LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A STUDY OF FOLLOWERSHIP IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL-WIDE CHANGE

OF THE MINISTRY OF CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP®

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Michelle Marie Russell

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

The influence of Child Evangelism Fellowship saw a significant increase across the United States of America after an organizational change following a 2001 Supreme Court case ruling. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the role of followership on the change and followership principles that emerged during the change that was implemented following the ruling *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* on the Good News Club ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship. Organizational change was defined as intentional actions promoted by leadership and intentional actions taken by followers who took advantage of the rights guaranteed by the ruling. The theories guiding this study were Followership Theory as popularized by Kelley, and Lewin's Organizational Change Theory

The methodology for this study was open-ended, qualitative interviews of CEF directors to determine what they perceived to be the leadership and followership qualities displayed in this organizational change. The researcher coded the results of these interviews using *NVivo* software. This coding identified guiding principles for leaders of both Child Evangelism Fellowship and similarly structured ministries and organizations in the case of future strategic changes. These principles were that followership is a role, it can be described in positive teams, and there are many expectations for followers in a workplace or ministry.

Keywords: leadership, followership, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Good News Clubs, , organizational change, strategic change

Dedication

Twenty-three years ago, my husband dedicated his dissertation "To My Michelle." In a rare situation where I am more wordy than him, I dedicate this to him as a thanks for encouraging me to do this in the first place, supporting me every step of the way, and being my biggest cheerleader. To My Dan.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Liberty University for putting a program in place that allowed me to achieve my goals while still maintaining my ministry and family responsibilities. I am thankful for the opportunity to receive a high-quality education this way. I would like to specifically thank Dr. Alvin Dockett for his patience throughout the journey. His demand for excellence and his practical suggestions made me a better researcher and a better writer.

My children, Cora, Caleb, Jacob, and Olivia were my inspiration throughout this process. They never failed to ask me about my progress and offer encouraging words. They make me proud every day.

I would also like to acknowledge the ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship and the amazing people who may not see themselves as such but prove it every day though their dedication to reaching children. Getting to know you encouraged me and reminded me of why I love this ministry.

Lastly, all praise goes to God. May this be used for His glory.

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List of Abbreviations

Child Evangelism Fellowship® (CEF®)

Children's Ministry Institute® (CMI®)

Good News Club® (GNC®)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Liberty University (LU)

School Good News Club® (SGNC®)

Sponsor a National™ (SPAN)™

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

British statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, said, "change is inevitable…change is constant" (Kebbel, 1882, p. 487). That sentiment still holds true in both personal and professional settings. When organizations are facing this inevitable, constant change, they must be ready to adapt. Often the responsibility for the implementation of organizational adaptation is placed upon the leadership within the organization. Leaders are expected to inspire, motivate, coerce, or even force their followers to make the adaptations needed to keep the organization on the path to success. Although leaders play a large role in this process, followers should also be considered a key factor in the success or failure of an organizational change.

Ledbetter et al. (2016) said that the best test of leadership is whether or not anyone is following. Realizing this truth immediately moves the study beyond focus on the leader and opens the whole dimension of followership. Followership is still not widely recognized as an integral part of leadership theory. In fact, followership is still not even recognized as a legitimate word by most spell-check and grammar tools. Yukl (2013) observed that only a small amount of research and theory puts an emphasis on the followers' characteristics instead of the traits of leaders. Northouse (2019) agreed that very little research has been done on followership compared to leadership. He also noted that much of the research that has been done is more anecdotal and observational than scientific. Northouse (2019) believed that leadership study will remain incomplete until more research is conducted on followership. Riggio and Bass (2005) asserted that more attention is needed to followership in the leader-follower transformational relationship. The importance of followership research will increase as global problems emerge

that leaders cannot solve alone. Followership is often unrecognized but ever-present. Hamlin (2016) said,

> Whether we work in an office, sit in a classroom, serve on a committee, play on a team, or join a congregation, we are followers whenever other people have titles, authority, and responsibility that include us within their sphere of oversight. (p. 2)

An organization is often said to be only as good as its leaders. It is also accurate to say that an organization is only as good as its followers. Maxwell (1991) said that a person who thinks he is a leader but has no followers is just taking a walk.

Followership often relies on character more than skill. "Followership is about saying and doing the right things. Followership is acting properly and well in a given situation. It is doing and saying what the situation dictates" (Riggio et al., 2008, p. 20-21). As followers of Christ, this characteristic is highlighted in scripture. Paul says that each member of the body is working together through "a manifestation of the Spirit given to each person for the common good" (Christian Standard Version, 2017, 1 Corinthians 12:7). Each member has been equipped to be a living, functioning, serving member of this body. The gifts and abilities given by God at the time of salvation are provided for this very purpose. God has given His followers all they need to serve one another together in unity. How each person carries out that role within an organization will define that organization as a whole.

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), established in 1937, found itself in a position where an organizational-wide change was inevitable if ministry was to continue successfully. Its signature ministry, the Good News Club, was losing its influence and effectiveness. In its early years of formation, these clubs were primarily held in private homes and churches (Estevez, 2022). CEF workers came alongside the churches to teach weekly clubs as part of a Sunday School or discipleship program. Clubs held in private homes were designed to reach children in

local neighborhoods. Often, a mother taught the club, and her children and their friends attended. In some states, there were some opportunities for clubs held in schools due to Released Time Laws. These laws allowed children to leave school for one hour weekly for religious instruction. The organization provided the location, the bussing, and the volunteers for these programs. In states where Released Time Laws were in place, the schools could not object and had to participate (releasedtime.org).

Schools without Released Time laws often had after-school activities available for children, so CEF began to hold Good News Clubs in these schools. One of these schools, Milford Central School in New York, took CEF to court, arguing that this club violated the separation of church and state since the club met in the school building. This case, *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* (2001) went to the Supreme Court, and their decision was announced on June 11, 2001. The ruling stated that the school's "exclusion of the club on the basis of its religious viewpoint constitutes unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination" (533 U.S. 98 at 107 n.2).

Under the previously decided Equal Access Act and the new ruling of Equal Treatment, CEF now had a green light to hold School Good News Clubs (SGNC) in any and all schools that allowed after-school activities by any outside organization, religious or otherwise. The door was opened, and CEF leadership made a quick and strategic decision to encourage every chapter nationwide to swiftly redesign their ministry strategy to include this new paradigm (Bachelder et al. 2003).

The leadership of CEF had a monumental job. They had to convince 57 state and nearly 400 local leaders that this new paradigm was the best way forward. The state and local workers had to buy into that paradigm, which meant changing how they did virtually everything in their

current ministry. The data suggested that this was a successfully implemented strategy. CEF had 545 School Good News Clubs meeting in the USA, accounting for 11.4% of their ministry just before the Supreme Court ruling. This number grew to 1,345 within two years of the verdict (Estevez, 2022). Twenty years after the ruling, School Good News Clubs numbered 3100 across the USA, making up 77% of all Good News Clubs and 81.7% of the total outreach of CEF in the USA (Estevez, 2022).

How did this dynamic of followership work in such a way that CEF demonstrated dramatic growth during a large organizational change? This research discovered the answer to that question through a qualitative study of grass roots local ministry directors who were present during this time of transition. To understand the followership principles that contributed to this successful organizational change, one must first understand the background leading to this decision, including the 2001 Supreme Court case that paved the way. Chapter One of this work will provide that background. It will also give a brief overview of existing literature to frame the problem, a statement of the problem, and the research questions that will focus the study. Next, this chapter will list any assumptions and delimitations the reader should know as well as definitions of key terms. Lastly, it will outline the significance of this study and a summary of the design.

Background to the Problem

This qualitative study was designed to understand the dynamics of followership that came into play during an organizational change that was sparked by a Supreme Court decision on June 11, 2001. This understanding came by knowledge of the history of CEF as well as an examination of the structure and strategy of the organization. Vital to this understanding is the

details of the 2001 Supreme Court Case of *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* which was the catalyst for the organizational change within CEF.

The History of Child Evangelism Fellowship

  Child Evangelism Fellowship was formally founded in 1937 by Jesse Irvin Overholtzer. Its founding was in response to a life-changing moment of Overholtzer when he read a statement by Spurgeon (1975) emphasizing that children can understand and accept the gospel just as adults. (Overholtzer, 1958). Overholtzer's question quickly refocused from "Can children be saved?" to "Why is the church not reaching the children with the gospel?" He dedicated the remainder of his life to establishing and growing a non-profit organization with a singular focus on evangelizing and discipling children worldwide (Morgan, 2011). Overholtzer started this ministry near his home in California with Bible clubs for children held in homes. These clubs were called "Home Bible Clubs, Neighborhood Bible Clubs, Good News Clubs, and the like" (Overholtzer, 1938, p. 880).

  The work grew rapidly, and Overholtzer soon started the forerunner to CEF, Christian Training Association, on March 23, 1922 (Morgan, 2011). This organization trained workers to reach children in California but also spread to New Mexico and Chicago. Overholtzer was constantly convicted to pray for children worldwide, not just in the United States. A worn globe and a tear-stained Bible in his office evidenced his heart for the worldwide evangelization of children. Overholtzer wrote about this time in his life: "The fact that there was a supernatural prayer burden for the children of every land indicated that this blessing was to become worldwide. No such prominence or scope of work primarily for children had ever been known" (Overholtzer, 1953, p. 66). Overholtzer formed a committee and recruited Dr. Paul Rood, who was the president of Biola University at the time, to be the first president of CEF. The

organization was incorporated in Chicago on May 20, 1937, as Child Evangelism Fellowship with the slogan "Capture the children for Christ" (Morgan, 2011, p. 16).

The Structure of Child Evangelism Fellowship

In the year 2019, CEF reached 25.5 million children in one year (cefonline.com). Leaders and volunteers alike credit God, but the structure of CEF also had much to do with its ability to expand exponentially. Because CEF is a grassroots ministry emphasizing local autonomy, decisions can be made quickly. Strategies can be implemented without an excess of red tape. Understanding the structure of CEF worldwide will lend insight into the speed at which complicated strategic change could be adopted and implemented. This structure will be understood through the lens of the location of CEF and CEF Press and the understanding of governance and organization procedures. Lastly, understanding the autonomous nature of CEF's strategy will be examined. This autonomy is crucial to the implementation of the focus of this study.

Location

Child Evangelism Fellowship is currently headquartered in Warrenton, MO. This campus contains all of CEF's operational buildings as well as the home of CEF's current president, Jeremiah Cho. Cho is a South Korean national who was chosen for that position in July 2022 after serving in various roles with CEF worldwide (cefonline.com). The president before Cho was Reese Kauffman, who served in that role for 33 years, including the time spanning the 2001 Supreme Court case and the subsequent organizational changes that were the focus of this study. The international headquarters is also the location of all senior staff, including the international ministries director, the USA director, the executive leadership team, the educational director, support services, and finances.

CEF Press, the publication arm of CEF, is also housed in Warrenton. Curriculum is written, illustrated, and printed for worldwide use in this department. Also within the buildings at headquarters is a digital media center that creates and produces digital media for the CEF website, the YouTube channel, and the U-NITE application. Twice a year, the international headquarters runs a 12-week institute called *Children's Ministry Institute,* which equips workers to be local, state, or national directors (cefcmi.com). This institute is also offered online and in all regions of the world.

Governance

CEF is governed by an International Board of Trustees, which includes eighteen members. These members meet in person three times a year and virtually as needed. They are divided into six subcommittees that oversee the various aspects of the organization. The president and all employees of CEF are ultimately responsible to this board. As a worldwide organization, the ministry of CEF is divided into eight regions across the globe. Each region has a regional leader, a regional office, and regional literature and training directors (Tant, 2019).

Within each region are national chapters, which are led by national directors and national committees. The national directors report to regional directors, who report to the International Board of Trustees. Currently, CEF has ongoing work in more than 200 countries worldwide. They have over 3,400 full-time workers worldwide. There are also tens of thousands of volunteers worldwide. Their website states, "God works through His people, godly leaders, staff, and volunteers to accomplish their goals. The sun never sets on CEF ministry" (cefonline.com).

In the USA, there is a further breakdown into state chapters. There are 57 state chapters within the fifty states, including states, partial states, and larger metropolitan areas. State chapters are comprised of local chapters encompassing one or more counties, a metropolitan

area, or an entire state (Estevez, 2022). These local chapters are where the grassroots directors

are found that execute day to day ministry.

Autonomy

Although all chapters are required to meet theological and organizational requirements,

they are autonomous in most ministry, staffing, and financial decisions. Each chapter of CEF,

national, state, and local, has its own committee, budget, and ministry plan. These local leaders

and committees are responsible for the day-to-day strategy, training, equipping, and

programming. Local directors are encouraged to work with the state and national offices in

matters pertaining to all chapters but have much freedom to implement policies and strategies

that work best in their local area. For example, CEF workers throughout the USA are required to

submit to mandatory background checks for all employees or volunteers. This safeguard is a

strict policy that all local chapters must follow. Other policies, such as finances, materials taught

in clubs, and required staff training, are also passed down to the local chapter as mandatory.

However, ministry decisions are made locally by the director and committee. CEF local chapters

are autonomous in most financial decisions. They are responsible for raising the support needed

for their workers and ministry. The local committee oversees all financial decisions and

expenditures (Tant, 2019).

The ministry and financial autonomy of local chapters meant that each of nearly 400

chapters had to decide to either adopt or reject the new strategic plan advocated by the

International and USA national offices. Understanding this hierarchical structure is crucial to

understanding the phenomenon of nearly every chapter adopting the new strategies after the

2001 ruling.

The Strategy of Child Evangelism Fellowship

CEF's current strategy can be summed up in three phrases which make up their current motto. These phrases are *every child, every nation, every day.* These are addressed in more detail on the CEF website. The idea of *every child* is,

> God has given His people a clear commission—to reach every creature with the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our special mission in CEF is to evangelize every child. Strategic ministry choices such as Good News Club in public schools and concentrating on high-potential growth countries will help us reach this goal. (cefonline.com)

Secondly, CEF is committed to every nation. In 2017, CEF had an active ministry in every country in the world but one. (cefonline.com). Since the onset of COVID-19, this number has declined slightly, but CEF still aims to have active work of evangelizing and discipling children in every nation in the world. The third goal, *every day* communicates the strategy of providing materials for the children to meditate on God's Word daily. This strategy is accomplished through training, equipping, supporting, and programming.

Training

The first step in the worldwide strategy is providing training for paid and volunteer workers. CEF provides its training program called *Children's Ministry Institute.* This twelve-week training program is available at the headquarters in Missouri, online, and in every region of the world. This training is standardized globally as an effective way to share the gospel with children and lead them in the discipleship process. Wright (2007), who developed this institute and standardized it worldwide, wrote that its purpose is to "provide training, curriculum resources, administrative assistance, and leadership as it oversees the entire program of CEF worldwide" (p. 2). This training is accepted at numerous Christian universities, including Liberty University (liberty.edu), as academic credit for students who have completed the institute (Wright, p. 5). Recognizing that not all those wishing formal training could attend a 12-week

institute, Wright implemented extension sites that offer module training. Some of the modules are also offered online. Since these alternative ways to receive training have been offered, training has increased at extension sites (Wright, 2007).

In addition to this program, there are shorter training sessions entitled *Super Seminars* geared towards volunteer teachers. Many local chapters also offer monthly training classes for local workers to get training as they teach. In 2022, CEF trained 439,423 workers in one or more capacities (cefonline.com). They state that "training is key if we are to see more children reached for His glory. We want to challenge more of the workers we have trained to enter full-time ministry" (cefonline.com).

Specific to SGNCs, CEF offers training called *Quick Start.* This program is a seven-part video series that explains the philosophy of SGNCs, the importance of holding these clubs, and practical tips for the successful start of a new club in a public school (Beers et al., 2022). CEF offers a scaffolding approach to training in which those who have undergone advanced training can become trainers. Wood et al. (1976) said that scaffolding requires a leader who models how a task can be accomplished to a learner. CEF utilizes this approach by having trained leaders model and teach other volunteers in the specific training offered by the organization. Once leaders are credentialed to be trainers, they must teach at least once every three years to keep those credentials. This policy helps keep the training consistent and helps to maintain the high quality of what is offered. It also contributes to the commitment to standardized training and curriculum worldwide (cefcmi.com).

Equipping

CEF writes and prints its materials to equip teachers worldwide with the resources needed to reach children. "Equipping volunteer teachers is the primary goal of our literature

ministries, which includes literature development and production" (cefonline.com). For those

teaching in third-world, underdeveloped, or hostile countries, these materials are often provided

free of charge. Materials are printed primarily in America and Europe and sent worldwide,

although some materials are printed locally in nearby countries if feasible. For many years, the

availability of literature was a barrier to ministry in underdeveloped countries. Workers had the

necessary training to teach and a heart for ministry, but no material to study or prepare and no

visuals to show the children. In a personal testimony shared with this writer while visiting CEF

workers in Ghana, Africa 2012, a local director shared that she cut tree leaves into shapes to use

as visuals. Recognizing this need, CEF started a program called *Boxes of Books*. These boxes are

filled with visuals, texts, and other resources needed to teach the children and are shipped

worldwide to trained CEF workers free of charge. Donors exclusively fund this project. A

worker in West Africa said that Boxes of Books has been such a blessing, and the teachers

literally weep for joy whenever a box arrives (Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc., 2019). These

shipments not only provide the needed materials for teachers but also contribute to the

consistency of CEF materials throughout the world.

Supporting

CEF is committed to using national workers in as many areas as possible. Out of the 3400

full-time workers currently on the field, 96% are nationals (cefonline.com). These nationals are

often not able to be self-supporting. CEF says,

> In many countries, it is impossible to raise the needed support from within because of
> poverty or oppression. For this reason, we are committed to building a connection
> between those who are called and equipped by God to do ministry and those who are
> blessed and able to provide the finances needed to sustain it. (cefonline.com)

A large part of this strategy is a program called Sponsor A National™ (SPAN™)**,** which uses

resources from more wealthy countries to fund national workers in their home or neighboring

countries. Strategic fundraising has provided for more than 1300 SPAN workers currently serving worldwide (cefonline.com). Once the workers are trained, equipped, and supported, they can begin implementing the strategy of CEF to reach the children. This strategy is implemented through three primary programs: Good News Clubs (GNC), School Good News Clubs (SGNC), and 5-Day Clubs. Since 5-Day clubs are strictly a summertime program, they were not included in this research which focused on ministry in the public schools during the school year.

