with Pastor Royal, effectively captured the prevailing feelings of all the pastors. Royal started with a very spiritual reply, saying, “Only if God told me.” But he thought for a moment before saying, “I’ll take that back.” Royal went on to address the Relational theme, communicating that the respect he had for people who had gone to the school and pointed him in the same direction. He ended up addressing the Theological theme, as he talked about the depth of the knowledge that he got from learning to study the Bible in the original languages. This mindset echoed Sangier’s thoughts on SBCSem1. In earlier addressing the school from a social perspective, he stated, “When it comes to the Bible, I’m not sure they have rivals, but when it comes to the practical and we can talk about that later as we go through here, I’m sure, that’s where there’s the disconnect with us.”

Without revealing too many personal details, the researcher finds it interesting that two of the pastors interviewed obtained two or more degrees at one seminary and one pastor did two degrees at different Southern Baptist seminaries. That does seem to say that the discomfort that

was experienced, even by these pastors, was not enough to cause them to not return. However, it is also interesting that Sangier, the pastor who had the strongest support system of fellow-black students was one that clearly said he wouldn't return because he is aware enough of the present atmosphere to declare that it is not a welcoming environment. The researcher was also able to look at the responses across multiple decades of attendance and ages of attendees and find that the oldest would not go back and the youngest would not go back but, at the same time, there were varied responses in the middle.

Summary Based on Research Questions

In the preceding section, the researcher examined each of the questions asked in the interview and offered themes that appeared as well as codes, with specific insights from various answers given by the pastors. In the following section, the researcher gives a more succinct summary of each research question generated from an amalgamation of the pastors' answers.

Research Question 1 Summary

RQ 1: "How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?"

For many of the pastors in this study who have relationships with white pastors today, they are relationships that were developed with friends while they were at the seminary or relationships based on models that were developed while they were in the seminary. Reflecting on his time at SBCSem1, Sangier says, that he had a group of three or four other black classmates -- that was his circle, he adds:

But there were a couple of other white guys that we kind of enlisted. Well, not enlisted, we just -- literally God put together, that we could have those discussions that most people shy away from and just seek to understand after creating a safe space to do that.

Today, Sangier is part of a group whose intent is to get together and address the proverbial elephants in the room. He says, “I’m part of at least two multiethnic pastoral groups. These are not district associations or anything, but they are persons who have decided on their own to come together and meet and talk. And we have what we call hard conversations.” This researcher would posit that Sangier had an opportunity to model these conversations thirty years earlier, saw the effectiveness of it then, and is willing to continue to do something similar today.

However, what can be heard in Sangier’s sentiments was echoed by multiple pastors. They made the point that such relationships were not facilitated or nurtured by the seminaries. They simply happened organically.

Research Question 2 Summary

RQ 2: “How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?”

The question in the semi-structured interviews that most directly spoke to this question was, “Do you feel like you left seminary with a better understanding of white people?” For this researcher, Pastor Lewellyn gave the most deeply thought-out response to the question, stating:

I will say that I really came to understand white people during the pandemic and during the civil unrest and during the protests -- George Floyd, BLM. I thought I knew. Oh, man, I thought I knew. I didn't know. I know now. I know better now. Because during times of crisis, during times of very difficult circumstances and situations, people's real beliefs, what they think, what they think about you, it comes out. They can't even hide it. And so, it wasn't during seminary. I thought people were who they were. I thought I knew who they were, but I ain't know nothing. I know now.

It was difficult for Lewellyn to express himself, but he offered a more tangible example that more clearly defined what he now knows. Lewellyn spoke of an incident that happened near his church during the presidential election season. He says a black vendor got her stand

vandalized and members of his church took to the streets to support her, show support of black lives, and to just show true love. Lewellyn said the hate that was spewed at them in the highly churched area just did not compute. Right or wrong, this researcher perceived that Lewellyn was struggling to not put his thoughts and feelings of the actions of that particular group of white Christians on white Christians wholistically.

Research Question 3 Summary

RQ 3: “How did the training received by senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they’ve rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?”

The researcher identified seven interview questions that would speak to answering Research Question 3. Perhaps most interesting is that two of those questions were virtually irrelevant based on the responses of the pastors. The first question was: “Did you have a black professor at the seminary?” The second question was: “Did you have a class that focused specifically on multi-cultural ministry? Ninety-five percent of the pastors interviewed answered “no” to both questions. In fact, several of the pastors laughed out loud or responded in a similarly sarcastic manner as if the question were a joke. If the question was answered affirmatively, it was primarily regarding black professors who came in to do intensives or professors who specifically taught within urban ministry-type programs.

While the researcher concluded that the questions on black professors and multicultural classroom experiences proved largely irrelevant or inconsequential, the researcher would posit that the true relevance is in their lack of existence. Pastor Bienemy was very clear in saying you should not teach what you do not know. While one professor cannot speak to or “know” the

experience of an entire race of people, that professor can speak to their individual experience as being a part of a particular race or a specific culture within a racial group. An individual's lived or observed experiences as being a part of a racial group alone adds credibility that cannot be fabricated by someone on the outside looking in. As black and white are the races being considered, this is true of a black professor trying to communicate the white experience and vice versa.

Several of the congregations of the pastors interviewed are not large enough to support significant paid pastoral or administrative staff. For those that are, the makeup of the pastoral and/or administrative staffs vary. First, there are several of the churches that do not consider themselves multiracial, though they have a few non-black members attending. However, at least the church led by Dr. Royal, understands the benefit of a diverse staff in growing a diverse congregation.

At least three of the congregations dub themselves as multiethnic or multiracial on their respective websites and these congregations have diverse staffs. The congregation led by Pastor Potter is the product of a merger that created a diverse congregation. That staff is racially diverse. Another of those congregations, one led by Pastor Smart is also diverse. However, while many of the pastors would speak to their seminary experiences affecting them then and now and perhaps shaping their mindsets on having meaningful conversations to this day, none of the pastors interviewed would attribute their diverse staffing to the training they received in the seminary.

Research Question 4 Summary

RQ 4: “How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially and emotionally and if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?”

This question drew answers on the furthest ends of the spectrum. It seemed largely connected to the age of the pastors. The oldest pastor interviewed received support from his local congregation which he said benefited him greatly. He also mentioned the fact that there were more than 80 black students in attendance when he was at SBCSem1. Of all the pastors, this represented the most on-campus support as it related to race. The two youngest pastors interviewed by the researcher were most vocal in their need to assimilate or hide their cultural norms at the seminary. However, two of the older pastors also felt the same. One of those pastors shared that there were never more than three black students in any of his classes the whole time he was at SBCSem2, and the occasion of three students only happened once. Concerning this assimilation becoming the new normal, none of the pastors felt the need to hide norms in the churches they pastor today, whether those churches were predominantly black or mixed-race congregations.