Programming

Good News Clubs. The Good News Club is the flagship program of CEF. In the most recent statistics provided by CEF, 79,733 good news clubs were held across the globe in 2022. In 2019 (pre-COVID), 98,618 clubs held nationwide (cefonline.com.). These weekly clubs are held primarily in schools, churches, daycare and community centers, and homes. Good News Clubs consist of Bible teaching, prayer, missions, verse memorization, games, songs, and small group time (Beers et al., 2022).

Because this study of CEF is focused on a phenomenon that happened in the USA and affected only American chapters, that will be the area of concentration for the remainder of this research. When Good News Clubs were first formed in the United States, the primary focus was reaching neighborhoods by holding clubs in homes for local children. This strategy was losing effectiveness as parents became more reluctant to allow their children to attend clubs in private homes (Estevez, 2022). Recognizing this trend, CEF developed a new strategy to reach children in public schools. There were many advantages to this approach. The first is that children were already gathered in this public, safe place so they were easy to access. Secondly, volunteers were more likely to help in this atmosphere as they found it more agreeable than hosting clubs in their homes. Thirdly, the burden could be shared with churches that were encouraged to reach out to

the public school in their neighborhood and provide the staff to teach a Good News Club in that school. As CEF began implementing these new ideas, a new strategy was born (Bachelder et al., 2003).

School Good News Clubs. Bible clubs for children attending public schools are not unique to the ministry of CEF. Due to Released-Time laws in several states, biblical organizations have had opportunities to hold Bible classes during school hours. Released Time laws vary from state to state, but most read like that of Pennsylvania which says children can participate in a released time program under three conditions. These conditions are that the school will not fund the program in any way, the classes cannot take place on school property, and participation is voluntary and requires parental permission (releasedtime.org). These conditions result from two supreme court cases, *McCollum v. Board of Education***,** 333 U.S. 203 (1948) and *Zorach v. Clauson***,** 343 U.S. 306 (1952).

Organizations such as CEF began to hold clubs after school in states that did not have Released Time laws. Like released time clubs, the after-school clubs could not use school funds and required parental permission, but unlike Released Time clubs, they were being held on school property since it was after school hours. Child Evangelism Fellowship began to take advantage of these opportunities to start after-school Good News Clubs across the country, especially in states that did not have released-time laws. After successfully establishing after-school clubs in various schools nationwide, they began to encounter opposition. The clubs met opposition from schools and community advocates. This opposition culminated in a lawsuit in New York which rose to the Supreme Court in 2001.

Good News Club v. Milford School District

This lawsuit came about when Milford School District in Milford, NY, denied CEF's application to hold a School Good News Club in their school. Milford claimed the application was rejected because CEF was violating the establishment clause of the First Amendment, which states,

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (U.S. Const. Amend. I)

Levy (1994) stated that the purpose of this clause was not to advocate for or against religion but to be sure that "neither religion nor government was sovereign, or slave, to the other" (p. 181). Milford School District felt that because the clubs were being held on school property, they were violating the Establishment Clause. Milford also pointed to the 1962 case of *Engel v. Vitale,* which states that the state cannot hold prayers in public schools, even if it is not compulsory or tied to a particular religion.

CEF's case was taken up by Liberty Counsel, who argued that CEF should have equal access and that denying this access was a violation of free speech guaranteed in both the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Milford felt that since they had not allowed other religious groups to meet at their school, they had the right to deny Good News Clubs. The District Court ruled in favor of Milford. The court agreed with Milford that there was no discrimination or unconstitutional behavior (Staver, 2001).

Based on these rulings and their understanding of the establishment clause, Milford felt they could reject the Good News Club application because (1) the club engaged in religious instruction, and (2) the young elementary students would mistakenly believe the school endorsed religion, especially since the club met immediately after the last bell (Staver, 2001).

Staver, the Liberty Counsel attorney, argued on February 28, 2001, that the club wanted "nothing more than to be treated neutrally and given access to speak about the same topics as other clubs" (Staver, 2001, p. 2). On June 11, 2001, the court ruled that the school could not deny equal access to the School Good News Club for any time that is generally available for public use (533 U.S. at 114 n.5). Staver reiterated that this ruling meant that equal access must mean equal treatment. Discrimination in any form between secular and religious clubs is unconstitutional (p. 6). CEF now had on record the highest court's permission to have equal access to any public school, which allowed after-school clubs to any other organization. Leadership at CEF quickly recognized that a door had been opened across the country. The next logical step was to establish a way to execute these clubs and help their local chapters find a way to navigate these uncharted waters which were full of previously unheard-of opportunities.

The Plan

This Supreme Court ruling opened the doors for many organizations to hold meetings in public schools during after-school hours. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said that this ruling ensures the rights of students to have clubs, whether they be Gay-Straight Alliance, Bible study programs, political groups, or other interest groups. After the historic ruling, CEF made an unprecedented decision to seek to change the paradigm of how they did ministry in nearly all 400 local chapters across the United States. They proposed an organizational wide change from mostly small clubs held in homes and churches to a plan where they would implement new strategies and procedures to shift focus to holding clubs in public schools.

In 2003, CEF published a comprehensive strategy for launching School Good News Clubs across America. Central to the paradigm shift after the Supreme Court decision was a book published by CEF entitled *The Plan.* This 338-page manual was put into the hands of every state

and local director and stated its goal to define the national plan, emphasize the importance of partnering with the local church, and lay out a step-by-step process that will work for the majority of CEF in the USA (Bachelder et al., 2003). This manual stated that CEF would have a goal to maximize their efforts by going to where the kids are. This work also recognized that "school-based clubs can reach more kids than a typical home club, producing greater results with the same effort and work" (p. 3). *The Plan* referred to the open doors provided by the Supreme Court ruling as an unprecedented opportunity to reach children right where they are. That opportunity is in the public elementary school at the end of the school day.

The primary focus of *The Plan* is church involvement. Although CEF is a parachurch ministry, its goal is to equip and work alongside churches to reach the children in their local schools. It stated that through these church partnerships, CEF would be able to effectively equip local churches to reach their communities through school clubs (Bachelder et al., 2003). CEF initiated an adopt-a-school program that provided training, mentoring, and encouragement for the teams and churches reaching the local children. A strategy was suggested for approaching local churches and sharing the vision of reaching children in the public school near their church. Specific flyers, permission forms, handouts, sample letters to superintendents, and other practical resources were included in this resource.

Through *The Plan* and strategic change policy, CEF's efforts were now laser-focused on inspiring local leaders to transition away from a focus on home and church clubs to one of implementing and prioritizing School Good News Clubs. CEF shared the vision with the local grass-roots directors and equipped them to make the change. Before the 2001 ruling, SGNCs comprised 11.4% of all GNCs in America which amounted to 545 clubs (Estevez, 2022). This number began to grow gradually but made significant headway in 2003 after publishing *The*

Plan. In 2003, 1345 clubs, or 27%, had transitioned to SGNCs. By 2019, 77% of all clubs and 81.7% of children enrolled in a weekly CEF program attended SGNCs at their local public school (Estevez). These numbers speak to a successful strategy change and transition among the more than 400 autonomous chapters in CEF.

In 2022, CEF updated *The Plan* and released a *Church Partnership Manual* revision. This revision includes updated strategy and practical resources for local CEF chapters to partner with churches to conduct SGNCs at their local public schools. This was distributed to all local chapters, along with online access to all resources needed to start clubs. The ministry strategy in the USA has not changed since the paradigm shift described in this study. President Jeremiah Cho recently stated,

> We have the privilege and the responsibility to proclaim the gospel to [the children] because God loves them and desires to forgive their sins. We must embrace the vision of God and ask the Lord to give us everything needed to reach them. We must seek to reach every child, every nation, every day. (CEF, 2022, p. 4)

The Plan was critical to implementing the new paradigm and was an essential aspect of this study. However, this manual does not highlight or even mention the followership decisions and feedback that led to this drastic ministry shift and contributed to the success or failure of this plan in the local areas. The goal of this work was to use interviews with grassroots workers who consider themselves followers to fill those gaps.

In the years following the 2001 Supreme Case victory for CEF, other nationwide and worldwide initiatives have been rolled out from the leadership to their followers. As with the SGNC strategy change, these other initiatives have been bold and require a partnership of trust between leaders and followers. The fact that these initiatives have been received and adopted speaks to the trust established through former decisions like the strategy change in 2001-2004. It

must have been significant if a phenomenon was enough to create trust and prepare followers for open-mindedness. That significance is what was revealed through this study of CEF.

Statement of the Problem

The number of School Good News Clubs held, and the number of children enrolled in the program began an upward trend in 2001 but saw significant growth in 2003-2004 (Estevez, 2022). The 2001 Supreme Court ruling catalyzed that increase but understanding and implementing the rights afforded by that decision had to be communicated to the field. This communication was designed to be specific and transformative. It was to be communicated with a sense of urgency and in a way to share a burden that the leadership strongly felt. It called for committed followership. Since both data and personal testimonies establish that CEF successfully implemented a paradigm shift, identifying the followership principles and practices that cultivated this shift was valuable as an example for CEF in future decisions and other organizations with similar structures.

The impact followership had on the implementation of organizational change from an organization as large as CEF was valuable to fill a gap. CEF is the largest evangelical ministry to children in the United States. CEF was worth studying from an academic standpoint to gain an understanding of their navigation during a time of organizational change. The followership demonstrated by the local directors revealed part of what led to this successful change.

This study examined how an organization as large as CEF used followership principles during an organizational change to expand its ministry successfully. More specifically, this study found the process that guided this organization through this phenomenon, which set the stage for both the proposal and acceptance of ministry changes. As CEF is once again facing a noticeable decline in ministry due to lingering COVID-19 restrictions, clearly articulating these principles

and processes may prove valuable as more strategies must be discarded, redefined, or reinvented in the years to come.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to describe the impact of followership upon an organizational change that was initiated by a 2001 Supreme Court ruling, *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* on the Good News Club ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship. At this stage in the research, organizational change is defined as a change which is far-reaching and impacts company culture, infrastructure, technologies, or day-to-day processes (MacNeal, 2022).

The theories that guided this study were Followership Theory, as popularized by Kelley (1988, 1992), and Lewin's Organizational Change Theory (1947). In the case of Child Evangelism Fellowship, leaders cast a vision for their followers to accept a new paradigm of ministry to accomplish a shared goal better. Followers believed in the vision enough to be willing to transform their entire way of thinking and acting to help reach this goal. CEF local directors, who were the most involved in both aspects of this process, were the focus of the interviews and research and offered relevant insight into this phenomenon. These local directors were grassroots level leaders that possessed the characteristics and functionality of followers in the organizational structure of CEF.

Research Questions

The following Research Questions guided this study:

RQ1. Are there discernable differences in how local directors describe their experience of the organizational structures of Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling and the School Good News Clubs established in response to the ruling?

RQ2. How do the local directors describe the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries?

RQ3. How do local directors perceive the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm?

RQ4: What are the perceived organization-wide long-term results of the paradigm shift of the Good News Club ministry to both leadership and followership?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

Sensing (2011) said that research should state any assumptions concerning the "nature of the behavior you are investigating, the underlying theory behind your methodology, and the conditions in which your study occurs" (p. 20). The researcher should also state the significance of the study, including its relationship to other organizations as assumptions. For this study, there are several assumptions that fall into these categories. The first is that the behavior being investigated was accurately communicated through interviews in which participants shared their lived experiences. Thus, although the researcher used methods of triangulation to seek validity, ultimately, she assumed that the participants were sharing their actual and truthful experiences.

Secondly, the researcher assumed that the participants, although carrying the title of "director," saw themselves as followers and grassroots workers in their organization. Thirdly, it was assumed that the participants could accurately remember the events surrounding the phenomenon even thought it was more than twenty years in the past. This assumption is based on the idea that the change was significant and would be memorable because of its impact. Fourthly, the participants, although employees of CEF and advocates for the organization, were able to be fair and honest in their assessment of the change. Lastly, it was assumed that the findings of the study contributed to the overall understanding of followership and its effect on organizational change. An understanding of these assumptions will help the readers of this study to be better prepared to evaluate the conclusions that result from these assumptions (Leedy, 1997).

Research Delimitations

This research will follow specific delimitations. The first is that the research was limited to the structure and location of Good News Clubs within a ten-year window leading up to the 2001 Supreme Court ruling of *Good News Clubs v. Milford Central School* and following the ruling. It does not include clubs prior to 1997 or after 2007. The second delimitation is that the research was limited to Child Evangelism Fellowship leaders at the local levels who were working at the grassroots level when the court case was settled in June 2001. Thirdly, the research was limited to local chapters deemed successful by CEF standards, meaning those who had a successful strategy of weekly Good News Clubs meeting each week within the period of study. This delimitation is necessary because those with only a few clubs would not have experienced a significant organizational change, but only small adjustments. These delimitations provided a "full disclosure of what the researcher intends to do and conversely, does not intend to do" (Leedy, 1997, p. 58).

Definition of Terms

1. *Child Evangelism Fellowship:* An international, nonprofit, Christian ministry teaching children the Bible since 1937. CEF has 400 offices in the USA and is organized in most nations worldwide, with over 3,500 paid staff and hundreds of thousands of volunteers. (cefonline.com).

2. *CEF Director:* Full-time, paid developer of leaders and volunteers; responsible for pioneering and charter new chapters and effectively reaching children throughout the state. This Director reports to the local committee, the state director, the state board, and USA ministries. (Tant, 2019, p. 45).

3. *Good News Club:* A weekly Bible club by CEF workers using CEF materials and methods for children held anywhere children gather, but not on school premises (Bachelder et al., 2003).

4. *School Good News Club:* A club that contains all the elements of the Good News Club but is specifically designed to enroll children from a public school. Most GNCs meet at public schools after school hours (Bachelder et al., 2003).

5. *Parachurch ministries:* Organizations that work outside and across denominations seek to come alongside the church and specialize in activities that individual churches may not be able to specialize in alone (Resane, 2020).

6. *Released-Time Law:* Upon written parental request, a student shall be excused from school to attend classes for religious instruction under section 1546 of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P.S. § 15-1546). The student may be excused no more than 36 hours per school year.

7. *Equal Access Act:* Religiously oriented student activities must be allowed under the same terms and conditions as other extracurricular activities. (*Prince v. Jacoby*, 303 F.3d at 1081).

8. *Equal Treatment:* Discrimination in any form between secular and religious clubs is unconstitutional (Staver, 2001).

Significance of the Study

This study was significant to the study of leadership and followership as it brought a focus on the concept of followership and its relations to both leadership and organizational change. This focus was missing in much of the previous leadership literature.

This study was also significant for organizations in that it illustrated a successful transition of a large organization due to the successfully executed roles of leaders and followers. It provided a model of followership that can be applied to other organizations.

The significance of this study can also be found in its application to future decisions that may be necessary for ministry organizations that face organizational change. An understanding of the role of followers in these organizations can contribute to successful change. With the lingering and looming changes to public school policy since COVID-19, it is likely that organizations will once again have to create and enlist followers for a new way of functioning. This study could help organizations with shared followership ideas to guide their organizational decisions and transitions.

Lastly this study may help other organizations take advantage of a law that is not well known. In 1962, the Supreme Court ruled in *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962), that school-sponsored prayer in public schools violated the First Amendment's establishment clause. Since this ruling, Christians have lamented the absence of biblical teaching, which provided values and morals for children in public schools. To this day, many evangelical Christians echo the wish of President George Bush, who said that America needed to "put the faith of our fathers back into our schools" (Levy, 1994, preface). Those echoing these sentiments are often unaware of the doors to minister in public schools opened by *Good News Club v. Milford Central School*. A study of Child Evangelism Fellowship, one of the few organizations taking advantage of the equal access clause, may bring light how others can also be involved.

Summary of the Design

This study was conducted using qualitative research. Creswell (2003) defined the qualitative researcher as one who "collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of

developing themes from the data" (p.18). The collection of data in qualitative research begins with questions. The answers to these questions provide images, sounds, words, or numbers, which form data that can then be grouped into information (Rossman & Rollis, 1998). The qualitative researcher will then examine the data to draw valid meaning (Miles & Huberman, 2013, p. 1). The qualitative researcher will also "aim to examine the many nuances and complexities of a particular phenomenon" (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 6).

Qualitative research is characterized by its search for meaning and understanding. As a qualitative study, the researcher will be the primary instrument for collecting data. Since the phenomenon occurred 23 years ago, the number of people who were available to participant was limited as CEF had lost contact with those who had since retired or passed away. The limited quantity of participants available meant this study was better suited to rely on quality, in-depth information obtained through interviews instead of larger amounts of information that would be needed for quantitative methods such as surveys, tests, or experiments (Hyatt & Roberts, 2023).

More specifically, the study was phenomenological, meaning it had a focus on people's experience from their perspective (Roberts, 2010). This is important for research when the data are not plentiful on the organization or people that are the focus of the study. The research gives a holistic picture, using words to "describe people's knowledge, opinions, perceptions, and feelings as well as detailed descriptions of people's actions, behaviors, activities, and interpersonal interactions" (Roberts, 2010, p. 12).

Finlay (2012) gave a broad definition of phenomenology as

an umbrella term encompassing a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches. It is a way of *seeing* how things appear to us through experience. More than a method, phenomenology demands an open way of *being*—one that examines taken-for-granted human situations as they are experienced in everyday life, but which go typically unquestioned. (prologue)

A phenomenological approach is one in which the researcher investigates how people perceive an experience that they have lived through and how it affected certain aspects of their world (Leedy & Ormrod, 1997). This study will seek to shed light on a little-known event that significantly impacted an organizational-wide change and how the followers in that organization contributed to that change.

Data were first collected through some basic participant profile information provided by CEF International Headquarters. These data answered some basic questions about the participating chapter and director. The interviews themselves were scheduled to last up to one hour. The interviews were done remotely using *Zoom.* Each interview consisted of open-ended questions, and participants were encouraged to share their experiences freely. All interviews were recorded with the participants' permission using the *Zoom* recording feature.

After all interviews were completed, they were transcribed. This transcription was done using the MP4 provided by *Zoom* and uploading it to a transcription software called *Transcribe.* These transcriptions were carefully checked and edited as needed to correct any mistakes made by the software. The accurate transcriptions were then put through the coding process. This process was used to "generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis" (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 194). *NVivo* software was used for data analysis and coding from interviews. This software was easy to install, widely recognized, and was able to do the essential functions of text searches and word frequencies required for this research. After all data was coded, the researcher used Creswell & Creswell's (2017) proposed steps to analyze, compile, and group the data, and to assign themes to the groups. Then the researcher interpreted the findings. Lastly, the researcher checked the findings for validity and reliability.

Research Population

The population of this study was made up of Child Evangelism Fellowship grassroot level directors who were employed with Child Evangelism Fellowship in the years leading up to and immediately following the 2001 Supreme Court ruling. They were directors over areas that were successfully implementing a weekly strategy of holding Good News Clubs.

Research Samples and Sampling Technique

The research sample for this study was identified using purposeful selective sampling. "Purposive samples select people who are aware of the situation and meet the criteria and attributes essential to research" (Sensing, 2011, p. 83). The researcher contacted national leaders who were in leadership during 2001 for recommendations of local directors meeting the profile criteria. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) said that a sample size can range from 5 to 25 individuals and that each of them must have had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. Because this researcher planned to interview participants from various geographic zones within the country as well as workers from both metro and rural areas, the plan was to interview up to fifteen workers. The specific interview questions can be found as in Appendix D, and specific research protocols are outlined in Chapter Three of this document.

When an organization redefines its long-held strategy successfully, others may wonder what they did to achieve this feat. When that organization is the world's largest ministry to children, its recipe for success ought to be studied. In a post-COVID-19 era where ministries need strategy changes to keep up with changing culture, the principles learned by a study of Child Evangelism Fellowship may produce critical information about leadership and followership. Change is unavoidable; being prepared for change and equipped to navigate

change successfully is possible and necessary for survival in the current world of ministry. A

look at theological, theoretical, and related literature laid the foundation for this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This research filled a gap in the theory of followership and how followership contributes to the overall study of organizational change. To identify and fill this gap, existing research on this subject had to first be explored. This chapter divides precedent literature into three major topics. The first is theological literature, focusing on a biblical framework found in scripture and relevant biblical and theological writers. Secondly, the researcher examined theoretical literature which addressed the literature on followership theory and organizational change. Lastly, related literature was analyzed, which is unique to the background and case of Child Evangelism Fellowship, the organization at the focus of this research.

Theological Framework for the Study

A strong foundation is vital for any physical structure to last. This foundation must be deep enough that it cannot be easily destroyed and robust enough to stand the test of time. A solid spiritual foundation is just as crucial when building biblical truths for leadership and organizations. Anthony and Benson (2011) wrote that biblical concepts cannot be viewed as separate from daily living, but that biblical teaching must be practiced in everyday life. Building truth upon the foundations found in the Bible will strengthen that truth and its application. Tozer (2017) said, "The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems" (p. 6). Therefore, the truth of the Bible establishes a firm foundation of correct belief about God for this study. "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (New International Bible, 1978/2011, 1 Corinthians 3:11). This foundation will be laid by first examining the biblical and theological understanding

of followership. Secondly, the idea of organizational change will be explored to shed light upon the biblical foundation of this principle.

Followership as a Theological Concept

Writings in the Old Testament sum up the concept of followership in the command found in Deuteronomy. 13:4, which Patterson (2016) summarized when he said that a good follower must follow God, revere Him, obey Him, serve Him, and be loyal to Him. This command from Moses assumes that followers are committed to the Lord and to the Lord's commands (Merrill, 1994). In the New Testament, the call to followership is made by Jesus with a simple command to "follow me." (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Matthew 4:19). From theocracy to monarchies to early church structure, the concept of followership is pervasive in scripture.

Gërhart (2021) said that the idea of biblical followership starts with Jesus's call to follow and includes the development of His followers. These ideas are very much found in scripture. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, the first thing He did was find followers. He did not have a job listing or schedule interviews to find these followers. He simply approached those He knew were needed to help in His mission and gave them an easy command to follow. He enigmatically said their task was to become "fishers of people" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Matthew 4:19). Jesus did not tell them their job was to follow so they could eventually become leaders, but to follow simply because He called them. Their calling was their impetus and motivation. Followership, often coupled with discipleship and calling, are themes highlighted in the Bible. Gërhart (2021) observed that these ideas include themes of social identity, courageous followership, and proactive followership.

Gërhart (2021) pointed out that the idea of being a follower can seem pejorative in secular society, but the biblical understanding of followership offers a more positive view. The

Greek word μαθητεία is translated as "to make a disciple of, to train in discipleship, to follow, be trained, be instructed" (Mounce, 2011, p. 1528). From this perspective, biblical followership can be viewed positively as a necessary element on the path to leadership instead of an undesired position or lesser honor (Steffens et al., 2018). The concept of followership can be found in both the Old and New Testaments.

Followership in the Old Testament

In the biblical account of Garden of Eden, Eve encountered Satan and told of her reluctance to eat the fruit because God had said it would lead to death. Satan responded by saying, "No! You will certainly not die. In fact, God knows that when you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Christians Standard Version, 2017, Genesis, 3:4-5). Satan tempted Eve to stop being a follower and instead take God's role as the leader. When Eve and Adam abandoned their role as followers of God's law for what they perceived as a better way of life, sin entered the world. Gardner (2001) said this quest for wisdom without revelation upset the whole process of God's design.

Elwell (2017) described that in the generations following Eden, God was the ultimate leader in a theocracy. He says,

> Although the political sense is essential to the word *theocracy*, as coined by Josephus, a broader meaning is usually implied to include every sphere and relationship of life as governed in OT times by the contemporaneous and continuing special revelation of God. (p. 1184)

God appointed others to hold leadership roles, such as prophets, priests, and Levites. Kings, like David, were divinely appointed leaders who ruled in a theocratic environment. These leaders were tasked with the duty of teaching the people the moral law, the statutes, the judgments, the sacred history, prophecy, and poetry of the OT as found in Lev. 10:8–11 and Deut. 31:9–11.

Literature shows that the followers in this theocratic era understood God as the ultimate leader and the One to whom they were pledging their obedience. They were reminded of this daily, from their food, the holidays they observed, and how they taught their children. Estep et al., 2008 said that a nation that operated as a theocracy would have spirituality and religious devotion apparent in its culture and everyday life. These everyday events pointed to God as the ultimate leader and reminded the people daily that they lived as a people who had a relationship with God throughout their history.

Literature suggests that followership in a theocracy should have been easy. In a theocracy, God was sovereign, and His Word was law without question (Josephus, 2001). When the Leader is a holy and sinless God, there is little room for fault-finding or claims of unfair treatment. The Israelites, however, failed in their role as followers as they doubted and tested God's leadership. Shepherd (2019) pointed out that God was disappointed with His followers because He had put faith in them and had hoped they could follow His instructions.

A documented example of this situation is the desert wanderers at Mount Sanai. Even as Moses was receiving the very words of God to pass on to them, God's followers, who had already witnessed His incredible power through many situations, questioned the validity and scope of His leadership. Some writers, such as Barker and Kohlenberger (2004), blamed this situation on leadership. Yet, they also recognize the power that followers can exert over leaders. The authors said that even holy men, such as Aaron, can be influenced by followers to do things they might not do otherwise.

Historical and biblical accounts showed that the Hebrew people grew impatient and fashioned a God with their own hands. They convinced themselves it was not just a legitimate god but a god worthy of their worship over the true God. "The Hebrews, who had just ratified an

unprecedented covenant with their God, became fearful when their mediator failed to return from Mount Sinai" (Hindson & Mitchell, 2010, p. 133). The Israelites forgot that their human leader was not their ultimate leader and quickly strayed from both.

As the Old Testament recounted, more kings rose and fell from power. These kings and their practices are described throughout the Bible and extrabiblical sources as both good and bad examples of leadership. Whether they led well or poorly, the people under them could choose how they would follow. The Bible highlighted the leaders who followed well. God described David as "a man after His own heart" (I Samuel 13:4, Acts 13:22). Succeeding kings were repeatedly described in one of two ways. They were either a king who did what was good and right in the sight of God (2 Kings 18:3), or they walked in the ways of the evil kings of Israel, doing what was evil in the Lord's sight (2 Chronicles 28:1). The summary of their leadership was judged by whom they followed. They either followed the ways of righteousness or the practices of evil. Their followership choices shaped their legacies. Joseph (2016) says, "Prosperity and dynastic continuity rely on the king following the laws and commandments, statutes and testimonies of the Law of Moses" (p. 5).

Ultimately, the leadership and followership successes and failures of the Old Testament pointed to the New Testament and the arrival of the promised Savior and the opportunity to follow with abandon the One who would make all things right (Gërhart, 2021). The words and actions in the New Testament outline this One's methods of followership.

New Testament

As is true for all New Testament teachings, the Lord Jesus Christ was the ultimate example to others of a perfect and holy life. Jesus described His mission on earth when He said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a

ransom for many" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Mark 10:45). Jesus further described His job on earth by saying, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, John 4:34). These proclamations were both a surprise and a disappointment to the Jewish people who had been waiting for many generations to welcome their Messiah. These followers believed that "if Jesus was the Messiah, his destiny wasn't death but autocracy. God was going to give him victory over foreign nations and sinful insiders so that he could reign supreme over an independent Jewish nation on earth" (Penley, 2017, p. 1).

Laniak (2006) pointed out that the idea of following is an important emphasis in John, as in all the Gospels. He further said that following is the appropriate response for anyone who recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:36–43). In the gospel of John, Jesus described Himself as a Good Shepherd. He spent the first part of that chapter detailing the roles of shepherd and sheep and portraying how He is the shepherd, and the sheep are those who follow Him. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, John 10:27). When speaking of John 10, Laniak (2006) said that the followers were inspired in the passage because they heard the familiar voice of their Shepherd.

Jesus not only demonstrated that His purpose on earth was to fulfill the will of His Father but asked those who wanted to be with Him to do the same. His call to the disciples was one of followership, and he asked them to follow Him. His call to followership was immediate, literal, and all-encompassing. Platt (2013) said that the early disciples that followed Jesus first left behind everything that was familiar to them. They were uncertain of where they would go and had no reassurances. All that really knew was they would be following Jesus. Keener (2014) said that observers would have understood this sudden abandonment of the men's families and

livelihood as a sign of radical followership. Platt (2013) stated that as one studies this

phenomenon, they cannot help but notice what a weighty decision this was for the disciples.

This call to followership extended beyond the physical call of the disciples to follow

Jesus. Later in the gospel of Mark, Jesus issued a similar command to a crowd that had gathered.

> Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow
> after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to
> save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save
> it. For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life? What
> can anyone give in exchange for his life? (Christian Standard Version, 2017, Mark 8:34-
> 37)

Once again, Jesus is asking those around Him to be His followers. In this scenario, the call

includes three essentials a follower must have. First, he must deny himself. Akin (2014) said this

call is a call to "Give up the right to self-determination. Live as Christ directs. Treasure and

value Jesus more than yourself, your comforts, your aspirations. Put to death the idol of I" (p.

168). The denial of self was a central part of Jesus's teachings. Mark 22:26 emphasizes this when

He says, "Whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest, and whoever leads,

like the one serving" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017).

Secondly, Jesus said that a follower of His must be willing to take up the cross.

In Luke 9:23, the word *daily* is added to this command. Jesus warns those who wish to follow

Him must be ready to face literal scorn and death because they are following Jesus to the cross

(Keener, 2014). Those listening to Jesus were familiar with the punishment of crucifixion. They

knew the scorn and humility of this type of death. This command of Jesus was radical in that it

requires dying to self and the willingness to face literal death.

The third part of Jesus's requirement in this passage was to "follow me." This mandate

reminds those willing to deny their self-interest and face the cross that there is a reason to do so.

It is to follow the only One worth following. Platt (2013) said that what Jesus was asking was a

wise transaction for followers because life on earth is not worth dying for, but eternal life is worth that price.

Osiek (2011) said that followership was demonstrated in the early church. Mary, the mother of John Mark, Lydia, Priscilla, and Aquila all hosted house churches. These house churches were examples of followership being carried out in the early Christian church and were the place in which the early believers lived out their calling to follow Jesus (Osiek, 2011). Early believers saw their calling as a way for them to live in a way that demonstrated to others what followers of Christ should look like (Whitt, 2019). Gërhart (2021) described their followership as all-encompassing and including all the follower thinks, says, and does.

The followership principles that Jesus demonstrated and demanded were evident even after His death, resurrection, and ascension through the actions and ethics of His followers. Paul, whom most describe as a great leader in the early church, reminded others that they should be "followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (King James Bible, 1769/2017, 1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul understood that in a theological realm, the ultimate leader is God, and all those who serve Him are His followers. Within that group of followers are other leaders, but all are ultimately responsible for the commands and teaching of scripture. Howell (2003) said,

> Strictly speaking, Paul does not call on the churches to 'follow' his leadership, for Christ alone is their leader, whereas he is a servant commissioned to enhance their allegiance to Christ. Paul sets forth himself not as a leader to follow but as a fellow servant to imitate. (p. 266)

In his writings, Paul identified and praised examples of good followership. In I Thessalonians, Paul praised the church for being firm in their faith and following the ways of hope and love. In Philippians, He pointed out that those who followed well did so by risking their lives, sharing in struggles, and sacrificing despite affliction. Paul also praised those who

personally followed him, such as Pricilla and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia, and Timothy. The faithful followership of these and others encouraged Paul.

Ledbetter et al. (2016) said, "The language of servant leadership resonates with Christians in part because it explicitly connects with the language of the New Testament" (p. 14). The biblical concept of followership is almost impossible to detangle from servant leadership. Wherever servant leadership is found throughout scripture, followership concepts are also seen. Since the biblical concept of servant leadership is prevalent among biblical studies, it is logical to apply those same principles to the followers, as followership is the flip side of leadership (McCallum, 2013). The literature on servant leadership is vast, and most also applies to the follower as well. From the outset of the early Christians' obedience to the command to go and make disciples, the biblical understanding is that even the most outstanding leaders are also servants and followers. Bredfeldt (2006) said, "Serving as a guide and pilgrim, the authentic leader-teacher goes ahead and then, when the way is certain, calls others to follow" (p.190).

Organizational Change as a Theological Concept

Scripture tells the story of change throughout biblical history. Some changes are small and relatively benign, while others are significant and organizational-wide. The Jewish nation is an example in both the Old and New Testaments of a group of people who encountered organizational change. One striking example of organizational change experienced by the Jewish nation is the Temple.

Old Testament

Literature on organizational change suggests that change can be categorized as either planned or unplanned. Zorn and Christensen (1999) defined planned change as changes that are planned on purpose by those who are invested in the organization and are responsible for its

success. They defined unplanned changes as changes that occur in an organization that are not planned and are often out of the control of all involved. A significant change in the Old Testament occurred when the Temple was destroyed, and the Hebrew people were left without the organizational system they had always known. The Temple and the worship connected to it exemplified organization (Sterba, 1976). The Hebrew calendar, types of offerings, worship structure, and the basics of how to approach God were all embodied in the Temple. When it was destroyed, there was a change in location, way of life, and structure. Anthony and Benson (2011) said that the exile of the Hebrew Nation affected every part of their lives. It caused them to rethink all that had previously known. They may have even questioned if they were still the chosen people of God. They may have wondered if God was still going to keep His promises to their nation or if He had chosen another nation to accomplish His plan. They surely wondered if they would ever return to the land they had known. All their theological and practical understanding had to be rethought.

The Hebrew nation had spent their lives with the Temple at the center of their worship. Scripture showed that King Solomon completed this Temple in 957 BCE (2 Chronicles 3:1, 1 Kings 6:37-38). The Temple was built as a replacement for the Tabernacle used in the times of Moses and was the sole place of worship and sacrifice for the Hebrew nation (Deuteronomy 12:2-7). The Temple was located in Jerusalem, and all worshippers had to travel to the Temple for sacrifice and worship (1 Chronicles 21:18; 2 Chronicles 3:1). The Temple, as an organization, had rules, procedures, and regulations that were unique to the building and outlined in detail in the Torah (Leviticus 1-27).

In the time of the exile, the Temple no longer existed. It had been destroyed physically, and there was no longer a way to travel to its central location. These events led to a change in

organization for the Jewish people. They no longer had the Temple for worship or sacrifice. The Synagogue became a place for both.

> The majority of writers on this subject have accepted, as probable, the assumption that sometime after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 586 BC and the transfer of a large portion of the Judaean population to Babylon, the Synagogue was established in Babylon by the Jewish exiles there. (Weingreen, 1964, p. 81)

Others believed that the Synagogue was not established after the destruction of the Temple, but that Temple worship underwent an organizational change while in exile, and the already existing Synagogues merely reflected those changes. Institutional life, which has its roots in pre-exilic times, was continued and reorganized while in captivity (Weingreen, 1964). No matter the history of the Synagogue, the fact remains that it represented an organizational change within the Hebrew nation.

The introduction of the Synagogue was a change in organization that ended up being long-lasting in Jewish history. In modern times, the words Temple and Synagogue are often used interchangeably, but in Jewish history, the functions of the Temple and the Synagogue differed. The Temple being destroyed led to the greater significance of the Synagogue. It also allowed for more flexibility in the use of the Synagogue. Roehrich (2019) pointed out that the Synagogue was used for worship like the Temple but was also for study, fellowship, schooling, and community activities.

Even though the Hebrew people left their land behind, they had the opportunity to hold onto their faith amid significant change. The Synagogue personified these opportunities. Daniel is an example of one who navigated the transition without turning his back on his beliefs. His account said, "When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house. The windows in its upstairs room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down

on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before" (Christian Standard Version, 2017, Daniel 6:10).

Leaders emerged, like Nehemiah and Ezra, who used their influence to gain the resources needed to establish their nation once again. Followers also became organized and paved the way for their communities' physical and spiritual rebuilding. When the Jewish people returned to their homeland, they survived a major life-changing event and used it to make changes to their nation that were seen as improvements with long-lasting consequences (Weingreen, 1964)

New Testament

In the New Testament, the Jewish Nation found itself in need of significant organizational change to keep peace, to survive, and to exert its influence. The New Testament begins as a continuation of the story of the heritage of the Jews. However, with the birth of the New Testament church came significant challenges to thought and practice. Munck (1951) pointed out that the introduction to the idea of Gentiles being a part of the church was a significant paradigm shift for the Jewish church. Previously, the church was defined as having ancestral commonality with the fathers, mainly Abraham. The church was also defined physically as those who had been circumcised. To explain it any other way would be a significant challenge to Jewish thinking (Penner, 1999, p. 16-17).

When Paul approached this subject, he referenced Old Testament passages to the Gentiles. In Romans 15, Paul quotes 2 Samuel 22:50, Psalm 18:49, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10, all referring to the Gentiles joining in the worship of God. In the book of Acts, the apostle Luke recounts Paul's words concerning Gentiles joining the church. Paul and Barnabas spoke to the legitimacy of the Gentiles, even uncircumcised Gentiles. Acts 13 said that the Gentiles rejoiced at this news, while the Jews "incited the prominent God-fearing women and the leading

men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their district" (Christian Standard Version, 2017, Acts 13:50).