Evaluation of the Research Design

Before conducting interviews, the researcher conducted a Teams call with an expert panel to talk through the interview instrument. The panel was made up of four senior pastors of churches that are part of an organization called the Baptist Fellowship Association. Two of these pastors had doctoral degrees and one an MDiv, though none were from an SBC seminary. The researcher went through all the questions on the survey instrument, tweaking as necessary to reflect non-SBC seminary attendance. This exercise gave the researcher a chance to hear the type

of answers given to the questions and, hence, an opportunity to make sure that the questions were accomplishing the quality of responses desired. The researcher also allowed the panel to speak to the answerability of the questions, as well as to give opinions on any questions that were unnecessary or perhaps redundant.

Originally, the researcher had a question on the survey which drew some pushback from the expert panel. The panel gave some thoughts on how the researcher might word the question differently. The researcher understood the concerns voiced and ultimately decided to forego the question altogether. The question referenced the acceptance of interracial dating and marriages on the campus of the SBC seminaries while the students were there. As it turns out, more than one of the pastors interviewed was married to someone of a different race. One shared an incredibly difficult life experience he encountered because of that.

Ultimately, the researcher believes this study not only validates the statement attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King, that Sunday morning at 11:00 is the most segregated place in America, but it gives persuasive rationale as to why that has been and remains the case. In the aftermath of this study, the researcher feels affirmed in having chosen to do this project both qualitatively and phenomenologically.

Each of the interviews lasted about an hour and fifteen minutes. Some were a little longer, some a little shorter. Each of the pastors was extremely forthcoming and did not pull any punches in describing their experiences at the SBC seminaries. Several of the participants made comments on the depth of the questions and the opportunity that some of the questions gave them to process some things that they had not considered in quite some time. Because this research dealt with a phenomenon that they had all lived, each of the pastors remained very

interested throughout the conversation; several of them wished the researcher success in his work and also asked that they be updated with the results of the study.

Overall, the researcher found the design of the questions and the research itself to be effective. However, there are a couple of questions that, in retrospect, he would have added. The first would have been a specific question geared toward RQ 3 that asked about the specific makeup of their church staff. Some of the pastors volunteered the information on their own and, for the remainder, the researcher was able to obtain this information through the visiting church websites. However, the researcher believes it would have provided more depth of how these staffs came about if the question had been asked.

Another question that the researcher feels would have been useful is one that got the pastors' take on the subject of CRT. Several of the pastors delved into this conversation on their own but, considering the timing of the research and the researcher's interaction with the theory, it may have been useful.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter 5 brings the dissertation to a close, beginning with a restating of the purpose of the study. This chapter continues with brief conclusions to the research questions posed. From there, the researcher explores the implications and potential applications of the study, while also highlighting observed limitations. Finally, the researcher proposes ideas for further research in the vein of this work before offering some concluding thoughts.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perception of preparedness for multiracial ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

Research Questions

RQ1. How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?

RQ2. How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?

RQ3. How did the training received by black senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they've rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?

RQ4. How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially and emotionally and if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

Based on the detailed dissection of the responses offered in Chapter 4, the researcher feels that approaching this project from a phenomenological perspective was a good choice. The results gleaned from the interviews in this study offer several research conclusions, implications, and applications. This information is discussed in the following paragraphs from a framework of each of the research questions originally posed.

Research Conclusions

Throughout this study, the researcher made it clear that his own experiences, in many ways, mirror those of the participants in this study. Those experiences were, in fact, a significant part of the impetus for the research. Being aware of this while crafting the questionnaire, the researcher was careful to avoid leading questions that immediately steered responses toward his preconceived beliefs. The researcher was also careful not to infer or read into the participants results. The researcher believes that the abundance of the participant's firsthand accounts shared in Chapter 4 are indicative of the pastors being allowed to speak for themselves. Several notable conclusions emerged from the research. The conclusions, as they relate to each research question, follow.

Conclusions Related to Research Question 1.

RQ 1: "How did the training received by black senior pastors who graduated from the Southern Baptist Seminaries affect their current relationships with white senior pastors?"

It was not training that affected the current relationships for black pastors with white senior pastors, it was the choices that they made to interact or to reciprocate kindness that was shown. Bienemy provided the best example of what could be achieved in both directions. He was skeptical of everyone from the beginning and walked around with what he called a chip on his

shoulder until God convicted him that he was the most prejudiced person on campus. When he chose to show a true representation of himself, it gave him the opportunity to be a voice to other students and a recognized mentor for other black students. However, the impetus for Bienemy's actions was not taught; instead, he attributed it to the guiding of the Spirit within him. Pastor Sangier's experiences at SBCSem1 affirm this conclusion. While Sangier had the benefit of a strong black student fellowship, he and a group of friends decided to join together with students who did not look like them to have real and sometimes difficult conversations. Sangier continues to have a similar cadre today. But, like Pastor Bienemy, Sangier's choice to do what he did as a seminarian was not prompted by training, it was a choice.

Conclusions Related to Research Question 2.

RQ 2: "How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?"

Many of the pastors in the study reflected that they had grown up in situations where being the minority among whites was their norm. So, the seminary experience was not an eye-opener. Still, others commented on the fact that they were seasoned adults upon entering the seminary, so they had had years of encounters that prepared them. But, even understanding that thought, one pastor articulated an underlying discouragement over the fact that the seminary looked so much like the world as it pertained to black-and-white relationships.

It was clear to the researcher out of the gate that Pastor Hansen metaphorically entered SBCSem1 with his eyes wide open. Before the researcher got into the meat of the interview with Hansen, Hansen asked for clarity on what exactly the interview would be about. The researcher

shared that the heart of the conversation was an attempt to see how Southern Baptist seminaries have trained black pastors to do multiracial ministry, to which Hansen emphatically replied:

I would correct you there and lovingly nudge you with this understanding. We were told at either of the six seminaries that this is a Southern Baptist school, and their mission is to prepare pastors for Southern Baptist churches. Now, if you, myself, came along -- fine, but you needed to understand that we were not their concern. Okay? Both sociologically and definitely theologically. Okay? So that's why you hear African American pastors say, we don't go -- I didn't go to seminary to get tools. No, I already had my tools. Most black people do. We go to school, then to sharpen the tools we have and to become aware and have access to other things kind of floating around out there that we're going to deal with. The intent was never, never, never since 1863, it was never to educate African Americans or anyone else.

While none of the other pastors interviewed spoke this clearly and definitively, the researcher was able to surmise from inflections, nuances, expressions, and non-verbal clues throughout the interviews that Hansen's feelings were not unique to him.