The Jewish people faced a paradigm-shifting decision. Were they going to accept the Gentiles without obligating them to keep the Jewish dietary laws, rituals, and the practice of circumcision (Thiessen, 2014)? Accepting these Gentiles as full-fledged church members was equivalent to significant organizational change. Old ideas had to be rejected, and new ones accepted. This change would involve what Stobierski (2023) called organizational, adaptive, and transformational change. The change was organizational in that the change to accept Gentiles would have to be organizational-wide. It was adaptive in that it was brought about by needs that had emerged over time and now were at the point where adaptation must be made (Stobierski, 2023). Lastly, the change was transformational, involving a significant shift in practice and strategy. Transformational changes often take much time and effort to adopt because of their scale and influence. Stobierski believed that transformational change is often spurred as a response to external forces, as demonstrated in the New Testament church.

The apostle Paul was very aware that the change to redefine the church as a group of Jews and Gentiles worshipping together was monumental. Paul described the new paradigm as "one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Ephesians 4:4-6).

Organizational Change and Theology

In the Old and New Testaments, God is described as One who does not change. God Himself said, "I am the LORD; I change not" in Malachi 3:6. James said that God is the Father of lights with whom there is no change (James 1:17). In a belief system where faith is placed in

an unchanging God and unchanging doctrine, it is still possible for significant organizational change to take place. The change involves the negotiable realm of practice and practicality without compromising the non-negotiables of theology. Whether faith-based or secular, organizations can learn from scriptural examples how to navigate change without compromising core beliefs.

Summary of the Theological Framework

The theological framework that has been outlined provided a foundation of scripture upon which to build the study of CEF and its paradigm shift. Since the phenomenon being studied is based on a Christian organization, this theological framework was crucial to understanding the transitions that took place in the years following the 2001 Supreme Court decision. Also essential to this study was a theological understanding of followership and organizational change. Both of these concepts were found through examples in scripture. The inclusion and affirmation of followers in scripture spoke to their importance. Followership research is seeking ways to reverse the traditional definition of followers as subordinates and instead see followers as those who are involved in "co-constructing organizational outcomes" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 84). This theological understanding of followership and organizational change provides the biblical foundation before examining the theories themselves.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework guided the research as it presented formal theories and used those theories to explain the phenomena observed and data collected by the researcher (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The theories set forth were Followership Theory and Organizational Change Theory. Followership was defined as proposed by its popularizer, Robert Kelley. Organizational Change Theory was examined through its popularizer, Kurt Lewin. Additional literature and

other popularizers of followership and organizational change were also used to provide foundational information.

Followership

Ledbetter et al. (2016) said that the best test of leadership is whether or not anyone is following. They also said that accepting this statement will cause researchers to move beyond the focus on the leader and concentrate on understanding followership. Northouse (2019) pointed out that very little research has been done on followership compared to leadership. He also noted that much of the research that has been done is more anecdotal and observational than scientific and that leadership studies will remain incomplete until more research is conducted on followership. Riggio and Bass (2005) asserted that more attention is needed to followership in the leader-follower transformational relationship. Yukl (2013) added that only a small amount of research and theory has emphasized followers' characteristics. The importance of followership research will increase as global problems emerge that leaders cannot solve alone. Followership is often unrecognized but ever-present. Hamlin (2016) said,

> Whether we work in an office, sit in a classroom, serve on a committee, play on a team, or join a congregation, we are followers whenever other people have titles, authority, and responsibility that include us within their sphere of oversight. (p. 2)

Followership must first be defined and understood through the lens of theological and biblical truth. After establishing that base, it can be examined systematically in a theoretical framework. This balanced approach combined the secular and the sacred to provide a foundation for successful followership in ministry settings. This foundation can help to fill the gap that has emerged in understanding followership, as noted by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), who believed that it is obvious that more research will be needed on followers and their relationship with leaders.

The Definition of Followership

Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) defined followership as a specific set of skills that complement leadership, a role within a hierarchical organization, a social construct integral to the leadership process, or the behaviors engaged while interacting with leaders to meet organizational objectives. Followership was more simply described as the flipside of leadership by McCallum (2013), the invisible key to success within organizations (Collins, 2001), and the act of having skills that complement leadership (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2015).

Based on his observations, Kelley (1988) asserted that influential followers share consistent, indispensable qualities: (1) They self-manage and think for themselves, exercise control and independence, and work without supervision; (2) they show a strong commitment to organizational goals as well as their personal goals; (3) they build their competence and master job skills; and (4) they are credible, ethical, and courageous. In emphasizing these positive attributes of followership, Kelley proposes that followers are not simply leaders-in-training but hold desirable traits in their unique and necessary role as followers.

The Need to Understand Followership

Kelley (1988) stated that leadership does not take place without followers. Northouse (2019) said that followers and leaders must work together if they hope to reach their common goals. He believed that they both share a moral obligation to strive for the understood goals. The limited research that has been done on followership has given some valuable insight into leadership theory. Kelley (1988) was one of the first to research the importance of followership in the 1980s. He wrote that followers' behavior is vital to understanding the leadership process. He further said that leadership will never be understood completely before one has mastered an understanding of followership. Riggio and Bass (2005) agreed on the importance of followers

and suggested that followers are often well-informed about the task at hand – possibly more informed than the leader.

Leadership is not complete without followership. Hurwitz and Hurwitz (2015) recognized that there is still a significant disparity between the attention given to leadership and that given to followership, even among those who acknowledge their interdependence. Training opportunities, books, publications, and leadership opportunities are plentiful. "Regrettably, the same is not true for followership despite the increasing body of research suggesting that followership has a critical impact on workplace relationships" (Thompson et al., 2021, p. 105).

Whether in a business or religious setting, an honest evaluation of methods and practices must include followership. Hamlin (2016) pointed out that everyone is a follower in some way. He believed that if we do not recognize this role of followership in our lives and in the lives of others, we only contribute to causing dysfunction in the organization. For these reasons, a theoretical and theological understanding of followership was valuable.

A Theoretical Understanding of Followership

Hurwitz and Hurwitz (2015) said that "Followership is the invisible criterion used to make all sorts of key organizational decisions about people" (p. 19). These authors pointed to the widely read leadership book by Collins which suggested that a leader's first job is to get the right people on the bus. Collins emphasized that the right people are not chosen for their skill sets but for being "self-motivated by the inner drive to produce" (p. 42) and having the right character attributes. Collins implied that leaders need to find those with followership characteristics. Followership characteristics do not exclude skills and knowledge but add "additional and qualitatively different set of process skills, such as the ability to delegate tasks, coordinate

efforts, resolve conflicts, and synthesize the contributions of group members" (Collins, 2001, p. 93).

Followership is essential to the leadership conversation because the leader/follower dynamic is changing. Since leadership theory began, most studies and observations about leaders, managers, and workers were based on a model where both groups work together in close proximity. Hickman and Pendall (2018) said that the new leader/follower relationship is based on the premise that the traditional workplace is outdated and that future leaders will look very different from traditional ones. Traditional leaders or managers may have led from an office in another part of the building, but the leadership was hands-on in many ways. Workers often had several layers of management to which they had to report. Some they would see daily, others less frequently. No matter where they worked within the company, there was usually a direct supervisor who could be reached and present at a moment's notice. The workers arrived at a particular time and left at an appointed time, and the time clock kept those times accurate.

In 2018, Hickman and Pendell saw this paradigm begin to change. They wrote that the old model of a manager who is always nearby or one who is watching your every move and speaking to you often is no longer the model being used in organizations. This observation was based on the rise of email and the internet and the fact that supervisors could follow the progress from a distance. With the proliferation of cell phones, a worker could be contacted at any hour of any day. This technology has changed how a business communicates with its employees Workers found ways to work from home to avoid commutes, long workdays, and office protocol.

Those working from home were navigating new territory as they no longer had to punch a timecard and were responsible for motivating themselves to finish their work. Companies had to figure out how to manage without the constant physical supervision of a leader. The need for

good followership became evident, as is the damage that can result from ignoring followership. Kelley (1988) said,

> If organization members can be seduced into believing that leaders are more responsible than followers as causal factors in organizational success, then followers don't have to behave responsibly toward their leaders, toward one another, or toward their tasks as they go about their work. Subordinates are treated as nonentities. Given that, is it any wonder that followers become apathetic and nonproductive in any organization that denies their unique contribution? (p. 69)

During the COVID-19 era, the organizational change was instituted in unusual ways. Thomas (2020) says COVID-19 brought about change much more quickly than corporate culture was used to. He pointed out that organizational culture usually changes slowly over long periods, which allows for adjustment. However, organizational change came much more quickly during the pandemic, sometimes in just a few days.

As COVID-19-era restrictions have mostly ended, companies are trying to find the right balance between working in an office or warehouse and working remotely (Parker et al., 2022). Remote workers sometimes took advantage of the freedoms they had been given, and performance levels dropped. In other cases, the freedom of remote work brought out the best in the workers who appreciated the flexibility. Research suggests that the challenge for leaders is finding the right balance between leadership and followership. (Hickman & Pendell, 2018). With this ever-evolving shift due to technology and environmental issues, an understanding of motivating followers is becoming increasingly crucial for success in organizational change. "Behind every effective leader, you'll find a team of dedicated, loyal, and committed followers that ultimately determine their effectiveness and success" (Murphy, 2002, p. 2).

Followership Within Organizations

Research showed that in organizations, the measure of success is often the completion of a goal (Forbes.com). To achieve that goal, everyone in the organization must work together and

fulfill their role to contribute to the overall success. Often, this is done through teamwork. MacMillan (2001) defined a team as a group of people who are all committed to a common goal or have a common purpose and cooperate with one another to produce the best results. MacMillan believed that the purpose of teams is that they work together to complete an objective. It is understood that working as a team will bring exceptional levels of performance. MacMillan said that it is a clearly assigned task that initially created a team and also what holds that team together. Followership is crucial in teamwork because there is often no defined leader, or the leader may fluctuate within the team or according to the task.

For this reason, each team member must be there for the collective good of the team and the task. Driskell and Salas (1992) observed that when this happens, "collectively oriented team members were more likely to attend to the task inputs of other team members and to improve their performance during team interaction than were egocentric team members" (abstract). Followership often relies on character more than skill. Followership is essentially understanding when to say and do the right things. Followership involves acting and reacting in the right ways no matter the situation (Riggio & Chaliff, 2008).

As organizations rely increasingly on teamwork, understanding followership will become more critical (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2015). Teamwork calls for cooperation and sometimes blurs the lines between employer and employee (Quinn, 1995). A culture of followership within these organizations will improve collaboration and overall results. Teams provide an alternative in the workplace for more flexibility and creativity. When creativity is shared, the individual worker can accomplish more, and the team can be more effective within the organization (Quinn, 1995). The unique idea that effective teams have members whose leadership and followership roles are interchangeable will contribute to success.

Followership Within Ministry Organizations

Gangel (1997) said that an understanding of biblical concepts must start with theology, move to philosophy, then be used for practical implementation. Hamlin (2016) said that religious groups offer good examples for examining followership. Since religious and biblical language is full of followership concepts and terminology, much information is provided for religious organizations seeking to follow the biblical model. Jesus's calling that followers deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him has not changed since the words were spoken. The conduit for this type of followership is the local church or parachurch ministry.

Much of the church's knowledge about leadership has been adopted from secular models. Gangel (1997) flipped this thinking around and said that even though organizations have spent many millions of dollars and many hours of time studying leadership theory, their conclusions are often very close to the descriptions of leadership which can be found in scripture. The church is already implementing things usually associated with outstanding leadership and followership. For example, the biblical church sees each person as made in God's image. They see inherent value in each person and recognize the importance of reaching them on spiritual levels and in ways that they value. Many ministries realize that building followers does not begin with a certain kind of technique; it begins with a certain type of heart— an unselfish, authentic heart desiring only God's best (Cordeiro, 2004). Churches are already effectively using and understanding followership theory through the use of teams, which are often called committees.

The ministry that utilizes ministry teams must also be aware of the importance of those on the team who are followers. Leadership cannot exist without followership. Although followership is an idea that has lagged behind leadership, Kelley (2008) observed that a lot of leadership courses have begun to recognize followership and even may dedicate a section of their

studies to understanding it. He also said that some organizations even acknowledge followership as having a unique role and are teaching it as such. Followership within a ministry context is not just biblical but also practical and optimal.

Gërhart (2021) said that for churches and ministries, followership should be emphasized not just for its effectiveness or because of a current trend but because Christians are first called to be followers. Paul told his followers to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Followership principles align with discipleship principles. Jesus' first and last words to some of His disciples were "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19; John 21:22). "There may be more to being a Christian than followership. There certainly cannot be less. The life story of all Christians should be 'they left all and followed Jesus'" (Sweet, 2012, p. 20).

Similarities to Secular Theoretical Understanding

Literature on followership exists in both secular and religious settings. Sound followership principles and characteristics would prove true in both environments. Riggio & Chaleff (2008) said that followership "is a free act of surrendering and acting in accord with what is being called for in a given situation. This act requires insight, forethought, physical and mental discipline, and the ability to put that understanding into action" (p. 23). They also said that followership is about saying and doing the right things and knowing how to act in a given situation. It involves doing and saying what is dictated by the situation. These descriptions of followership were consistent across the spectrum of business and industry as well as ministry, non-profit, education, or other work environments. Like leadership theories, many of the principles and characteristics concerning followership will be consistent in any setting.

Followership researchers acknowledged that ministries still need leaders. Followership is emphasized as a focus of this work, but not to minimize the importance of good leaders. Hurwitz

and Hurwitz (2015) said that leadership is something everyone does, whether or not the word is in their job title. Conversely, followership is also something that everyone is involved in, regardless of titles. They believed that each person within an organization has both leadership roles and qualities as well as followership roles and qualities. They said that this idea is important because it makes leadership accessible to anyone and makes the role of follower legitimate. As these stereotypes are overcome, people become more open to having conversations about their changing roles within the team and within the organization. This holistic approach, in turn, taps into more potential and builds better, more effective teams.

Having a team where everyone wants to be a leader will prove problematic. Having all followers on a team will also not work. Good leaders cannot compensate for poor followership, just as excellent followership cannot replace inadequate leadership. Followers and leaders have unique roles within a team. Kelley (1988) said that just because someone is named a boss, they are not automatically a good leader. In the same way, those not in management or leadership are not necessarily effective followers. Some people have found ways to avoid either role. Others find themselves in a role that they may not be comfortable with and perform it badly. The two roles must be complementary to one another. The key to a successful leader/follower relationship is finding a working balance between the two roles.

Differences From Secular Theoretical Understanding

As a theological concept, followership differs from the business application in several ways. Ledbetter et al. (2019) explained the difference.

> Within our respective organizations, most of us would describe ourselves as an employee, a team member, a committee member, or some other term that more closely describes our role, but rarely would we use the term follower. We would typically reserve that term for a cause, or for someone who is symbolic of a movement, a vision, or a set of values. In this case we would voluntarily identify ourselves with that cause and its leadership. The key word is 'voluntary.' Most roles in organizational life are not voluntary; they are

contractual. We receive a paycheck for fulfilling the roles for which we were hired. Even though we may have great admiration for a leader in the organization, few of us would describe ourselves as followers. (p. 11)

Research suggested that followership is better applied within a cause or a movement than a business. For this reason, the term followership fits well in a ministry context. The biblical idea of followership, often expressed as servanthood, is the idea that everyone on the team is there to serve together and to serve one another.

The biblical idea of followership is often countercultural to secular thinking. In most definitions of followership, the follower is following a leader. In a biblical context, the one being followed is not a human leader but Christ. In much of life and work, people are used to following other people, and they look for idols to lead them. Biblical leaders are not looking for followers to idolize them but for companions to walk beside them as they both follow the path and commands of Christ. (Richardson, 2015). This opinion seems the opposite of leadership to research from a secular worldview.

Approaches To Followership in Ministry

Kelley (1992) described what he called the *exemplary follower.* He suggested these followers possess job skills, organizational skills, and values. Unlike leaders, who sometimes have almost supernatural powers or abilities attributed to them, followers work hard to complete a task and add value to the organization. Their job skills show focus, commitment, competence, and initiative. Their organizational skills demonstrate that they are part of a team. Their values guide their activities and choices.

Kelley (1992) suggested through this data that the goal of any organization should be to have exemplary followers. Northouse (2019) says these exemplary followers are those who are active in the work of the organization, have positive attitudes, and are not afraid to either give or

receive constructive criticism. In a ministry setting, the exemplary follower would possess these traits but also exhibit a spiritual side that demonstrates the following of a higher calling. Kouzes and Posner (2017) believed that leading these exemplary followers requires exemplary leadership. They said that exemplary leaders do not force their views on their followers, but instead work to help the followers see the future for themselves. Good leaders inspire followers to have dreams, believe in their ability to do great things, and encourage them in their quest to do so. Good leaders help followers get excited about how their actions can have the potential to change peoples' lives and do good things in the world. Ultimately, followers want to believe that what they are doing will make a difference in the company and possibly even in the community or the world.

Exemplary leaders and exemplary followers must find ways to work together to achieve what both believe to be the greater mission. As they work together with this goal in mind, it will be important that they relate in a way that recognizes the significant contribution each will have in the process.

Organizational Change

An understanding of organizational change will be needed to fully understand the influence of followership on organizational change. The definition of organizational change, the types of organizational change, and the importance of organizational change will help to establish this understanding.

Definition of Organizational Change

Strickland (2002) said the word "change" has multidimensional meanings such as "transformation, development, metamorphosis, transmutation, evolution, regeneration, innovation, revolution and transition" (p.14). Organizational change refers to how a company or

business alters a significant component of its organization, such as its culture, the underlying technologies or infrastructure it uses to operate, or its internal processes (Stobierski, 2023, p. 1). Hussain et al. (2018) said that organizational change explains how an organization moves from a current state that is familiar to a desired future state that is unfamiliar. This concept differs from organizational shift or adaptive change in that it affects a major component of the organization, if not the entire organization. Shifts and adaptations tend to be minor modifications that can be made without disrupting business flow. Organizational change is major in both scope and influence within an organization (Cummings & Worley, 2014).

Research indicated that because organizational change is so wide-reaching, it is much harder to implement and has a lower success rate than more minor shifts. A global survey of those serving in executive positions revealed that only one-third of attempted organizational-wide change was deemed to be successful (Meaney & Pung, 2008). Knodel (2004) gave more dismal numbers and said that 80% of implementation efforts fail to deliver their promised value, 28% are canceled before completion, and 43% are overextended or delivered late. Organizational change is difficult to successfully implement because the future of the suggested change is uncertain, and it may seem like a threat to the people's values, abilities, and competency. Unless those involved are genuinely convinced of a necessary move against the status quo, it is hard for them to support wide-reaching change. (Cummings & Worley, 2003).

Types of Organizational Change

Organizational change can be planned or unplanned. Change experts call planned changes intentional and unplanned changes emergent. Aravopoulou (2016) defined planned changes as those that are implemented through intentional actions that result from strategic thinking.

The goal of these changes is to be certain that the organization will be equipped to meet the demands of clientele. Whereas emergent changes are unpredictable, and there are no precise and clear prior intentions for change (Boje et al, 2012; Orlikowowski, 1996; Weick, 2000).

Change can be initiated from without by external factors or within through either management or workers. Lewis (2011) spoke to the benefits of change that originates from followers within an organization. He said it gives those most invested in the results an opportunity to follow their own ideas of what they believe their organization can or should do. The feedback from those on the front lines allows for a company do continually evaluate their progress in light of the past and adjust it to what they feel is coming in the future.

The literature varies as to how many types of organizational change there are. Some sources include as few as four (nibusinessinfo.co.uk), while others claim up to twelve (changemanagementinsight.com). Vandeneijnde (2021) complied the lists into four major categories. These categories are structural change, remedial change, people-centric change, and strategic transformational change. Each type varies in its scope, its source, and its participants.

Structural change occurs when there is a significant change within the organization due to circumstances that cannot be altered. An example would be a merger, an acquisition of the company, major policy changes, leadership changes, or significant market changes. Senior (2002) points out that structural change could also be brought about by political changes such as taxation, legislation, employee rights, exchange rates, or other government policies.

Remedial change is a reactional change within an organization. It occurs when a problem is identified and must be solved immediately. Ibbs et al. (2001) classified this type of change as beneficial and state that these changes positively influence a company, such as a cost reduction or immediate problem-solving. One benefit of remedial change is that it can be quickly evaluated

for success or failure. If the problem was solved, the change was successful. If the problem still exists, more change is needed.

People-centric change is when the individuals within the company face change, not the whole organization. Senior (2022) listed some factors that may call for people-centric change, such as new technology, HR policy, changes in hours, departmental changes, or hiring/layoffs. These changes are complex because they involve individuals and their personal lives, so they may have strong feelings about and resist the change.

Strategic-Transformational change is the organizational change that will be the focus of this study. Aravopoulou (2016) described transformational change as a radical change in which a new way is developed in place of the previous one. He also referred to transformational change as the passage from a current state to a new, future state. Strategic, transformational change is usually initiated by management, and management will assume responsibility for the success or failure of the endeavor. This type of change is implemented when an organization feels a strategy change is necessary to reach its goals, become more effective, or respond to new opportunities or perceived threats. Although initiated by management, the entire company must adopt the strategy to succeed. Quinn (2010) said this type of change is radical in nature and will lead to profound, irreversible transformation. As a leader in understanding organizational change, Kurt Lewin described this type of change as taking place in three steps. His contribution to the field of organizational change is significant.

Kurt Lewin

Burnes (2004b) said that "Few social scientists have received the level of praise and admiration that has been heaped upon Kurt Lewin" (p. 978). Kurt Lewin was born in Poland in 1890 and educated in Munich and Berlin. He studied psychology, which influenced his work in

understanding and explaining the steps of organizational change (Lewin, 1992). Schien (2016) described Lewis as one of the prominent figures in twentieth-century psychology. He said,

> There is little question that the intellectual father of contemporary theories of applied behavioral science, action research, and planned change is Kurt Lewin. His seminal work on leadership style and the experiments on planned change, launched a whole generation of research in group dynamics and the implementation of change programs. (p. 239)

Upon immigrating to America in 1933, Lewin formed the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Marrow, 1957). The goal of establishing this center was to investigate the behavior of groups and how the behavior could be changed (Burnes, 2004b). Although Lewin was involved in much practical research and theory, his model of organizational change, called change process, will be relevant to this study.

Lewin's Model

Lewin's model was more specific, addressing the stages needed for successful change. Lewis believed these three stages define the process of a change, no matter the type of change involved. He called these stages unfreezing, moving to the new level, and freezing on the new level (Lewin, 1947). What is now called Lewin's three-step model has become one of the best-known and most influential approaches to organizational change (Burnes, 2004a). Burnes also believed that Lewin's model is a well-developed approach to changing human behavior and pointed out that Lewin's conclusions are based on over 25 years of research. Hussain et al. (2013) believed that Lewin's model of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing is widely accepted in psychology for implementing change. In the case of CEF, Lewin's three stages will most likely be evident as, by most accounts, the organizational change was successful.

The first step of Lewin's model was *unfreezing*. Unfreezing refers to the process of stopping the existing way of doing things. This process is complicated because it involves overcoming the mindset of those who do not like to change. It also requires discomfort and calls

for stopping or even reversing inertia. Lewin (1947) said, "To break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness, it is sometimes necessary to bring about an emotional stir-up" (p 229). Schein (1996) said that it is important to "recognize that change, whether at the individual or group level, was a profound psychological dynamic process" (p. 27). Both researchers recognized that people must feel safe letting the old go before they can accept anything new. (Burnes, 2004a).

The second step in Lewin's model was *moving*. As Schein (1996) pointed out that the change process cannot stop with unfreezing but must be built upon in order to understand the direction the change must go. An organization facing change will have many options to try new approaches. Lewin's model assumed that those in leadership have carefully researched all available options and are presenting the group with the best option. Lewin (1947) said that planning for change is very challenging because many complex forces are at play. All these forces must be considered and evaluated before choosing the best path. Lewin also recognized that sometimes this process may involve trial and error until the right approach is found.

The third step of Lewin's model was *refreezing*. Once the right approach has been found, the organization must refreeze and accept those changes as the new normal. Lewin believed that successful change must happen as a group because "unless group norms and routines are also transformed, changes to individual behavior will not be sustained" (Burns, 2004a, p. 986). Cummings and Huse (1989) pointed out that refreezing often requires change within the entire organization, including its culture, norms, policies, and practices. Although not perfect for every situation, Lewin's model will be a guide for understanding the role of followers in the organizational change process.

Not all researchers agree on the relevance of Lewin's contributions today. Burnes (2004b) recognized that in the late 20th century Lewin's work on change was under criticism because it could only be successful with small changes in stable conditions. Some also criticized Lewin's model for not recognizing the role of organizational politics and conflict within change. More specifically, Lewin was criticized for "viewing social or organizational groups as fixed and stable, or viewing change as linear and un-dimensional" (Burnes, 2004b, p. 992).

Despite these criticisms, proponents of Lewin pointed out that his morals and ethics have stood the test of time, even if some believe every aspect of the theory itself has not. Lewin (1946) defended himself by pointing out those that he helped through the use of his model. He said that he had helped "representatives of communities, school systems, single schools, minority organizations of various backgrounds and objectives; labor and management representatives, departments of the national and state governments, and so on" (p. 201).

Researchers agreed that Lewin significantly influenced the study of change (Burnes, 2004b). His approach to change and behavior and his concern for ethics and morality contributed to his importance in the study of organizational change. Other researchers, such as Bullock and Batten (1985) and Cummings and Huse (1989), developed models to improve upon Lewin's work. Their combined research led to an emergent approach. Aravopoulou (2016) said this new approach improved Lewin's approach because of its emphasis on understanding that organizational change is not the same for all, and that there must be constant adaptation as changes are made. Another response to Lewin's work is what Strobel (2015) called a situational approach. This approach recognized that no one can claim they know the best way to initiate or understand change within an organization. The organizations are each unique and what works for one may not work for another. The situation at each company will dictate the best way in that

time and place. Each must come to that conclusion individually instead of trying to propose a one size fits all solution. (Aravopoulou, 2016). Despite minor differences in definition, organizational change research agrees with the basic assumption that "change is driven by various internal and external factors such as social, cultural, political and economic factors, technological advances, competition, globalization, new markets, new customers and customers' expectation" (Aravopoulou, p. 24).

Importance of Organizational Change

Research on organizational change indicated that it is a common occurrence. Gupta (2022) wrote that organizational change was a business necessity. He attributed this necessity to the fact that businesses are continually growing. Employees leave or join; departments are added or eliminated; new technology is adopted to keep up with competitors and the market. Cummings and Worley (2014) said that organizational change is crucial if an organization hopes to enhance or improve its effectiveness and growth. Burnes (2004a) stated that organizational change was a dominant feature within organizational life.

Literature on organizations agreed that an organization will not successfully grow or improve without change. It is the approach and the execution of the necessary change that will often determine the success or failure of the change. The leaders within an organization play a crucial role in that success. Those that follow, however, also play an equally important role. Armenakis and Harris (2009) emphasized the importance of followers. They said that as followers are the ones most affected by change, it was important to understand their motivations to support or fight against organizational changes. These motivations would give practical insight. Reardon et al. (1998) believed change can allow an organization to grow, increase success, encourage innovation, develop skills, challenge employees, and lift morale. Resistance

to change not only negates these opportunities but can lead to the decline or destruction of the organization. Burnes (2004b) said that organizational change is a feature of organizational life at a strategic and operational level. He also believed that there should be no doubt of the importance of organizational change. Organizations need to change. They will not survive without making changes. Followers within an organization will contribute significantly to an organization's success in navigating organizational change.

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

Literature on leadership demonstrated that leadership principles and theories play a significant role in the decision-making process of organizations. In this study of CEF, leadership will be studied through its counterpart of followership. The more recently emerging topic of followership will factor primarily into this study as the paradigm shift made by the organization involved the large majority of nearly 400 autonomous chapters, each with its leaders and ideas. Understanding the theory behind this event will be vital as it can bring a greater understanding of effective leadership and provide ways to foster better leadership in other ministries, non-profits, or similar organizations (Riggio & Bass, 2005).

Related Literature

After literature was reviewed to build a theological foundation and design a theoretical blueprint, it was essential to research and examine any other literature related to the topic of study. Galvin and Galvin (2017) said that the purpose of a literature review is to offer a rationale for the research one is conducting. For this rationale to be legitimate, all areas of research related to the topic of study must be examined. For this study of followership principles learned from CEF, the related literature focuses almost exclusively on Supreme Court Cases, which paved the way for organizational change.

Details of the 2001 Supreme Court Case of *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* and other cases that set the stage for equal access will be scrutinized to understand the significance of this landmark case in the strategy of CEF following the decision in their favor. After examining related literature, a rationale for the proposed study will be exposed and explained. The gap in the literature regarding CEF, followership, and its influence on organizational change will emerge and provide this needed rationale.

Precedent Supreme Court Cases

Events never occur in a vacuum. Such is the case with the 2001 Supreme Court case, *Good News Club v. Milford Central School.* Other precedent cases contributed to the environment, which set the stage for the 2001 case that transformed CEF's strategy. The research will analyze three specific cases to provide background for this event as well as the groundbreaking case that was the impetus for CEF's strategic change.

McCollum v. Board of Education, **333 US 203 (1948)**

The case was brought by Vashti McCollum, the mother of a student enrolled in the Champaign Public School District in Champaign, IL. McCollum was an atheist who objected to religious classes being held in the school. She asserted that religious classes held in public schools violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment, commonly known as the separation of church and state. She requested that the school board "adopt and enforce rules and regulations prohibiting all instruction in and teaching of religious education in all public schools in Champaign School District" (Page 333 U. S. 205). The ruling, in part, stated, "a state cannot, consistently with the First and Fourteenth Amendments, utilize its public school system to aid any or all religious faiths or sects in the dissemination of their doctrines and ideals does not ... manifest a governmental hostility to

religion or religious teachings…" (*McCollum v. Board of Education,* 1948). This ruling made religious classes held inside public schools illegal.

Zorach v. Clauson, 343 US 306 (1952)

This case offered clarification and provided an alternative to the McCollum case. Although still holding that public schools could not participate in the hosting or funding of religious education, it gave another option. This option was that if the classes met off-site, using no public funds or resources, they could be held. These types of classes were called Released Time Classes. Justice Douglas said in the majority opinion that the Released Time program involves neither religious instruction in public school classrooms nor the use of public funds, making it different from *McCollum v. Board of Education*. This ruling was an important distinction for religious groups. It clearly defined which classes were legal and which were illegal according to the First and Fourteenth Amendments. According to the ruling, classes were permitted if they occurred off school grounds, with parental permission, and without public funding (releasedtime.org).

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962)

The focus of this case was prayer in schools. The court ruled that it is unconstitutional for schools to implement school prayer in public schools. The reasoning was that a school-led prayer was deemed a violation of the First Amendment by the court. These three cases working together made clear that those who had a goal to teach religion in public school were limited to released-time programs that removed children from the school and used no school funding or resources. Even though the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of Released Time programs, implementing these programs is not governed by federal law but by state laws (Hodge, 2012). Since these laws vary from state to state, there was no nationwide workable strategy for

organizations involved in Released Time programs to adopt. Even with these barriers, Released-Time programs are widespread. Brevik (2019) found programs in 1,000 areas with more than 250,000 students participating. CEF was one of the organizations taking advantage of this program. CEF also began taking advantage of another opportunity to hold religious education programs after school hours. Unlike Released Time, these programs were held on school property but not during school hours. One of these programs was the impetus for the 2001 Supreme Court case that initiated organizational change within CEF.

Good News Club v. Milford School District 533 U.S. 98 (2001)

This case was rooted in equal access, which stated that if other organizations were allowed to meet on school property after instructional hours, CEF should have that same right. Schools allowed after-school, optional student-led programs led by outside organizations. Since the other organizations were non-religious in nature, CEF was singled out by Milford School District and banned from meeting. The school district claimed the club was a violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The Supreme Court ruled that the Equal Access Clause applied to all organizations, regardless of their religious or secular nature. Justice Thomas wrote, "We conclude that Milford's restriction violates the Club's free speech rights, and that no Establishment Clause concern justifies that violation" (sec. 102). CEF was now permitted at the federal level to continue this new strategy.

Subsequent Challenges

Since the 2001 ruling, CEF has been taken to court more than 200 times. Each time, the argument revolved around the First and Fourteenth Amendments, but the rulings cite Equal Access and the 2001 decision. CEF, represented by Liberty Counsel, has not lost one court challenge in twenty-two years (https://lc.org/cef). These favorable rulings do not mean that CEF

is free to function in every school. They are only allowed equal access in schools that also allow other groups to meet. Since the phenomenon of COVID-19, many schools have banned all after-school programs, so CEF is included in that legal ban. If the prohibition is not soon lifted, CEF may find itself again in a position where an organizational-wide change will be necessary to continue its mission.

Summary of Related Literature

These Supreme Court cases laid out the background to the organizational-wide change implemented by CEF. As laws changed throughout the years, CEF looked for ways to implement the new laws to benefit the organization practically. The laws affected the strategy throughout the 20th century, but most profoundly in 2001, when CEF was already looking for a new paradigm to evangelize children. This ruling was a catalyst for the new paradigm. The only missing piece was followers willing to make the necessary changes within their strategies.

Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature

This research sought to understand the role of followership during a time of organizational change. Both followership and organizational change have been researched individually. The concept of followership, although critically important to leadership theory, is lagging in the representation of literature and a detailed understanding of its importance. A thorough study of followership as represented by an organization that successfully used followership to make strategic changes will help fill a research gap. Riggio (2014) said that in this culture of leadership focus it is important to give serious attention to followership development as well. Riggio further said that followership development should be included in all leadership development training. Leadership is still very much the focus of organizations. Maroosis (2008) suggested that leaders and followers ultimately follow a common purpose.

Riggio (2014) added that leaders are also followers, and followers are also leaders. It is a reciprocal relationship. He went on to say that this new way of understanding this relationship will contribute significantly to the research on both leadership and followership.

The most significant gap in the literature is any published information about the role of followership during a time of organizational change. The strategy and strategic change implemented by CEF in the years following the 2001 Supreme Court ruling and the followers' reactions contributed to that deficit helped to fill this gap. A qualitative approach that involved interviewing local directors who were serving in that role during the organizational change produced accurate information on this phenomenon as it relied on personal experience and not published information. The gap in understanding the role of followship during organizational change was filled with strategy and information about leadership and followership that can be applied to future decisions regarding CEF and other prominent non-profit organizations of similar structures.

Profile of the Current Study

As the concept of followership becomes more prevalent, it can contribute to a holistic understanding of organizational change. Followership being practiced and successfully implemented will be critical to this emerging body of knowledge. The literature on followership and organizational change shows that there is likely a connection between the two theories. Scripture also indicates the importance of both organizational change and followership. For these reasons, a study of the influence of followership during a nationwide ministry shift of a significant ministry organization was valuable to the study of followership. This study may also aid other organizations or leaders facing strategic change. Although the biblically mandated task given to Christians remains the same, the strategies often will change to become more effective

or efficient. The researcher intends for the results of this research to provide both positive and cautionary feedback that may inform other organizations in similar situations.

Machi and McEvoy (2017) informed writers that their goal was to "define the subject of study, collect the relevant data, pattern the evidence, and build a justifiable case supporting the thesis conclusion" (p. 134). This literature review was designed to complete this task and prepare the researcher for the next dissertation writing phase. The theological framework provided scriptural and theological for followership and organizational change. The theoretical framework provided ideas and theories that are relevant to the study in this phenomenological research project. Lastly, the related literature provided the necessary background for a thorough understanding of what led to the organizational-wide change that is the focus of the study. These three parts combined form a gap in the research and a rationale for further study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology that was implemented in the research process, including the research design synopsis, research problem, purpose, questions, and a brief design summary. It also outlines the setting, participants, the role of the researcher, and any ethical considerations. Lastly, the chapter reveals the data collection and instruments used by the researcher and the data analysis process. The data gathered through this research helped to explain the followership principles that were at play and how they influenced an organizational change within a ministry organization.

Research Design Synopsis

Research Problem

Good News Clubs, Child Evangelism Fellowship's anchor program, was started in the 1930s by Jesse Irvin Overholtzer. The very first clubs met in churches and were evangelistic by design. As time passed, the clubs also began meeting in homes. Overholtzer (1955) realized that when the clubs met in Christian homes instead of churches, many more unreached children came. Local chapters followed this model of church and home clubs as the organization grew into a country-wide and eventually a worldwide ministry. Although successful for many years, home-based clubs started declining in the 1990s as parents became skeptical about allowing their children into a stranger's home (Estevez, 2022). Since local chapters in this organization are autonomous, some were beginning to conduct the clubs in public schools.

However, most followed the church-and-home model of reaching children in their neighborhoods. A Supreme Court ruling in 2001 (*Good News Club v. Milford Central School*) stated that Good News Clubs must have the same equal access to meet in public schools that other groups have. After this ruling, the number of School Good News Clubs held within public

schools and the number of children enrolled in the program began an upward trend. As the idea spread, the ministry grew significantly in 2003-2004 (Estevez, 2022).