Conclusions Related to Research Question 3.

RQ 3: "How did the training received by senior pastors at the Southern Baptist Seminary subsequently affect the practice as pastors, including the diversity of staffs they hired and sermons/conversations they've rendered regarding reconciliation among the members that they have shepherded?"

Despite the lack of training, there was an articulated understanding among several pastors of the need for a diverse staff to better grow a diverse church. The researcher first reminds the reader of Pastor Hansen's reflections of a mentor who spoke of the blacks in entertainment roles in the church, as opposed to actual roles of leadership. The researcher also reminds the reader of Pastor Royal's clear understanding of his need to diversify his staff to set the standard for an older congregation that is not going out and creating relational moments that might lead to invitations to a diverse group of visitors.

In terms of sermons/conversations rendered, based on Table 3 matching research questions and interview questions and the responses to the interview questions, it is clear that the pastors' seminary training did not speak to this. There were no black professors, classes, etc., in the seminary that spoke to this. For this researcher, based on 15 hours of interviews, it would seem more likely that these pastors' existence, living as black people in America and shepherding folks who are experiencing the same day-to-day struggles as them has been and continues to be the impetus for conversations. Similarly, the researcher feels that the same mindset that would cause the pastors to matriculate to the PWIs or PWSs in the first place has guided them in their knowledge of and ability to grow diversity in leadership and to build diversity in congregations.

Pastor Bienemy shared that he has had the opportunity of being the first black pastor at three or four Southern Baptist churches. He feels his presence and reputation alone have been key in diversifying staff. Bienemy states:

I've had maybe six associate ministers that came to join to minister with me. Everyone was white... I did not ask nobody. I've not passed out not one flyer. I didn't look for associate ministers. They heard about my church and me being an African American pastor and I was at a Southern Baptist church.

Bienemy continued, explaining that there is a new era of young ministers who want to be involved in multiracial ministry because of what they have experienced in school and in sports. He says they listen to the same music, dress alike, and they are no longer comfortable with churches that are full of one group of people. Bienemy says:

If you've noticed, there's a great movement of young Anglos away from the Southern Baptist Convention because they don't want to be involved in a ministry that looks like granddaddy and grandma, look like mom and daddy. They're stuck in that old antiquated method of doing religion. They just don't want to be a part of that.

However, based on the answers communicated by the pastors in this research, whether it was the seminary thirty years ago or the seminary three years ago, there does not seem to be training that speaks to teaching toward such a trend.

Conclusions Related to Research Question 4.

RQ 4: “How, if at all, did the Southern Baptist Seminary experience cause the student to assimilate in order to better connect spiritually, socially and emotionally and if applicable, did that new normal move forward with the student post-graduation?”

Several pastors made it clear that assimilation was a norm for them in the seminary. For some, it was not a fear of being who they were, it was more the case that they did not want to be bothered with a back and forth over their view on something that did not match the dominant view. Speaking of his experience at SBCSem4, Pastor Lewellyn remembers a few times in his cohort when he would state something, and it would become a full class-period discussion that would spill over into lunch. While Lewellyn finds himself to be something of a contrarian, he says that he often learned to be quiet and listen, understanding how much he was able to truly learn about people in doing so.

While this conclusion seems clear on the surface, the researcher poses the question, what if there had been more professors or students that looked like Lewellyn? Would he have been more willing or comfortable to have such conversations? The researcher will spend more time fleshing out additional thoughts on this mentoring model in the upcoming section suggesting future research.

Theoretical Implications

In Chapter 2, the researcher examined Alumkal’s (2004) treatment of Racial Formation Theory (RFT) in a religious context, as he uses it to look at the work of reconciliation giants like

John Perkins and Tom Skinner in the 60s and 70s before tying it to Emerson and Smith's 2000 work, *Divided by Faith*. Atiya Husain (2017), framing her theoretical leaning model, writes, "Because most recent empirical research on the relationship between race and religion uses Michael Omi and Howard Winant's racial formation theory, I build on this choice and offer a constructive critique of the use of this theoretical toolkit to analyze the relationship between race and religion" (Husain, 2017, p.2).

The researcher suggests the plausibility of people of faith making use of a social theory such as RFT in helping to recognize that the framers of this nation's foundation, laws, and rules did not operate in ignorance with no knowledge or intent of systems being put in place. In the wildly popular musical, *Hamilton*, Lin-Manuel Miranda pens a song entitled, "The Room Where It Happens" The song chronicles some important events in the shaping of America. The song contains the following lyrics:

Two Virginians and an immigrant walk into a room, diametrically opposed – foes. They emerge with a compromise, having opened doors that were previously closed -- bros. The immigrant emerges with unprecedented financial power, a system he can shape however he wants. The Virginians emerge with the nation's capital and here's the pièce de resistance -- no one else was in the room where it happened. (Allmusicals.com)

For discussion's sake, it was 191 years from the inception of the United States before there was a black Supreme Court justice in America, Thurgood Marshall. It was 219 years between the election of George Washington and America's first black president, Barack Obama. In the history of this country, there have been a total of 11 black members in the U.S. Senate. These figures represent a very long time for a group of people to have very limited representation and a lot of rooms where no one but whites, were in the room when the framing of legislation, laws, and deals happened. Southern Baptists would do well to look at the similar framing of their

history and consider who was in the room when it happened. In this vein, the researcher posits race is not just a social construct, race is a religious construct.

This researcher points these things out in an effort to foster spiritual, sober-minded, intellectual people toward considering the historical self-centeredness of humanity, coupled with those who have repeatedly cried out that, in their life experience, there is a system of inequality in place that was intertwined within the foundations and fabric of this country. This researcher points to these things, suggesting that they are worth being part of an educational conversation initiated by those in the Christian academic community. If effective training of black pastors toward multiracial ministry is not being done -- and this researcher would say that it is not, based on the conclusions of this phenomenological study -- and if there is a desire for it to be done, the question is how will it be done?

The researcher used Racial Formation Theory (RFT) to frame his study, which has been defined as “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed,” (Alumkal, 2004, p. 196). The theory suggests race as being a socially constructed paradigm that is manipulated by political, social, and economic forces.

In analyzing what he considers five strengths of RFT, scholar Cha-Jua (2001) highlighted the state’s role in racial formation. However, in looking at the deficiencies of RFT, Cha-Jua immediately points to the over-involvement of the state as it relates to policies. This research would counter that perhaps it is an under-involvement of the church and Christian academia.