The Supreme Court ruling was a catalyst for that growth but understanding and implementing the rights afforded by that decision had to be communicated to the field. This communication was specific and inspirational. It was shared with a sense of urgency and in a way to share a burden strongly felt by leadership. It called for committed followership, asking the local followers to try a new paradigm after using a comfortable strategy for over six decades. Since data and personal testimonies establish that CEF successfully implemented an organizational change in many ways, identifying the followership principles and practices that cultivated this shift was valuable as a model for CEF in future decisions and other organizations with similar structures.

Literature on organizational structures is plentiful, but a model of a successful organizational change within an organization as large as CEF that highlights followership was valuable to fill a gap. CEF currently has an active ministry in over 200 countries worldwide and is the most extensive evangelical ministry to children in the United States. CEF is worth studying academically to understand why they succeeded in this transition.

This study explored the influence of followership during a time of significant organizational change in CEF. It examined how the organization successfully implemented this change. More specifically, this study found common principles and practices that set the stage for successfully proposing, inspiriting, accepting, and implementing organizational changes. As CEF is again facing challenges in ministry due to lingering COVID-19 restrictions, other school policy changes, and increasing opposition, a clear articulation of these principles and practices could be valuable as more strategies are discarded, redefined, or reinvented.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to describe the impact of followership upon an organizational change that was initiated by a 2001 Supreme Court ruling, Good *News Club v. Milford Central School* on the Good News Club ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship. Organizational change is defined as a change that is far-reaching and impacts company culture, infrastructure, technologies, or day-to-day processes (MacNeal, 2022).

The theories guiding this study were Followership Theory, as popularized by Kelley, and Lewin's Organizational Change Theory. In the case of Child Evangelism Fellowship, leaders cast a vision for their followers to accept a new paradigm of ministry to accomplish a shared goal. Followers believed in the vision enough to be willing to transform their entire way of thinking and acting to help reach this goal. CEF local directors, who are most involved in both aspects of this process, offered relevant insight into this phenomenon and were the focus of the interviews and research. These local directors were grassroots-level leaders with follower characteristics and functionality in the CEF organizational structure.

Research Questions

The following Research Questions guided this study:

RQ1. Are there discernable differences in how local directors describe their experience of the organizational structures of Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling and the School Good News Clubs established in response to the ruling?

RQ2. How do the local directors describe the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries?

RQ3. How do local directors perceive the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm?

RQ4: What are the perceived organization-wide long-term results of the paradigm shift of the Good News Club ministry to both leadership and followership?

Research Design and Methodology

This study was conducted using qualitative research. Strauss and Corbin (1998) differentiated qualitative research from quantitative research and defined it as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p. 10-11). This definition is incomplete as it only addresses procedure. Yilmaz (2013) drew from research by Creswell (2007), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Patton (2002) created a comprehensive definition of qualitative research as an "emergent, inductive, interpretive, and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal and describe terms and meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world" (p. 312).

Research design starts with a research theory and questions guiding the study. The answers to these questions provide images, sounds, words, or numbers, which form data that can then be grouped into information (Rossman & Rollis, 1998). Unlike quantitative research, which is "concerned with process, context, interpretation, meaning, or understanding through inductive reasoning" (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 313), qualitative research is concerned with collecting and understanding participants experiences in their own words through interviews and then using those experiences to draw valid meaning (Yilmaz, 2013).

Quantitative research begins with "a specific plan— a set of detailed questions or hypotheses" (Hyatt & Roberts, 2023, p. 161). Due to the scarcity of followership research that has been done, especially in the specific area of its role on organizational change, the hypotheses and terminology needed for quantitative research were not yet available for this study. It is hoped that after this study and others on followership, the vocabulary will be available to produce surveys and hypotheses for future quantitative research.

More specifically, this research was done through a phenomenological study focusing on people's experiences from their perspective (Roberts, 2010). This approach is important for this research because the data are not plentiful on this organization. The study will give a holistic picture, using words to "describe people's knowledge, opinions, perceptions, and feelings as well as detailed descriptions of people's actions, behaviors, activities, and interpersonal interactions" (Roberts, 2010, p. 12). A particular focus was given to the followership methods and practices implemented during the planning and executing of this paradigm shift in ministry. Although Child Evangelism Fellowship is an international organization, it is not widely known in the Christian or academic community. This study will seek to shed light on a little-known event that significantly impacted a strategy for evangelizing children.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. CEF leadership recommended those that they felt fit the criteria of having been a local director during the time of organizational change and having a successful weekly Good News Clubs ministry under their tenure. The leadership also recommended those that they felt represented local work in a variety of geographical areas and strategic approaches. The leadership recommended participants who are still working with CEF as they were the ones for whom contact information was available. Those that were eligible were sent a recruitment email (Appendix B). If they agreed to participate, they were emailed a participant notification email (Appendix C) and a consent form (Appendix D). After participants signed and returned the consent form, they were scheduled for an interview.

Interviews were conducted with each participant. The interviews themselves were scheduled to last up to one hour. Interview questions, based on research questions, are included as an appendix. The interviews were done remotely using *Zoom.* Each interview consisted of open-ended questions, and participants were encouraged to share their experiences freely. All

interviews were recorded using the *Zoom* recording feature with the participants' agreement. Participants were informed that this recording agreement was a condition of participation.

After all interviews were completed, they were transcribed. The *Zoom* feature provided an MP4, which was uploaded to a transcription software called *Transcribe.* This transcription was carefully checked and edited as needed to correct any mistakes made by the software. The accurate transcriptions were put through the coding process. The coding process was used to generate a description of the setting or people as well as to begin to develop categories or themes for that could later be analyzed (Creswell, 2017). *NVivo* software was used for data analysis and coding from interviews. This software was easy to install, widely recognized, and can do the essential functions of text searches and word frequencies required for this project. After all data were coded, the researcher used Creswell's steps to process the codes. (Creswell, 2017, pp. 169–170). Then, the researcher interpreted the findings to identify emerging themes by examining word frequency and text searches. Lastly, the researcher checked all results for validity and reliability.

Setting

The setting for this study was local chapters of Child Evangelism Fellowship. A local chapter is defined as one that operates within the corporate bylaws of the state and national organization, is officially established by the state board's Local Chapter Charter Resolution, and has received a charter certificate from USA Ministries, providing recognition that the local chapter will carry on the *CEF* ministry under the supervision of the state board (Tant, 2019, p. 36).

The goal was to engage representatives of chapters from various geographic zones throughout the United States. Although all local chapters are subject to the state and national

bylaws, they are considered autonomous in financial and strategic decisions. Each chapter has a governing committee to assist the director with these decisions. The participants in this study had current or former affiliations with CEF chapters that will vary in ministry size and longevity in their given location. The result of engaging participants representing chapters with different locations, sizes, and histories was a diverse, representative sample.

Participants

The researcher chose participants for this qualitative, phenomenological study through purposive sampling. Purposive samples are those who are aware of the research and meet the criteria sought by the researcher. Patton (1987) believes this method is proper in qualitative research because the participants are full of information and provide needed depth to the study. The recommended sample size varies among research experts. This process is a case where quality is more important than quantity (Sensing, 2011). Leedy and Ormond (2004) noted that,

> To some extent, the size of an adequate sample depends on how homogeneous or heterogeneous the population is—how alike or different its members are with respect to the characteristics of research interest. If the population is markedly heterogeneous, a larger sample is necessary than if the population is fairly homogeneous. (p. 170)

The sample group for this research was largely homogeneous as they all work for the same organization and represent similar values and beliefs held by that organization. For these reasons, a large sample was not required. The plan for this research was to interview up to fifteen participants. This number assumed integrity in the recruiting process and that the participants all fit within the qualifications and delimitations outlined in the study.

For this study, the participants were recommended to the researcher by the Rita Wockenfuss, administrative assistant of president emeritus of CEF, Reese Kauffman, who was president during the phenomenon being studied. Ms. Wockenfuss provided a list of 51 names of those who are currently serving with CEF that were also serving in 2001. The Executive Vice-

President of CEF, Moses Estevez, who also served with CEF during the event being researched, reviewed that list and removed some whom he knew did not meet the criteria. Lastly, the Executive Vice-President of USA ministries, Fred Pry, made some suggestions of former local directors whom he felt would meet the parameters for the study. Those making the recommendations were aware of the criteria needed and recommended only local directors who met the criteria that they were a director during the phenomenon begin studied and they led a chapter with an active ministry of Good News Clubs meeting weekly at the time of the studied phenomenon. The recommendations from these leaders resulted in a list of twenty-three people who were possible candidates to be contacted for interviews. All twenty-three were contacted, but only thirteen agreed to do an interview.

Role of the Researcher

As in all qualitative research, the researcher was the main instrument for gathering data. The researcher was also the one who compiled the data collected and explained the findings produced by the study. This researcher had worked with the ministry of CEF off and on for approximately thirty-five years as a volunteer or an employee. As such, she had previous knowledge and experiences with some of those she interviewed. This familiarity had potential to expose bias, but it also allowed for participants to speak freely and comfortably knowing that the information would not be used against them in their career or to harm the organization in any way. The researcher was not volunteering or employed by CEF during the time of the phenomenon being studied for this project, nor is she employed by CEF currently. This researcher has no vested interest or desire for a specific outcome. The researcher desires that the event be understood and explained in a way that will be helpful to the organization of CEF and

other organizations where change is needed. Thus, this researcher predicts there will be no issues as she collects, analyzes, and reports on the data for this project, no matter the outcome.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research, by design, is interpretative (Creswell, 2003). Because of this design, the qualitative research process has various strategic, ethical, and personal issues (Locke et al., 2000). The issues of bias and personal interest in the research make it prudent to be aware of and transparent about ethical considerations that may arise. Leedy (1997) said that it is unprofessional for the researcher "to fail to acknowledge the likelihood of biased data or to fail to recognize the possibility of bias in the study" (p. 220). Therefore, this researcher committed to be aware of and eliminate any bias, values, or private interest that might be involved with the research presented (Creswell, 2003). The researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University before beginning the interview process. The IRB committee ensured that the proposed research complied with federal regulations and provided protection against human rights violations (Creswell, 2017).

Each participant signed an informed consent form (Appendix C). Creswell and Creswell (2017) said that informed consent forms show that the participants are aware of and agree to the provisions of your study before they provide data. This form contained basic information about the researcher and the research utilized the template supplied by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board. Lastly, the names of those interviewed were not compromised, as the researcher used pseudonyms to protect their identity. No identifiable information was included.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

As a qualitative work, the method and instruments used in data collection followed the essential characteristics described by research experts and summarized by Creswell and Creswell

(2017). The interviews took place in each participant's natural setting. This setting was not only the most convenient, but it was also helpful for the researcher's observance. "This up-close information is gathered by talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context" (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 181). The researcher was the crucial instrument for collecting data. That means she was the one to write and ask the questions. The researcher was also the one to interpret the gathered information. The researcher implemented various sources of data such as examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants. Not all qualitative research will need to utilize every source of data. The researcher decided which sources best contributed to the overall study. Lastly, the researcher strove to have holistic research. A qualitative study views a topic from various approaches. Creswell and Creswell (2017) said, "This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges" (p. 182). Following are specific descriptions of how this researcher incorporated these five characteristics of qualitative research into the topic of study.

Collection Methods

Leedy (1997) said that data collecting should be concerned with four specific questions. These questions are: 1) What data are needed? 2) Where are the data located? 3) How will the data be secured? and 4) How will the data be incorporated? (p. 115). The research proposal must answer these questions to avoid ethical and practical problems. These questions will be answered by describing collection materials and protocols, the procedures, and the data analysis.

Collection Instruments and Protocols

Although phenomenologists depend almost exclusively on in-depth interviews, this researcher will also incorporate document analysis into the research process. The two collection

instruments of document analysis and in-depth, semi-structured interviews will work together to provide clarity and credibility.

Document Analysis

The researcher used document analysis to help determine eligibility for this research. For this determination, the documents were simple documentation of statistics from specific CEF chapters. Since the study intended to interview participants from various-sized CEF chapters and multiple geographical locations, some data was needed beforehand to clarify those factors and provide the balance required in the final selection of interview participants. Also, as there were several parameters set to determine eligibility, the data confirmed that the directors recommended meet that eligibility. The first parameter is that the director was an active director during the phenomenon begin studied. The second is that the chapter being represented had an active ministry of Good News Clubs meeting weekly at the time of the studied phenomenon. Data confirmed their eligibility before they were contacted and invited to participate. Bowen (2009) said, "Documents can provide data on the context within which research participants operate - a case of the text providing context" (p. 29). Document that provided these data were housed at the international headquarters of CEF, located in Warrenton, MO. This institution has the records available indicated a willingness to share them with the researcher, as they are available for public review by appointment.

Secondly, document analysis was used in the final stages of research to test trustworthiness and validity. Documents pertinent to the study were used along with the interview process to provide triangulation. By triangulating data, the researcher attempts to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Eisner, 1991). Two data sources working together offer more robust evidence of the validity of a study.

Interviews

As a qualitative work, the most important data collection was personal, in-depth interviews of the participants chosen through purposive sampling. The role of the researcher in these interviews was to take cues from the participants and allow them to speak freely as they answered open-ended, semi-structured, in-depth questions. Leedy (1997) said that interviews should be conducted as a conversation. The participant should do most of the talking and the researcher doing most of the listening. The researcher used an Apple laptop, and the participants used the computer or device they were comfortable using.

The researcher interviewed each participant one time in person. Following Seidman's (1998) model of a three-part interview process, there were three engagements with the participant, but only one was an in-person interaction. Before this in-person interview, the researcher emailed each participant a list of some interview questions they could expect.

The interview itself was the second part of the process. The interviews lasted no more than one hour and consisted of open-ended, pre-approved questions. Weiss (1994) reminded the researcher that "There are no magic questions. Any question is a good question if it directs the respondent to material needed by the study in a way that makes it easy for the respondent to provide the material" (p. 73). Each interview was recorded using the recording device provided by *Zoom*. The participants were informed of when the recording began and ended. They were also informed that each interview would be transcribed by the researcher using transcription software.

Following the in-person interviews, the researcher sent an email in case some clarification was needed as the information was reviewed. Seidman (1998) referred to this third

engagement as a reflection on the meaning. These three engagements with the participants worked together to bring meaning to their experiences.

Procedures

Before beginning any data collection, the researcher worked through the process of gaining permission through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University (LU). The purpose of an IRB is to fulfill a requirement of federal regulations and to ensure that all work done under the auspices of that university protects against human rights violations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The researcher applied to the IRB of LU to outline "procedures and information about participants so that the committee can review the extent to which you place participants at risk in your study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 91).

The IRB required the submission of the questions this researcher planned to ask each participant. It also included a copy of the consent form, which was be sent to each participant. The consent form outlined to each participant the identity of the researcher, the institution, the purpose of the study, any benefits or risks that may be associated with the study, a guarantee of confidentiality, and an assurance that they may withdraw at any time if they so desire (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These forms aligned with the requirement of the IRB.

After obtaining permission from the IRB, the researcher contacted those in current or former senior leadership positions at CEF to compile a list of potential participants. The leaders were aware of the criteria for the study and only recommended those who met all criteria. The researcher aimed to collect 20-24 names through this purposive sampling as possible candidates. When this number was reached, the researcher sent initial introduction letters to those candidates outlining the purpose and nature of the research, as well as what would be expected of them as participants. A deadline was attached to that letter, asking for their response if they were

interested in participating. Because this study aimed to understand a nationwide phenomenon holistically, final participants were chosen based on their chapter size and geographical location to ensure equal representation. Although the goal was fifteen, a total of thirteen participants were chosen and interviewed as they were the ones available in the time frame provided. These thirteen were enough to provide saturation of the topic.

After the final group of participants was chosen, the researcher provided a copy of a consent form and a confidentiality agreement. Participants were asked to read and sign these forms before the first interview was scheduled. Participants were invited to share any questions or concerns about their participation with the researcher before signing the forms and before any interviews began. After the documents were signed, each participant received an email to schedule an interview. At this time, each participant was assigned an identification code, which was used as their identity and to refer to them whenever they may be referenced in the research.

All data that were collected was stored securely. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) said,

> A good storage and retrieval system is crucial for keeping track of what data are available, permitting easy, flexible, reliable use of data, and documenting the analyses made so that the study can, in principle, be verified or replicated. (p. 430)

The researcher stored all information on her laptop, accessible only by her fingerprint or a secure password. The computer was not used by anyone else or left unattended. Data was backed up onto a physical hard drive and stored in a locked cabinet. Data from interviews was not stored on any shared computers or networks. A unique code identified participants and their names and identifying information was not stored with this code.

Data Analysis

After data collection was complete, the data was organized and analyzed. Data analysis in a qualitative research project involves interpreting the data collected in the interviews. Creswell

and Creswell (2017) said that the interpretation of qualitative research requires "summarizing the overall findings, comparing the findings to the literature, discussing a personal view of the findings, and stating limitations and future research" (p. 198). Content analysis is a carefully detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material to identify patterns, themes, assumptions, and meanings (Berg & Latin, 2008a, Leedy & Ormond, 2005; Neuendorf, 2002).

This data analysis process required analysis methods and a plan to establish trustworthiness. This analysis method was coding. The coding process was used to generate a description of the setting, the participants, and the themes for analysis (Creswell, 2003). Trustworthiness was the last thing needed to complete data analysis.

Analysis Methods

Sensing (2011) said, "Collecting and identifying themes is the primary way qualitative researchers process and analyze data" (p. 202). The researcher collected data from various sources and needed to organize the raw data to make it more accessible for interpretation. For this qualitative, phenomenological study, data was be analyzed through coding. Rossman & Rallis (1998) defined coding as "the process of organizing the material into 'chunks' before bringing meaning to those 'chunks" (p. 171).

Coding

All qualitative data, from interviews to fieldwork, must be coded and analyzed to derive meaningful findings. (Berg & Lune, 2016). The coding process allows researchers to "identify and themes, topics, or issues in a systematic manner (Berg & Lune, 2016). Coding is more than just labeling the parts of research. It serves to "inspect, interrogate, revisit, and interpret the data in order to filter, focus, and highlight" what is most important to the study (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2019, p. 240). Doing coding correctly helps the data to be logically grouped and more easily understood.

Coding was the process this researcher used to convert information collected through interviews and documents into data. These data were then analyzed and interpreted to find meaning. The coding for this study was done using software designed specifically for this type of study. *NVivo's* was used for this process as it was easily accessible to Liberty University students. *NVivo's* ability to import Word docs, PDFs, audio, images, and video made it ideal for the research in this study.