Empirical Implications

Recalling this researcher’s gap in the literature, the researcher posits that it is not the excess of government involvement that must be considered, but rather the absence of church involvement and Christian academia. A final interview question that the researcher postponed

discussing in chapter four was the question worded, “What does the phrase race is a social construct mean to you?” The pastors’ responses to this question fell under three themes: systemic, ideological, and spiritual.

Table 17

Race Social Construct Themes and Codes

Theme 1 – Systemic
System embedded in fabric of nation
System establishing order, preference, and privilege
Instituted by those with power to oppress minority
Centuries to implant
Theme 2 - Ideological
Identified a predominant group and a less-than-group
Race is created based on society
A given identity
What we have been ingrained to think
System unseen by some, but real
Theme 3 – Spiritual
Pattern realized very similarly in Christian circles
Inclination toward sin makes democracy necessary

The researcher held off on examining this question with the thought that it would fit in better in this tie-in to the theoretical content of this research. Once again, examining the codes, the pastors were spot on in their understanding of this terminology which largely gained traction in the societal racial conversation through the work of Omi and Winant. In defining RFT, these scholars make it clear that race, as we know it in society, is socially constructed. However, what the researcher found missing in their initial treatment of the theory was terminology connecting it to the religious community. In giving his definition of the term, Pastor Lewellyn makes the tie-in, saying:

There is a system in place that establishes order and preference and prejudice and privilege. It identifies various groups of people as being less than predominantly a group of people. And that social construct is realized both in Christian circles and in secular circles. And sometimes you can't tell the difference. They merge pretty well.

While the fraternity of current black senior pastors who went to Southern Baptist seminaries is not an overwhelming number, they are not non-existent, as evidenced by the fact that this researcher reached out to close to 100 pastors. Of that number, the researcher ended up with 10 percent. Something that stood out to the researcher was the fact that the pastors he talked to knew what they were talking about as it related to the subject matter at hand. Many of them were able to pull from memory historical incidents and/or information from studies -- obscure facts that the typical person was not going to be able to rattle off nonchalantly. As the researcher considered this further and compiled biographical sketches of the participants, it dawned on him that nearly half of his participants had doctoral degrees. With a little digging, he found that many of them had done research that did not necessarily mirror his research but did deeply consider racial dynamics in the church today. The pastors knew what they were talking about, had similar interests, and had traveled similar roads of life and ministry. Many had the same mentality as the researcher of somehow being agents of change to the status quo.

Omi and Winant suggest race as being a socially constructed paradigm that is manipulated by political, social, and economic forces. While several researchers, including Alumkal (2004), advocate for the use of RFT in framing research that incorporates a religious component, this researcher repeats that what should not be missed is the potential that religion is one of the manipulating forces driving race. There can be no dismissing the interplay of race and religion in this country, from the spiritual undertones that were sown into the fabric of slavery (as has been discussed through part of the history of the SBC) to the interplay of religion in national elections to the long-time manifestation of Christian nationalism. The researcher suggests that subscribing to such a theoretical premise would benefit from a foray into the social aspect of religion that has been posited by W.E.B. DuBois and others in the black religious

community. The researcher believes that this mindset is affirmed by Yadav's proposition of Religious Racial Formation Theory (RRFT) and suggests that this research with RRFT as foundational as opposed to RFT alone would be more practically productive and more thought provoking ideologically.

Applications

This researcher posits that two levels of education must take place for reconciliation to happen in the church setting fueled by academia. First, the educators (who are the pastors), must be educated in the seminaries. These educators, in turn, educate the people in the church. Once this happens, there are boots on the ground in communities actively walking out a vision and living out relationships, with the seminary as the initial model. This is the quick and neat version of the model, but that is easier to write than what actually happens. What has happened time after time is an acknowledgement of wrong by an organization like the SBC -- a resolution, but then a turnabout like the CRT moment involving the six seminary presidents. When such an event takes place, it causes the educator to lose credibility and trust in the eyes of their students.

In Chapter 2, the researcher looked at CRT in detail and discussed strengths and weaknesses with arguably the clearest possible unbiased definition of the theory and its tenets. Ultimately, the researcher chose not to use this theory to frame the research because of a desire to keep the conversation open, with the understanding that there would be those who would cease to be willing to communicate, based on an unchangeable, yet unresearched opinion that they have formed of an unhuman theory. Perhaps, the six Southern Baptist Seminary presidents represent the "those".

In assessing the meeting of the seminary presidents to nix CRT, Dates asks a credible question, "When did the theological architects of American slavery develop the moral character

to tell the church how it should discuss and discern racism? When did those who have yet to hire multiple Black or brown faculty at their seminaries assume ethical authority on the subject of systemic injustice?" (Dates, 2020).

While the researcher chose not to use CRT as a framing theory for this research, the detailed look at the theory in Chapter 2 clearly defines the tenets crafted by those who originally framed the theory. In considering Dates' question to the seminary presidents and considering what can be learned of the theory by intentional research and, finally, considering this researcher's focus on the potential power of church and Christian academia working in tandem, the researcher asks what might be learned by an intentional academic examination of the theory by those in power seats of seminaries like those of the SBC, rather than outright dismissal without any academic research or rationale.

In the preface to the work of Sawyer and Shenvi (2023), Carl Trueman suggests that there is a portion of CRT that is true and, as such, there is some attractiveness to it for some Christians. However, this truth is overshadowed by biblical inconsistencies. For Trueman, critics cannot merely dismiss CRT on grounds of cultural Marxism but must instead examine the actual shortcomings of the theory, one of which is the opportunity to manipulate truth rather than dealing in absolutes which Scripture offers. Similarly, critical theory suggests that what works for one area of criticism must be accepted for all. So, what is suggested for race must also be applicable to sexuality and gender.

This researcher concludes from what has been provided by those interviewed in this phenomenological project, along with information ascertained from previously conducted studies, that the Southern Baptist Convention -- particularly its educational wing, the seminary -- has not been overly concerned with training toward multiracial education or ministry. While

black students are not turned away, they are not necessarily made to feel welcome either. Roach (2021) intimated that there have been periods when concentrated efforts have been made to increase black student populations but, even in those times, the goal has not been to educate either the black students or the white students toward multiracial ministry. Outside of those times, decisions have been made that affect black students -- such as changes in scholarship programs -- that may not necessarily be meant to diminish the black population but, because not enough intentional thought has gone into it beforehand, this has been the result. Efforts to correct those instances have been slow at best.

In many instances, it seems that when race has been considered in the seminary as it relates to black students and the black community, it has been to educate black pastors toward ministering to black people. In instances where race has been considered in the convention at large with an apology or a proclamation declaring a wrong that has been committed, it is either followed by a period of inactivity or some type of negative event or conversation that undermines the proclamation. Such sentiments were shared by several of the pastors.

Research Limitations

While saturation was accomplished with this group of black pastors, the researcher's sample size was admittedly smaller than initially desired. However, the researcher firmly believes the conclusions that came forth from the research would be the same given a larger sample size. As such, the researcher is hopeful that the results from this study will lead institutions that are serious about addressing the issues presented to be more open to creating an environment that assists numerically in future studies.

In the last 50 years, while the population of blacks in America has statistically remained relatively constant, the population of Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans has increased.

The Hispanic population is now the second largest in the United States. To bring data to a point that allowed a small enough group to study, this researcher looked specifically at the relationship between blacks and whites in the Southern Baptist Seminary. The researcher also interviewed black pastors specifically. The researcher would immediately suggest individual studies that compare the relationship between whites and Hispanic Americans, whites and Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and black Americans, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans, and black Americans and Asian Americans. In doing so, this would precipitate interviews with each of these groups individually, asking the same questions that were asked of the black pastors.

It would also be interesting to expand this research to a group of pastors that was not specific to Southern Baptist seminaries. For example, Charlie Dates -- who was wooed by the Southern Baptists -- earned his PhD from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. How would black pastors from similar Christian institutions of higher learning expand this study?

Further Research

While this was alluded to briefly in Chapter 2, the researcher suggests a more in-depth study of the interplay between Christianity and patriotism and nationalism as it relates to race in America, but also as it relates to life on the campus of Christian PWIs. Quantitative data that tries to ascertain the depth of everyday American's religious beliefs versus their political absorption, particularly tying in educational attainment could speak to this research at another level.

In analyzing the response to Research Question 2, "How did the training received at the Southern Baptist Seminary change the attitudes of current black senior pastors toward white people from the time they entered the school to the time they left?", As previously noted, the researcher largely considered analysis to that question from asking the question, "Do you feel

like you left seminary with a better understanding of white people?” However, because of the nature of the response of Pastor Carol, the researcher flipped the question, and asked him “Do you feel like when you left the seminary, white people had a better understanding of black people?” Carol responded:

Oh, yeah, sure, man. I think that's the name of the game, man. It's who you know, right? It's relationships. And so, these guys think that you mentioned an African American preacher -- he some charismatic chaos guy. I don't know. But when they get to know you and you get to share some things with them, it opens their mind to some things. Right. And you introduce them to guys. Right. For example, I'm in a cohort right now with some guys, and this brother, I went to college with him --and good guy, he asked me, ‘Hey, man, we want to try to diversify the guys we're having come in here and speak stuff like that. Who would you recommend?’ So just from that relationship, I could provide some names for him that he wouldn't necessarily know.

Unfortunately, Pastor Carol was the last pastor who was interviewed by the researcher. It would have been interesting to get a response to that question from the other participants. In asking that question, the researcher immediately points out that one must allow for the complexity of individuals. So, it would be a fallacy for the students at a PWI to feel like they understand all black people because of their interactions with one or two black people.

Recalling Research Question 4, the conclusion was that while some of the black pastors felt the need to assimilate at Southern Baptist seminaries, none of them carried that mindset forward as senior pastors. The researcher ponders, how does that crossover for one of the few black professors in the academic space of the Southern Baptist seminary? Do these underrepresented teachers of would-be pastors feel the need to assimilate as faculty or do they feel freedom to go against the system? If they do not feel such freedom, how does this affect the students that they are teaching? The researcher would posit that there is a level of independence and freedom that the senior pastor -- particularly in a black congregation -- not only feels, but has, that would not be present with a faculty member in an academic space.

Building on that thought, the researcher thinks it would be interesting to look at the level of freedom to push back against leadership boards and members that exist in a predominantly black church versus in a predominantly white church. Is it similar? Is it drastically different? If it is drastically different, could this lack of freedom cause a white pastor, who might be desirous of changing the status quo but fears for job security, to do nothing?

In Chapter 4, the researcher spoke of the expert panel helping to fine-tune the interview questions. One question the researcher chose to remove dealt with the potential presence of interracial relationships among seminary students. While the researcher decided against using any form of the question, the researcher thinks it would be interesting to study the impact a black minister with a white wife or in an interracial relationship might have in the predominantly white seminary setting. Similarly, it would be interesting to see if such interracial relationships have any noticeable effect on the congregations that senior black pastors minister to, whether predominantly black or mixed-race congregations. Finally, the researcher would also be curious to see how such relationships might have impacted or could impact relationships with same-race pastors or pastors of other races.

While the researcher touched on numbers several times, specifically based on recollections of the pastors, the researcher suggests a quantitative study that undertakes a deep numbers dive. If the Southern Baptist Convention has an interest in growing the diversity of its educational arm, the researcher recommends in-depth looks at trends in the history of the body. The researcher suggests comparing numbers and percentages of black students at the different seminaries, considering if the actual geographic locality of the seminary plays into those percentages. The researcher further suggests that a comparative look at numbers in different decades and cross-referencing the decline in numbers with events in the life of the Southern

Baptist Convention. While the researcher believes that the lived experiences of the pastors interviewed in this study would mirror the lived experiences of other black students, the researcher understands that this study represents a starting point. The seminaries must open their alumni databases to allow for further quantitative data to be seen and more voices to be heard through additional qualitative data.

Next, the researcher suggests comparing the percentages of black faculty and staff at the seminary versus the percentages of black students. How well do the numbers balance each other? In seminaries where there is a higher percentage of faculty/staff of a particular race does it or has it translated into similar figures in the student population of the same race? Table 17 shows a current breakdown of black leadership and faculty in each of the Southern Baptist seminaries. The percentage of total black students at both the undergrad and seminary level is data from 2021.

Table 18
Southern Baptist Seminaries Black Presence

Seminary	Black Leadership	Black Faculty	% of Black Students*
Gateway	5 in cabinet, 0 black	55, 3 black	Not available
Midwestern	8 in cabinet, 0 black	65, 1 black fellow	3.7
NOBTS	8 in cabinet, 0 black	66, 3 black	12.1
Southeastern	7 in cabinet, 0 black	63, 2 black (1 inst.)	4.7
Southern	Not available	75, 1 black	2.8
Southwestern	8 in cabinet, 0 black	69, 2 black (1 inst.)	4.1

*<https://dataus.io>

What do these numbers mean toward retaining underrepresented students? Pastor Bienemy recalls how, one day, he realized that basically every black student who came on

campus came and introduced themselves to him. He was cordial and would always have a friendly conversation. However, when it clicked with him that this was happening, he finally asked one of the students why. The student said, “Because my professor said, you need to meet Bienemy.” Bienemy realized that, “somewhere along that journey, I gained that respect.” The researcher hypothesizes what might happen if there were more staff, more students, and different personalities for different people to grow networks of support on seminary campuses. In a 2021 study by *Inside Higher Ed* conducted with 2003 undergraduate students in a secular setting, “fifty-six percent of the Black undergraduates surveyed stated a preference for a mentor with the same racial identity” (Vick, 2021). Does that number vary or does the need change in a seminary setting with Christian graduate students? Bienemy’s professor did not seem to think so.