Themes

Berg and Latin (2008b) said that a critical characteristic of qualitative research is the creation of themes through a systematic process of examining meaning, coding, and providing descriptions of reality. If done correctly, the process of coding and data analysis will lead to the emergence of themes. Mishra and Dey (2022) said that themes are at the heart of the research approach in qualitative research. They also said, "Themes cannot be observed as they are perceptions, experiences, feelings, values, and emotions residing in the minds of participants/respondents of research" (p. 187). Themes may be identified before, during, and after data collection and analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003), but in qualitative research, the majority of themes emerge after data analysis (Mishra & Day, 2022).

Words and phrases will often be repeated during the coding and data analysis. These repeated ideas lead to the emergence of categories or themes. These emerging themes can be compared to previous literature on the topic and provide either agreement or differences. Mishra and Day (2022) say, "The convergences validate previous studies while divergences will extend the phenomenon or theory that informs your study" (p. 190).

Themes must be extracted from the data and are not always immediately obvious.

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) offered practical step to identify themes. The researcher followed

these steps to identify themes. The first step was to carefully re-read all data, including

interviews, written data, and the data discovered in the literature review. Reading these data and

looking for the big ideas helped to provide an initial framework for the development of the

study's findings. This immersion in the data led to the emergence of categories through repeated

words, phrases, and ideas.

The second step in discovering themes was to develop descriptors for each category

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). These descriptors were identified by the researcher as well as

through the data coding software. The data analysis and coding worked together to create a

coding process that allowed that text to be organized into systematic categories that were able to

be related back to the original research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Discovering themes was important because they provided the practical results of the

study (Krauss, 2005). Vaismoradi et al. (2016) said that the presence of high-quality data will be

helpful to ensure high-quality codes and themes. These authors believed that theme development

done well will yield meaningful, credible, and practical results. For this research, data analysis

worked to discover emerging themes around the concepts of followership and its relationship to

organizational change.

Trustworthiness

After data analysis is complete, the results must be shown trustworthy. This process

indicates that the data and interpretations are "credible, dependable, confirmable, and

transferable" (Leedy & Ormond, 2019, p. 239). Since qualitative research is based on felt needs,

shared experiences, and interpretative data, it cannot be deemed valid by simply applying a

mathematical formula. Patton saw validity in the eye of the beholder. He said that if "those who are judging the research find it to be useful, relevant, and significant, then the research is deemed valid" (Patton, 1987, p. 485). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further included the appropriate use of methodology as a factor for validity. They believed that validity is assured if the research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques are consistent with the methodology. Still, others use triangulation as a valid method for verifying results. Triangulation involves analyzing different forms of data separately and then comparing the results from each analysis (Hatcher & Rocco, 2011). This comparison and agreement strengthen the validity. This study showed trustworthiness by adequately using a proven research method, careful data collection, and proven analysis methods. Triangulation was also implemented by analyzing the multiple forms of data used in the research process for consistencies or inconsistencies (Leedy & Ormond, 2005).

Chapter Summary

The goal of this chapter, according to the Christian Leadership Doctoral Program Handbook, was to present "the methodology, population, sampling technique(s), and the plan for collecting data, including any instruments that will be used" (2023, p. 21). This chapter presented those elements from a qualitative, phenomenological approach. The researcher sought to outline the details to show that the research plan was legitimate and could be replicated. Care was made to include authoritative sources on research and design.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to describe the role of followership upon an organizational change that was initiated by a 2001 Supreme Court ruling, *Good News Club v. Milford Central School,* on the Good News Club ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship. Chapter One provided background information about the organization of Child Evangelism Fellowship, including its purpose, goals, and strategies. This chapter also explained the details of the 2001 Supreme Court ruling and how they related to the organization being studied. Additionally, Chapter One laid out the case for understanding organizational change in light of the concept of followership. Followership is a less understood and studied topic than its counterpart, leadership. This focus on followership was vital because it will contribute to the overall study of leadership and followership when understood through organizational change.

Chapter Two supplied a literature review of organizational change and followership concepts. This chapter provided a theological and theoretical review of the literature on these two constructs. Lastly, it examined literature related to historical court cases, which set the stage and provided background information on the 2001 ruling. This literature review exposed the scarcity of material written specifically on the topic of followership, especially when compared to leadership theory. It also emphasized the importance of understanding followership in both a theoretical and theological context.

Chapter Three outlined the concept of qualitative phenomenology and the research design for the study. This chapter outlined who was included in the study population and how the participants were selected. The researcher's role and any ethical considerations to be

acknowledged are also included. Lastly, this chapter detailed all data collection methods, procedures, instruments, protocols, and analysis methods.

Chapter Four will outline the coding process and how the participants' responses led to those codes. Each code will be presented along with the interview matter that led to that particular code. The codes will be represented visually through code maps as well as through thorough explanations of the participants' use of the codes.

Compilation of Protocol and Measures

This study examined the role of followership on organizational change by examining local workers within an organization who experienced significant change caused by an external phenomenon. The background literature provided a need for additional study on the concept of followership and its importance in organizations. The literature also identified the concept of organizational change and its influence on organizations and individuals. The following research questions outlined the direction of the study:

RQ1. Are there discernible organizational differences experienced by local directors in Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling and School Good News Clubs established in response to the ruling?

RQ2. How do the local directors describe the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries?

RQ3. How do local directors perceive the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm?

RQ4: What are the perceived organization-wide long-term results of the paradigm shift of the Good News Club ministry to both leadership and followership?

Demographic and Sample Data

Before any contact was made to identify participants, the researcher submitted the necessary paperwork to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University, seeking

permission to enlist participants and interview them. After IRB approval was granted (Appendix E), the data collection began.

The participants for this study were identified through the process of purposive sampling. Gill (2020) described this process as one in which "The researcher intentionally selects participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied" (p. 520). A list was initially supplied by Rita Wockenfuss, who is the administrative assistant to CEF's former president, Reese Kauffman, after consultation with Fred Pry, who serves as CEF's director of USA ministries. This list was comprised of CEF workers who had been serving with CEF during the 2001 organizational change. Secondly, Moises Esteves, Senior Vice President at CEF, and Fred Pry, CEF USA National Director narrowed the list to recommendations that best met the study's parameters. All who were eligible were initially invited to participate (Appendix A) and sent consent forms (Appendix C), but not all responded. Those who responded, returned consent forms, and were chosen to participate were sent a participation notification email (Appendix B). After this, a *Zoom* interview was scheduled with each participant. Creswell (2014) recommends a sample size of up to ten participants for phenomenological qualitative studies.

The original goal was to enlist fifteen participants to engage through the interview process, but due to scheduling conflicts, only thirteen participants were involved in the study. This number was enough to exceed the recommended size and to reach saturation. Hennick et al, (2019) said that in a qualitative study, the goal of sampling is to enlist enough participants who will provide the in-depth data needed in order to understand the phenomenon being studied. The thirteen participants in this study achieved this goal.

All participants met the criteria for this study as they served with a local CEF chapter during the organizational change in 2001. Eight participants were male, and five were female.

They represented twelve states from various geographical regions across the United States. The following table visually represents the participants, the states they represented, and the number of years they have served with Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Table 1

Location and Experience of Study Participants

Participant	State Represented	Years with CEF
D1	Ohio	27
D2	Illinois	31
D3	Washington State	33
D4	Michigan	40
D5	Ohio	25
D6	Arizona	29
D7	New York	37
D8	Maine	38
D9	Wisconsin	34
D10	Missouri	39
D11	Pennsylvania	13
D12	South Carolina	29
D13	Texas	51

Data Collection

Data collection was done as laid out in Chapter 3 of this document. Data was collected through open-ended interview questions with the thirteen participants in the study. Each

interview was conducted through the *Zoom* application. The participants chose the date and time for each interview, and the researcher worked around their preferences. The interviews lasted between twenty and sixty minutes depending on what the participant chose to share. A feature of qualitative research is that participants are motivated by a desire to explain their real-life experiences through existing or emerging concepts (Yin, 2011). Because the questions were open-ended, the length of the interview relied heavily on how much each participant chose to share about their experiences. The participants all consented to being recorded in writing as well as orally at the beginning of each interview.

Data Analysis and Findings

After completing the interviews, the primary source of data collection for this study, the data needed to be organized to bring understanding and meaning to the words. The interviews were first transcribed using transcription software, *Transcribe*. Secondly, the transcriptions were analyzed through the process of coding using *NVivo* software. Yin (2011) referred to the process of coding as a disassembling and reassembling of data. The data had to be broken down into small pieces before they could be reorganized in a way that gave them meaning or provided understanding. Codes were identified as the researcher read through the transcripts. These codes were classified into like categories, leading to the study's themes. Each research question produced its own set of transcripts, data, codes, and themes that led to understanding that question.

Table 2 visually illustrates the relationship between the research questions, the key concept behind each question, and the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Table 2

Visual Representation of Relationship Between RQs, Key Concepts, and Themes

Research Question	Key Concept	Themes
RQ1: Are there discernable differences in how local directors describe their experience of the organizational structures of Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling and the School Good News Clubs established in response to the ruling?	Organizational Change	Previous experience Current situation Unprecedented opportunities Challenge received
RQ2: How do the local directors describe the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries?	Motivation	Intrinsic Motivation Extrinsic Motivation
RQ3: How do local directors perceive the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm?	Strategy	Grassroots Relationships Focus Teamwork
RQ4: What are the perceived organization-wide long-term results of the paradigm shift of the Good News Club ministry to both leadership and followership?	Long-Term Results	Follow Success Be Prepared

The themes emerged from the organization of the coding. The initial coding process done using *NVivo* software resulted in 227 unique codes. These codes were then merged so that like codes would be grouped together to avoid redundancy. After this merge, forty-one codes remained. These forty-one codes were grouped together according to the research question with which they most closely aligned. This process led to the emergence of themes based on similar

codes that were produced and grouped together. Table 3 shows the codes after being sorted and

grouped and how they led to the emergence of themes. Each theme will be explained in more

detail, along with its implications and applications, in Chapter 5.

Table 3

Visual Representation of Relationship Between RQs, Codes, and Themes

Research Question	Codes: Keyword as depicted in code chart followed by a short explanation	Theme Formed from Codes
RQ1	**Asset:** Ministry familiarity was an asset to understanding change **Background:** CEF background contributed to understanding **Experience:** Previous experience with school clubs was valuable	Previous experience of workers
	Ineffective: The old model was no longer working **Change:** Change the paradigm **Understanding:** Did not need to convince people to change **Eager:** Workers were ready for change	Current situation of ministry
	Impact: Court case had a huge impact **Process:** Understood the process **Opportunity:** Unprecedented opportunity **Transition:** Was mostly easy	Unprecedented opportunities
	Challenge: The school was a mission field **Strategy:** The new strategy made sense **Leadership:** Leaders encouraged change Leaders motivated change Leaders provided resources Leadership not heavy-handed	Challenge received from leadership
RQ2	**Results:** Good results were achievable **Increase:** Great numerical increases **Desire:** to reach more children **Open Doors:** Go through open doors **Calling:** Fulfilling a calling no matter what it takes	Intrinsic Motivation

	Partnership: with churches **Benefits**: for local churches and pastors **Vision:** Churches caught the vision **Volunteers:** Churches provided volunteers **Possibilities**: overshadowed misgivings	Extrinsic Motivation
RQ3	**Field:** Best ideas came from the field **Process:** Slow process and different approaches **Followers:** were ahead of leaders **Freedom:** was given **Difficulties**: came from schools **Important:** Had to establish relationships **Build bridges** for long-term success **Not discouraged** **Not distracted** **Necessary:** Clubs had to be taught by teams **Church Teams:** best strategy	Grassroots Relationships Focus Teamwork
RQ4	**Positive:** Change was positive **Impactful**: Impacted the totality of CEF **Successful:** Overall successful experience **Stay Focused:** Keep eye on the main thing **Future:** Long-term solutions will be needed **Vision:** Look for what might come next	Follow Success Be Prepared

Research Question One

RQ1 asked, "Are there discernable differences in how local directors describe their experience of the organizational structures of Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling and the School Good News Clubs established in response to the ruling? This question aimed to discern what, if any, impact the Supreme Court ruling had upon the local chapter. This question focused on the concept of organizational change as it related to this specific phenomenon. Participants explained this impact by describing their ministries both

before and after the ruling. The code map below shows the process of going from research question to code words to themes for research question one. The research question and key phrase are centered in the oval. The squares represent the codes, and the triangles at the bottom indicate the themes. The colors show how each code word fits into a specific theme. Below the code map is an explanation of how the data led to the codes.

After the initial coding from the transcripts of research question one, seventy-three codes that fit the topic of organizational change were identified. Those codes were grouped around key words and concepts and reduced to fourteen. Each of the fourteen codes summarizes the participants' collective comments on the topic, which are explained in detail below.

Figure 1

Code Map of Research Question 1

Ministry Familiarity was an Asset to Change

Participants used words and ideas pointing to what they perceived as assets to their organizations. One of the identified assets was familiarity with CEF and the programs they offer. This familiarity was helpful as it made apparent what change would entail. The participants in this study had collectively averaged just over ten years of ministry with CEF before this organizational change occurred. This familiarity with CEF's goals, vision, and strategy was an asset in determining the best ways to implement a new paradigm.

For example, the purpose statement of CEF says that their purpose is to "evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to establish them in the Word of God and in a local church for Christian living" (cefonline.com). The participants had been familiar with this shared purpose for many years. This purpose was not changing even though the strategy to fulfill that purpose may be. The vision was still the same for each of the participants as well. The change being suggested was largely an organizational change and did not involve new materials, new leadership, or changes to the content of the clubs themselves. It did not involve changes to their vision or to their calling. The participants felt equipped to do what was being asked of them and confident that that could do it, even if they were a bit nervous about the change of venue and strategy. Anderson (2022) said that what people often do not realize is that even a major change may not have dramatic impact on the priorities of the organization or the people involved. A change that allows for the preservation of priorities is less threatening to many.

Participant D6 emphasized that their familiarity with the school club strategy meant their team was eager to implement a new approach. Participant D2 added that in the state where they served, they had already been in schools for some time and knew what after-school clubs looked like. This knowledge was an asset to others who may not have been as familiar with the process.

Background Contributed to Change

Along with the asset of knowledge and understanding of the new paradigm, many participants had a ministry background that contributed to the quick adoption of the new plan. Participant D2 said, "I understood about schools from my background. I thought it was really cool that [CEF] was already in schools. So, I understood all that, and I understood equal access." Participant D11 worked in a chapter that had been doing school clubs for more than forty years before the ruling. For this chapter, their background, understanding, and experience paved the way for further involvement in schools. They said,

> We had a long history with clubs, and we knew it was the best way to reach students. It was the success of these clubs that encouraged us to develop a six-year plan where we would add three schools a year until we were having clubs in all eighteen schools in the district.

Andersen (2022) outlined three reasons why people are resistant to organizational change. Those reasons are people think the change will be difficult, costly, or weird. Andersen defined difficult as believing that the change is too hard, and people think they are not able to do it. Those who worry that change will be costly are concerned that it might take away things that they value. Those that worry that change will be weird are usually prone to the thinking of "we've never done it that way before." Participants in this study all had element of these worries, but their background of being successful in ministry and of working through previous hardships helped them to overcome those barriers.

Previous Experience was Valuable

Closely related to the idea of the participants' background was the idea that some participants had previous experience with school ministry. Those with this experience saw it as an asset to making helping them feel comfortable with implementing change. This experience quelled their fears when they realized a paradigm change was necessary. The volunteers'

previous experience also contributed to the process. Participant D11, when speaking of a volunteer, said that because this volunteer had first taught a home club and secondly taught a church club, she was well-equipped to start teaching in a school.

Conversely, other participants cited their lack of experience as an obstacle as they tried adjusting to the organizational change. Participant D13 said, "For that [Supreme Court] decision, we were really excited. But at the same time, it scared me to death because I didn't know how to do it." To these participants, the new paradigm was unfamiliar and challenged them. Participant D13 went on to say, "I don't invent things. I'm a follower. That's why I've been in CEF for over 50 years because they taught me what to do and I just keep doing it exactly, and so I didn't know what to do." This participant recounted their success with the new paradigm after getting past the initial fears and uncertainty.

Research on this topic emphasized that hesitation and even fear of change is common. It is not a sign of resistance or of closedmindedness. Each time a person or an organization works through a change, they become less afraid of change and more confident of their ability to implement future change. In the case of this study, those who had experienced the change of strategy from neighborhood clubs to school clubs were more confident than those who did not have that background experience. Andersen (2022) suggested that as more and more people go through change, an organization will eventually reach a critical mass of people who understand the need and the process to implement change and future changes will be easier to navigate.

The three codes of asset, background, and experience were grouped together to form the first theme of "background experience of workers." This background experience was a prominent factor in the organizational change the workers were facing. Some of the experiences were successful and helped them to see the change brought by the ruling as a positive stop. Other

experiences, or lack thereof, made the ruling an unwelcome turning point at the beginning. This theme will be explored and explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

The Old Model was Seen as Ineffective

Every participant in this study agreed that the old model that CEF had been using for years was no longer effective or successful. "The concept of having a club in people's homes has really diminished," said Participant D6. They also said, "People were hesitant to open their homes to children in their neighborhood. They would much rather go to some neutral race like a school where the kids already are." They added, "and just from a liability and insurance standpoint. It's safer to be in the public schools than it is to be in somebody's home." Participant D8 said of the problem, "We had good workers. They worked hard. They knew what they were doing, and yet no matter how hard they worked, no matter how much we prayed, the Good News Club ministry kept diminishing."

Participant D3 summed up what most participants shared when they said, "We were mostly doing good news clubs in homes, apartment complexes, and things like that where the kids were at, but then after the Supreme Court decision, we were able to get into the schools." The ineffectiveness of current and previous strategies contributed to the participant's willingness to consider and implement new strategies. Participant D1 said they were "happy to make the change because we sort of saw that the in-home clubs weren't producing the results."

Stobierski (2020) said that organizations implement strategic changes for several reasons. It may be to achieve certain goals, to give them a boost over the competition, or to respond to market feedback. In the case of CEF, the experience and background of the participants allowed them to clearly see that market was changing. They knew that a change would be needed to

respond to the changing market. They decided to implement a strategic change that would affect policies, structure, and processes (Strobierski, 2020).