Finally, the researcher asks, if the results of this particular study are accepted and found to be historically accurate and presently transferable, what are the next steps? If the Christian college or seminary sees itself as the catalyst for change in the church and the church sees the seminary as an equipper for leaders, what comes next? What kind of practical majors, minors, clubs, and mentoring groups are put in place? What does the recruiting of faculty, students, and pastoral staff look like?

Summary

In the book of Ecclesiastes, the preacher wraps up this thought-provoking text by writing, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). This researcher considers that passage in conjunction with the numerous accounts in the gospel which proclaim, the greatest commandment is loving God with all our hearts and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

The love that we have for God is based on our relationship with Him. The same is true of the love that we will have for others. Relationships are built on the foundations of authenticity and time. There is no fast track for time. It happens second-by-second, minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour.

Shortly after the George Floyd murder was caught on video and viewed by individuals all around the world, the researcher got a call from a colleague. The colleague, knowing of the researcher's three black sons, two of whom were teenagers at the time, called because he imagined where the researcher's headspace was in those days and he just wanted his colleague to know that he cared. He ended the conversation expressing gratitude for the researcher's demeanor. He said that he felt that the researcher was a person to whom, in search of understanding, he could ask a stupid question and receive grace if necessary.

The preacher continues in Ecclesiastes 12:14, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil." This verse calls to mind a readiness to do what needs to be done based on obedience to and a reverent fear of God. Midway through the researcher's conversation with Pastor Sangier, speaking on the Body of Christ, the pastor made a statement that resonates so clearly with what this researcher believes is the heart of God. Sangier said,

I just believe if our community has any hope, it's going to come through the church. And so, against hope, I'm still hoping that we can get this thing right. And I can't sit idly by without being compelled to seek to address it and foster an environment where we can at least attempt to do that.

How do we "get this thing right"? In analyzing, coding, and formulating final thoughts, as the researcher considered his four research questions, contemplating what he had learned, two words stood out for the first time. In originally formulating the questions, the word choices were intentional, but not to the point of wordsmithing. However, considering them now on the heels of

conversations with ten black seminarian senior pastors, they are significant. The two words are “training” and “experience”. The researcher posed the first three questions with the word “training”. The last was asked with the word “experience”.

So much of what the participants of this study learned was based on experience. So little was based on training. This researcher would posit that, in any occupation, experience is amazing and necessary, but immediately the researcher would posit that it cannot exist without training. What happens if every experience is just that – an experience? This researcher suggests it becomes far less meaningful if it is not shared for the greater good of the community. Ultimately, the word choice was an accident – perhaps a profound mistake – but discerning the difference is truly the key. One gets trained. One has experiences. The researcher would posit that lived experiences should shape training and training should help shape to future lived experiences.

On the back cover of John Perkins’ 2018 book, *One Blood*, the following words appear: “There is no institution on earth more equipped or more capable of bringing transformation to the cause of reconciliation than the church” (Perkins, 2018). The researcher agrees. However, there is one institution that he would posit is equally equipped – Christian academia.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 12, 2021

Timothy Griffin
Brian Pinzer

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-38 Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effectiveness for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating From Southern Baptist Seminaries

Dear Timothy Griffin, Brian Pinzer:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: October 12, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

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

Appendix B Seminary Comparative Data

SEMINARY COMPARATIVE DATA

179

SEMINARY COMPARATIVE DATA

I. Enrollment:

a. Total SBC Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) both funded and unfunded - (Total credit hours divided by 24).

	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>3 Yr Rolling Average</u>
GS	420	443	498	454
MBTS	1,615	1,395	1,264	1,425
NOBTS	1,508	1,531	1,598	1,546
SEBTS	2,438	2,215	2,128	2,260
SBTS	2,762	2,311	2,339	2,471
SWBTS	1,126	1,029	1,164	1,106
Total	9,869	8,924	8,991	9,261

b. Actual FTEs approved by the Council of Seminary Presidents for Cooperative Program (CP) Seminary Funding Formula:

	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>3 Yr Rolling Average</u>
GS	342	338	422	367
MBTS	1,615	1,395	1,264	1,425
NOBTS	1,145	1,110	1,028	1,094
SEBTS	1,268	1,185	1,216	1,223
SBTS	2,762	2,311	2,339	2,471
SWBTS	1,126	1,029	1,164	1,106
Total	8,258	7,368	7,433	7,686

c. CP Allocation per SBC student.

	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2019-2020</u>
	<u>Total SBC Students</u>	<u>CP Allocation Budget</u>	<u>CP Allocation Per Student</u>
GS	420	\$ 3,836,589	\$ 9,135
MBTS	1,615	\$ 6,924,461	\$ 4,288
NOBTS	1,508	\$ 7,032,583	\$ 4,664
SEBTS	2,438	\$ 7,492,794	\$ 3,073
SBTS	2,762	\$ 10,283,214	\$ 3,723
SWBTS	1,126	\$ 7,377,175	\$ 6,552
Total	9,869	\$ 42,946,816	\$ 4,352

d. Nonduplicating head count (number of students registered and taking one credit hour or more).

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Non-SBC Students</u>	<u>SBC Students</u>	<u>Total</u>
GS	314	1,607	1,921
MBTS	1,265	3,109	4,374
NOBTS	471	3,983	4,454
SEBTS	1,692	3,523	5,215
SBTS	1,097	4,562	5,659
SWBTS	795	3,112	3,907
Total	5,634	19,896	25,530

Appendix C

Interview questions for pastors who graduated with a Master of Divinity from a Southern Baptist Seminary

1. What age range do you fall in:

20-38

39-54

55-73

Over 74

2. Describe the type(s) of colleges you have attended:

HBCU

State University

Christian College or University

Other Private College or University

Southern Baptist Seminary

3. What seminary did you attend in attaining?

4. Why did you choose to go to that seminary?

5. What was your experience like from a social perspective?

6. What was your experience like from a spiritual perspective?

7. Do you feel like you left with a better understanding of who you were as a person and as a Christian?

8. Do you feel like you left seminary with a better understanding of white people?

9. Did you make friends with students in the MDiv. program that you still connect with today?

10. Did you have a black professor at the seminary?

11. Did you have a class that focused specifically on multi-cultural ministry?

12. Do you believe there is a racial problem in the American church today, if so, how are you addressing it and how is your church addressing it?

13. What is the foundation of the race problem in the American church, if you believe there is one?

14. Do you believe that the education you received at your seminary helped prepare you for those problems?

Appendix C Continued

Interview questions for pastors who graduated with a Master of Divinity from a Southern Baptist Seminary

15. Do you believe there is/was a race problem at your seminary?
16. What do you believe is the foundation of that race problem if you believe there is one?
17. What does the phrase, race is a social construct mean to you?
18. Are you married? Are you married to someone of your race? If not, what race is your spouse?
19. Were you married before attending seminary or did you get married after?
20. There is a common statement that Sunday is the most-segregated hour in the U.S. Why do you believe this is the case?
21. What was the political climate of your seminary?
22. How did that affect you then and now?
23. Do you feel like you had to hide or minimize your cultural norms to fit in?
24. Describe your upbringing as it related to race.
25. Describe the church that you attended growing up.
26. Without leaning toward the uber-spiritual answer, if you had it to do over again, would you attend this seminary? Why or why not?

Appendix D

IRB Consent

Title of the Project: Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effectiveness for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating From Southern Baptist Seminaries

Principal Investigator: Timothy Griffin, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a senior pastor of a Baptist Fellowship of America church. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of the study is to understand the continual racial divide that exists between white and black Christians in America, with particular emphasis on the role that Christian academia has played and is playing in the divide. The researcher will look to understand the perception of preparedness for multicultural ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Complete a pre-focus group survey that will help shape the focus group.
2. Take part in a Teams focus group. The estimated time of the interview will be 60-75 minutes. The focus group will be recorded in both audio and video formats.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

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

Benefits to society include a better understanding of how Christian academia and the local church can speak into and positively affect race relations in the United States.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

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

information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and/or codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

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

- Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

• **Is study participation voluntary?**

- Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not 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 Timothy Griffin. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 434-xxx-xxxx and/or e-mail [txxxxxxxx@liberty.edu](mailto:txxxxxxx@liberty.edu). You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Brian Pinzer, at bxxxxxx@liberty.edu.

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

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

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

• Your Consent

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix E Seminary Permission Request

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The title of my research project is Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effectiveness for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating From Southern Baptist Seminaries and the purpose of my research is to understand the continual racial divide that exists between white and black Christians in America, with particular emphasis on the role that Christian academia has played and is playing in the divide. The researcher will look to understand the perception of preparedness for multicultural ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

I am writing to request your permission to utilize your membership list to recruit participants for my research.

Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule an interview. The data will be used to assess the lived experiences of the subjects while they were students at your institution. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Timothy Griffin
Researcher

Appendix E Continued
Seminary Permission Response

Timothy Griffin
Address Redacted
Address Redacted

[Date]

[Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear Timothy Griffin:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effectiveness for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating from Southern Baptist Seminaries, we have decided to grant you permission to access our membership list/contact our faculty/staff/other and invite them to participate in your study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

We will provide our membership list to Timothy Griffin, and Timothy Griffin may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in his research study.

We grant permission for Timothy Griffin to contact black Masters of Divinity graduates to invite them to participate in his research study.

We will not provide potential participant information to Timothy Griffin, but we agree to send his study information to black Masters of Divinity graduates description on his behalf.

We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

[Official's Name]

[Official's Title]

[Official's Company/Organization]

Appendix F

Recruitment Letter Black Pastors

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The title of my research project is Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effectiveness for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating From Southern Baptist Seminaries and the purpose of my research is to understand the continual racial divide that exists between white and black Christians in America, with particular emphasis on the role that Christian academia has played and is playing in the divide. The researcher will look to understand the perception of preparedness for multicultural ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be must be a black senior pastor of a multiracial church. Additionally, you must have graduated with a Masters of Divinity degree from one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in a one-on-one video interview. It should take approximately 60-75 minutes to complete the procedure listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at txxxxxxx@liberty.edu for more information or to schedule an interview.

A consent document will be sent to you one week before the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Timothy Griffin
Researcher
Phone
email

Appendix G
Recruitment Letter Expert Panel

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The title of my research project is Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effectiveness for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating From Southern Baptist Seminaries and the purpose of my research is to understand the continual racial divide that exists between white and black Christians in America, with particular emphasis on the role that Christian academia has played and is playing in the divide. The researcher will look to understand the perception of preparedness for multicultural ministry of current black senior pastors who earned a Master of Divinity at one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries, each of which can also be classified as predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study and serve as part of an expert panel to develop the final interview instrument.

Participants must be must be a black senior pastor of a Baptist Fellowship Association church. Additionally, you must have graduated with a Masters of Divinity degree from one of the six Southern Baptist Seminaries. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in a one-on-one video interview. It should take approximately 60-75 minutes to complete the focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at txxxxxxx@liberty.edu for more information.

A consent document will be sent to you one week before the focus group. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the focus group.

Sincerely,

Timothy Griffin
Researcher
Phone
email

Appendix H
Recruitment Black Pastors Follow-up

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education in Christian Leadership degree. Two weeks ago, an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].

Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in a one-on-one video interview. It should take approximately 60-75 minutes to complete the procedure listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at txxxxxxx@liberty.edu for more information or to schedule an interview.

A consent document will be sent to you one week before the interview/focus group. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Timothy Griffin
Researcher
Phone
email

Appendix I
Recruitment Expert Panel Follow-up

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education in Christian Leadership degree. Two weeks ago, an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].

Participants, if willing, will be asked to serve as an expert panel member to take part in a video focus group. It should take approximately 60-75 minutes to complete the procedure listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at txxxxxxx@liberty.edu for more information.

A consent document will be sent to you one week before the focus group. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Timothy Griffin
Researcher
Phone
email

Appendix J Recruitment Social Media

Facebook

ATTENTION FACEBOOK FRIENDS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctor of education degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to understand the intersection of Christian academia and the local church as it relates to racial reconciliation. To participate, you must be a black senior pastor of a multiracial church who graduated from a Southern Baptist seminary. Participants will be interviewed (60-75 minutes). If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please direct message me for more information. A consent document will be emailed to you one week before the interview, and you will need to sign and return it at the time of the interview.

Twitter

Are you a black senior pastor of a multiracial church who graduated from an official Southern Baptist Seminary? Direct message me for information about doing a one-on-one recorded interview speaking of your seminary experiences.

Appendix K

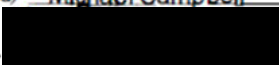
Confidentiality Agreement For Transcription Services

Confidentiality Agreement for Transcription Services

I, Michael Campbell, transcriber, based on the stipulations of the Liberty University Institutional Review Board given to researcher, Timothy Griffin, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audio recordings and documentation that I am given access to by the researcher related to his doctoral study entitled, Phenomenological Analysis of Training Effective for Multiracial Ministry Received by Black Pastors Graduating from Southern Baptist Seminaries. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be revealed during the transcription of audio interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To work on this research only on the computer of the researcher, located in his office, and to not make any copies of computerized files of the transcribed interview texts.
3. To make sure that if anyone enters the researcher's private office and headphones aren't being used that any audio recordings are paused immediately, so nothing will be overheard.
4. To comply with any special instructions given by the researcher as it relates to the research material.

Transcriber's name (printed) Michael Campbell

Transcriber's signature  _____

Date 10/1/2022

Appendix L

Condensed Interview Answers

Questions	Pastor Sangler	Pastor Royal	Pastor Potter	Pastor Smart	Pastor Trip
What is your age range?	55-73	55-73	55-73	20-38	39-54
Undergraduate institution	State school	HBCU	State school	HBCU	Christian HBCU
Seminary	SBCSem1	SBCSem2	SBCSem6	SBCSem2	SBCSem6, SBCSem1
Why that seminary?	Mentor	My grandfather	I had heard good things	Proximity, best friend	Father/T. Vaughn Walker
Social Experience	Great- 80 blacks	Culture shock, 38 of 4500	I was a family man	No diversity, had friend group	Undercut prejudice, 3 blacks
Spiritual Experience	Black Fellowship	Light momentary affliction	Appreciated prof. mentors	Kept ministry central focus	It was good
Developed better self-understanding	Yes	Yes	I came in pretty secure	Solidified some things	Affirmed my ability to succeed
Developed better understanding of whites	Yes	Yes, but not vice versa	Yes	Different in spaces of faith	Less spiritual than I thought
Maintained friendships	Yes	One guy	With professors, yes	Loose relationships	With one guy
Any Black professors?	Only in J-term	None - adjunct, Dr. Walker	No	No	No
Any classes focused on multiracial ministry	No	No	Not really	No	No
Is there a racial problem in church today?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Absolutely, unequivocally	Yes
How do you address the problem?	Small pastoral group	From what the Bible says	This was dissertation topic	Model intentional Relations	We try to appeal to all
Foundation of the problem	Lack of knowledge	Sin	Lack of understanding/fear		People like to be around own
Seminary prepared for the problem	No	No	No, I was wired that way	Not at all -- my upbringing did	No
Race problem at seminary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foundation of the problem at seminary	Knowledge, but denial	It came w/ folks from home	Lack of intentionality	Embedded in the founders	Threatened by excellence
Explain phrase, "race is social construct"	There's a system at work	N/A	N/A	it's not real, it's establishment	What we are ingrained to think
Seminary political experience	Not an issue then	serious tensions third year		Few conversations around	I was very political, they tried
How did that affect you then/now	N/A	N/A		Just kept my head down	It didn't. Always been me
Did you hide cultural norms?	I had strong ties to church	Initially I did, I was rebuked		Absolutely some times	I pushed black authors works
Describe racial upbringing	Racially charged environ	Broken home,	Inner city, St. Louis, till 12	Some of best friends, white	Raised to respect everyone
Describe church you grew up in	CME, but not often	Granddad pastor, mom music		Black church, dad pastor	Black church, dad pastor
Would you go to this seminary now	Not today's Southern	Yes, because of my mentors	Yes, it helped me express	I'd say no	Yes, I helped their perspective

Appendix L Continued

Questions	Pastor Hansen	Pastor Lewellyn	Pastor Blenemy	Pastor King	Pastor Carol
What is your age range?	39-54	55-73	55-73	55-73	20-38
Undergraduate institution	PWI	State College and Christian College	Christian PWI	Private	Christian PWI
Seminary	SBCSem1	SBCSem4	SBCSem3	SBCSem4	SBCSem5
Why that seminary?	Mentors advised	Convenient, friends there	Spirit compelled	Pastor/Discount for SBC	Undergrad prof & Dr. Alken
Social Experience	Blacks had a brotherhood	Not much socialization	Good when I let it be	Gateway was great	little diversity, but was good
Spiritual Experience	Was already strong	Helped understand Word	Many didn't burn before learn	Helped me grow	Clarified great commission
Developed better self-understanding	engaged people who helped	helped stabilize beliefs	knowledge of my ignorance	Without a doubt	Some things I missed, but yes
Developed better understanding of whites	Yes, not all against us	Though I did until Floyd	Greatest nemesis is ignorance	I can't quite say that	They need to broaden scope
Maintained friendships	Yes, and made some since	Absolutely, encouraged	No	No	I'm still cool with some
Any Black professors?	I had one and a half	Laughter	No	Yes, spiritual formation	No
Any classes focused on multiracial ministry	No	No	No	No	No
Is there a racial problem in church today?	Disharmony in BOC/	ignorance, but it's there	Without question	Definitely a problem	Absolutely
How do you address the problem?	Liberty after salvation	I address biblical hypocrisy	multiple white assoc. pastors	Striving to build multicultural	intentionally multiethnic
Foundation of the problem	black performer, white power	Lack of spiritual transformation	preconceived concepts	Superiority of the whites	Sin
Seminary prepared for the problem	Made aware, didn't prepare	It helped me rightly divide Word	Prepared me to minister to mix	For pastoring, not race issues	I really do, Alken is MVP
Race problem at seminary		I believe there was, they're trying	Was and is	Not a problem, lack of understanding	Race problem everywhere
Foundation of the problem at seminary		White is superior, more intelligent	Whitewashing Christianity	Whites don't understand blacks	N/A
Explain phrase, "race is social construct"		System of prejudice/privilege	Black is what they named me	Idea of race created by society	Not on Trump train
Seminary political experience	Recalls week of OJ verdict	Barack is wicked - every negative	Republican and believe God is	I don't get caught up in politics	I don't play politics
How did that affect you then/now		hurts as a black man, hypocrisy		N/A	It affects me, but not who I am
Did you hide cultural norms?	Never have, never will	You learn to be quiet, listen	I stayed me and was respected	I was able to be myself, classes away	Absolutely, capital A
Describe racial upbringing	Dallas projects, parents split	From Detroit	Born/raised Detroit, inner to suburb	Born/raised in LA, whites had fled	From Alabama
Describe church you grew up in	National baptist, some SBC	Broken family, Detroit riots		100% black, uncle was pastor	grew up AME, SBC from teen
Would you go to this seminary now	No, temperament has changed	I don't regret God's providence	Divine move, wanted black experience	Yes, Gateway is a great school	N/A