It Was Time to Change the Paradigm

Although every participant agreed that change was inevitable for their chapter, some were slower to make the change initially. Even those who fully embraced the new strategy hesitated to change too quickly as they tried to understand the ramifications of this change in their area. It was uncharted waters for the majority of the participants. Those participants who were timid expressed that they were encouraged by positive results they had seen in other local areas. When other participants heard the success of D11's strategy of entering three clubs per year, they began to establish similar goals. D11's chapter can be described as that of an innovator, as depicted in Rogers's Bell Curve (1962). Their innovative energy and success helped others to adopt, albeit more slowly in most cases. Participant D6 said that when they heard they could go from reaching a handful of children in a home to reaching as many as 100 kids in a school, their response was, "Change the paradigm!"

Participant D10, who has moved into a higher leadership position since the 2001 court ruling, provided an explanation for adopting change. While admitting that people really do not like change as a rule, they added,

> I think the fruit and growth that we saw was because our CEF workers are so dedicated to the Lord and committed to our threefold purpose of evangelizing, discipleship, and establishment that when they saw a ministry that was bearing fruit. They just wanted to get behind it.

There Was Understanding of the Need

Participants who admitted to their early reluctance said it was for reasons other than a lack of understanding of the need for change. Kanter (2012) said that things such as a feeling of loss or control or feelings of uncertainty hold people back. Participants agreed with these reasons

and also added fear of the unknown and lack of finances as reasons for hesitancy. The reluctance was not because they did not understand the need for change, but because they saw very real barriers. Participant D6 said, "We struggled financially, which was a problem we had even before the ruling. Our workers were underpaid and overworked." Trying to do something new that was going to stretch the budget even more seemed frightening to them.

Participant D6 also added that personality and stubbornness may have contributed to hesitancy. This participant added, "I would like to think that we, as missionaries and employees of Child Evangelism Fellowship, would not be stubborn, but sometimes we are." There were many fears and uncertainties to overcome, but an understanding of the need was not one of them identified by the participants. They all recognized their need to implement a new and more successful strategy.

Literature agreed that people will adapt to change more easily if they truly understand the overall reasons for the change. If they can understand how change supports long-term strategies and how it will bring a positive impact to the organization, they will be more open to making the change (Brower, 2020). Leadership is responsible for making this information available to the workers and demonstrating their belief in it through their own actions (Brower, 2020). In the case of this study, participants felt confident in their understanding of the need for change. Participant D9 summed up their understanding, saying, "In the end, it was just being sensible; it was logical."

Participants Were Eager to Make a Change

After experiencing dwindling numbers and a strategy becoming increasingly ineffective and feasible for several years, participants said they were eager to make the organizational change and try a new paradigm. Participant D2 said, "It wasn't like [national leaders] had to

convince anyone. People were ready." They went on to say, "The followers were sort of ahead of the leaders, and they were kind of waiting for the leaders to catch up." Participant D4 said, "I think everyone was pretty much on board. I don't know of anyone who pushed back." Participant D6 added, "there is more of an urgency today because there's an apathy that's kind of developed."

Motivation was categorized earlier in this study as being intrinsic or extrinsic. Motivation can also be thought of as "inspiration, enthusiasm, driving force, desire, will, purpose, and incentive" (Bartholomew et al., 2006, p. 2). In the case of the participants in this study, many of these words were used to describe their eagerness to try the new strategy of School Good News Clubs. All participants shared their eagerness to embrace the change brought about by the Supreme Court ruling. Although implementing the change was the more significant challenge, their eagerness made the challenge worth the effort.

The four codes of ineffective, change, understanding, and eager were grouped together into a theme entitled, "current situation of ministry." This theme describes what the participants faced during the call for change and how they dealt with these realities. These themes will be explained and compared to the literature on the topic in Chapter 5.

Court Case Had a Large Impact

Participants were asked to share the impact of the Supreme Court ruling in 2001 on their local ministry. Participant D7 said that the change was exciting for their local area and "changed the dynamics of what they were doing." Some who were already involved in the school club strategy did not witness a significant change in their strategy but recognized that the legal change was valuable to them as they sought to grow their school strategy. Participant D8 spoke about the difficulty they were facing. "It was hard to get school clubs going because there are powers that

be in the government that would do everything they could to keep them out." Participant D6 added that they often had to "have help from a First Amendment lawyer every time we went into a new school." Documents provided by lawyers that explained equal access and outlined the rights of the organization to hold clubs had a crucial role in breaking down opposition to the clubs.

The 2001 ruling opened an entirely new possibility for organizational change to take place. Workers saw new strategies for clubs. Even chapters already familiar with and involved in school clubs saw open doors they had not experienced before. Participant D1 said, "It's amazing how that Supreme Court ruling really impacted our chapter." Participant D6 said, "It totally changed the face of CEF in the United States." Participant D10 noted, "Most of our Good News Clubs prior to 2001 were basically in homes, or you know, sometimes a church would sponsor a Good News Club, but after the Supreme Court ruling, the schools opened up, we were able to see quite a few schools open up."

All participants agreed that the ruling positively impacted their chapter and exposed unprecedented opportunities of which they were happy to take advantage. Participant D5 said, "I believe the change implemented in the years following the Supreme Court decision was overall positive for our chapter and also for CEF as a whole."

Participants Understood the Process

Transitioning from one strategy to another in a large organization is crucial to its success. Participants credited the organization of CEF for helping implement and expedite this process. The organization provided resources to accelerate getting permission to enter school property legally. The organization also offered resources on the process of recruiting and preparing volunteers to help with this organizational change, which was most likely going to lead to

considerable growth and a great need for more volunteers. Participant D7 said, "I would say we transferred over very easily because the volunteers were so used to doing clubs in a home or community center, and we knew that they would just transfer over to the schools."

The participants also credited the followers (themselves and their colleagues) involved in the process for their contribution. Participant D6 said that the followers "had to be part of the development of this ministry for it to take root and flourish truly." Participants, in retrospect, believed that without followers willing to take risks, the change would not have been implemented as quickly or successfully as it was. Participant D8 said there was a combination of leadership and followership working together. He said, "I think good leaders were needed, and good followers were needed."

Prochaska and DiClemente (2005) believed that leaders must acknowledge that people in one stage of change are addressing different challenges than those in another stage. They suggested that meeting people where they are is the key to helping them get through the process as well as making sure each follower understands the process before asking them to implement it. Participants in 2001 were in many different stages of implementation, but each had to understand what that stage meant and how that stage fit within the entire process. Participants in the study felt they were clear on the process and understood it will. This understanding contributed to their implementation.

The Opportunity Was Unprecedented

Participant D8 mentioned that the efforts of activist Madalyn Murray O'Hair were still being felt in the schools forty years later. This participant referred to the Supreme Court case of *Murray v. Curlett* in 1962, which prohibited mandatory Bible reading in schools, and *Engel v. Vitale* later that year, which prohibited officially sponsored prayer in schools. Participants

pointed out that since the O'Hair influence, the Christian community has been calling for the Bible to be reinstated in schools.

Participants joined in lamenting the secularization of schools but now saw an opportunity to bring spiritual opportunities back to the students. They saw the opportunity the Equal Access Clause granted as one that could not be ignored. They also felt it may not last long. They felt compelled to take advantage of the opportunity that was put before them. Participant D9 said, "I don't like to be boxed in very much, but I just felt like you don't want to miss opportunities to reach children with the gospel." Participant D12 agreed. "God graciously gave us the victory in the lawsuit, which really opened the door wide open, and all of CEF across the nation had a push for after-school clubs."

Jones (2020) said that many people merely talk about what they want to do. Those who know how to take advantage of opportunities go ahead and do it. The participants in this study felt the same about their ministry. This unprecedented opportunity gave them the opportunity to actually do what many others only talked about doing.

The Transition Was Fairly Easy

The initial strategy for school clubs was nearly identical to that of the clubs the participants had been doing for many years. The difference was not in the product or the presentation but in the procedure and protocol. Participants believed that transitioning to the new paradigm was relatively easy once they learned to navigate working with schools to arrange when and where clubs were held. The workers simply taught as they always had, but now in new locations and larger settings. This continuity made the transition more manageable at the outset. As time went by, needed changes became apparent and were slowly implemented.

Andersen (2022) said that transitions will be easier if the change is seen as easy, rewarding, and normal. The participants agreed that because they understood the change, felt as if they were in control, and felt like they had support, the transition was fairly easy and felt rewarding. As they reflected, they saw the change as part of their normal process of ministry.

The four key code words of impact, opportunity, process, and transition were grouped together to form the theme of "unprecedented opportunities." As participants evaluated the opportunities put before them as a result of the ruling, they had to decide how they would respond to these unprecedented opportunities. This theme will be explained and applied in Chapter 5.

Challenge to See Schools as a Mission Field

Participants had long believed that the school was a mission field. Now, they were challenged with how to enter that field. Participants thought that some of the challenges came from within themselves, and some of the challenges came from outside forces. Several participants referred to a nationwide meeting held in 2002 in which Mat Staver, the attorney who had argued successfully for CEF before the Supreme Court, shared from his perspective what this ruling meant in a practical way. His explanation was followed by an inspirational challenge from a Bible teacher to go through the newly opened doors and a challenge from the CEF president at the time, Reese Kauffman. The challenge during that week inspired many participants to implement a change they were previously hesitant to start. They were challenged spiritually and practically to initiate change in their local ministries.

This challenge to see school as a mission field helped the participants by quelling some of their hesitancies. Their desire to reach the schools soon became bigger than any fear or resistance. Murphy (2016) discussed how willingness to change can be impacted by desire.

When someone desires a change, they will do what is needed to bring that change to fruition. If they have no desire to change, they will resist. One may not think emotions come into play when working through change, but often emotion will lead to interpretation and give context to facts (Murphy, 2016). Since the participants in this study desired to make a change, the entire change process went more smoothly.

The New Strategy Made Sense

Participants were not only challenged by the opportunity and inspired to implement change but were also aware that what was being proposed was a logical strategy. A currently failing strategy also helped promote the legitimacy of the strategy. The new strategy was simple and specific. The participants were being asked to approach schools about holding clubs, recruit churches to form partnerships, and replace the former strategy of community clubs with a successful implementation of school clubs. They understood what was being asked of them. Participant D9 pointed out that "we were looking at it from our angle and not realizing that for a lot of people, it's not just a matter of wanting to do it. It's a matter of the right timing."

The participants now realized that the timing was right, the strategy was good, and they were ready to take action. Literature on strategy stresses the importance of using common sense when determining strategy. Manning (2005) said, "Business strategy is not rocket science. It's about using pertinent information to make smart decisions and doing it fast enough to keep your business ahead of the curve" (intro). Because the participants fully understood the strategy and it made sense to them, they were able to follow it easily.

Leadership Gave What Was Needed

Participants spoke often of the role of leadership in this specific organizational change. The local directors used terms such as encourage, motivate, and provision to describe their

feelings about leadership. Participant D4 said, "The state office, you know, was encouraging us to get into the schools. Even before the decision in 2001. Right when they saw how successful some chapters were with getting into the schools." Participant D5 said leaders were "helping to get us what we needed." Participants believed that both national and state leaders encouraged local workers to make this organizational change. They felt both leadership levels gave both inspiration and practical resources.

The participants described what leadership theory refers to as transformational leadership. Transformational leadership focuses on the transformation of people from where they were to where they need to be. The leaders provide the influence to move the followers in a direction that allows them to accomplish more. Bass (1985) said these leaders must gain trust, respect, and admiration from their followers. Proponents of transformational leadership theory suggest that workers and followers prefer this type of leadership. Notgrass (2014) asserted that "employees prefer managers to perform transformational leadership behaviors such as encouraging creativity, recognizing accomplishments, building trust, and inspiring a collective vision" (p. 164). In agreement with the literature, participants in this study expressed that they trusted and respected their leaders throughout the process of organizational change.

The three codes of challenge, strategy, and leadership were grouped together to form the theme of the "challenge issued." The challenge was relevant, timely, and strategic. The implications of this theme will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Research Question One Summary

The conclusion that was found through the codes pertaining to Research Question 1 was that there were noticeable organizational differences between the clubs held before 2001 and those started after the 2001 ruling. Those differences were quite drastic, yet the changes were not

difficult to make because of the dwindling success most were experiencing. The challenge to make organizational changes was issued, but it was also eagerly received as circumstances made it evident that change was needed.

Research Question Two

RQ2 asked, "How do the local directors describe the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries? This question had to do with motivation for making organizational change as well as the influence of leadership upon decisions.

After the initial coding, there were 58 codes found that spoke to this topic. Those 58 codes were grouped together around key words and reduced to ten codes. These codes were then grouped into like groups. Two themes emerged from these groups. These themes reflected the two categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as defined by Cherry (2023). The code map below shows the process of going from the research question to code words to themes for question two. The research question and key word are centered in the oval. The squares represent the codes, and the triangles at the bottom indicate the themes. The colors show how each code word fits into a specific theme. The code words were explained in more detail in Table 3. Below is the code map of the individual codes that were found through data collection.

Figure 2

Code Map of Research Question 2

Good Results Were Achievable

The participants shared that one factor that motivated them was that of the results being advertised. For the workers and for the organization of CEF as a whole, good results were measurable. For example, a desired result was to get approval from a principal or school administrator to allow a club to meet after school in their facilities. Since one of the largest barriers to getting into the schools was getting this approval, it was exciting for participants to see school administrators begin to accept the rights of CEF to be in their schools. Another desirable result was to have a club be adopted by a church. A very measurable result was counting the children who came each week and seeing that number increase. Each time one of

these milestones was reached, it encouraged the participants to see that these results were achievable.

Each time the participants saw measured success in one school, it helped them to realize that it could be done in other schools. Each victory helped them to be motivated to try to achieve the same results elsewhere. Participants shared how these results not only motivated them personally but helped them in recruitment and participation as they could present their ministry as a success. Participants noted that people love to join a winning team and being able to show the proof of desired results motivated people to want to join their team.

Participant D5 said, "We have seen kids come to Christ! We have kids learning their memory verses and growing in Christ!" Participant D1, who admitted that, at the beginning, he prayed, "God, You have to give me the strength because I really don't have a great love for schools," now believes that success was his biggest motivation. The results made up for any hesitancies.

They Saw Great Numerical Increases

The numerical success was the easiest to measure. Participant D6 said that after teaching a home club with meager attendance, "I started a Good News Club in a public school, and we had about eighty kids that were attending. God really used that year of teaching that club to rekindle my heart and desire to serve with CEF." They went on to share specific examples of growth in their ministry, which nearly every participant shared. They said, "We went from small neighborhood clubs and peoples' living rooms or in their backyards teaching one or two people at a time to going into schools where you just got 10% of the number of children that attend that school. You would be looking at fifty to sixty to seventy heads."

Participant 13 shared how their local chapter started five clubs immediately after the 2001 Supreme Court ruling and saw instant success with increased numbers. That success spurred them on, and by 2005, they had 75 school clubs, reaching 5009 children (Appendix E). Participant D12 said of their success, "We went from having around three to four hundred kids that we were reaching in Good News Clubs, and then it just blossomed into a couple thousand children that we were reaching." They added that this experience gave them "greater access to more children and in a more consistent manner."

There Was a Desire to Reach More Children

Participants shared that one of the motivating factors in making the change was their desire to reach more children and have a more effective ministry. Participant D6 believed the desire was evident in nearly everyone they spoke to. "It really didn't take much convincing. Everybody was sort of on board just with the idea of it and the potential of it." Participant D7 added, "We were excited about the possibility of being able to reach more children." Participant D6 shared how they had a heart to reach as many children as possible and were praying for open doors when, "all of a sudden not only can we pray but we can share the gospel, and we can teach God's word without any government involvement at all, and everybody wanted in on that and wanted to get started." Participant D4 added that even though people do not usually like change and are generally resistant to it, the followers desired to make the change. This person said, "Everyone was all over it!"

Otto (2021) believed that "any desire we have is motivated either by a love for God or a love for our ego." (p.1). Otto went on to say that desires are often manifested in subtle ways things like fears people have or values they hold. In the case of the participants in this study, the desire came from their love for God and their love for the ministry they were called to. Their

love for and desire to reach more children was a byproduct of that motivation to serve and please God. These factors contributed to their excitement and desire to find ways to be even more productive in doing the things they felt called to do.

Go Through Open Doors

Participants, although eager to make the change, also believed that the acceptance of the new paradigm spurred forward by the opening of doors. In this case, the open doors were exposed as schools and districts began to understand and implement the Supreme Court ruling and allow CEF to meet on their campuses. Participant D8 said,

> The door was open for us, and people just responded to that call. I think the fruit that we saw and the growth… I think our CEF workers are so dedicated to the Lord and committed to our threefold purpose of evangelizing discipleship and establishment that when they saw a ministry that was bearing fruit, they just want to get behind it. That was the door that opened. And when [God] opens a door, I think we're going to be held accountable as to whether we went through that door or not.

Participant D9 said, "If the kids are there at school anyway and they're not coming back to the neighborhood, then we should reach them where they are." Participant D5 echoed that thought, "When God opens a door of opportunity, by all means, if at all possible, do whatever it takes to go through that door to reach more children with the Gospel." Participant D6 spoke to the urgency of the open doors. "If this is open to anybody and everybody, I want CEF to get in there first,"

Participants spoke of open doors as a challenge they were ready to take on. Participant D11 said that they all realized that it was "going to be a lot harder to teach sixty kids than six. They didn't really balk at it because they saw the opportunity, so that kind of speaks well of our volunteers." The open doors motivated workers to challenge themselves and do things that may have previously made them nervous or afraid.

Literature suggested that the removal of barriers is a great motivator. This is especially true when the barriers have been long standing and the desire to see them removed was strong. Sometimes the removal of barriers is out of one's control, but other times one must make direct action to remove the barriers (Ockerman, 2019). In either case, once that action is taken and barriers are removed, the open doors that are exposed are the result of the hard work.

Importance of Fulfilling a Calling

Those who participated in this study through interviews had many things in common, but their calling to their ministry was the standout characteristic. They all believed that the calling upon their life was from God, and it was very specific. Participant D9 summed it up when they said, "God called me to reach kids. God gave me the method of CEF." Their longevity in their ministry demonstrated their commitment to that specific calling.

Kouzes and Posner (2017) spoke to the importance of leaders recognizing that calling is a motivation for success. They caution leaders to be sure to leave room for followers' individual vision and calling when challenging them. They believe that good leaders

> Don't impose their visions of the future on people; they liberate the vision that's already stirring in their constituents. They awaken dreams, breathe life into them, and arouse the belief that people can achieve something grand. When they communicate a shared vision, they bring these ideals into the conversation. What truly pulls people forward, especially in more challenging and volatile times, is the exciting possibility that what they are doing can make a profound difference in the lives of their families, friends, colleagues, customers, and communities. They want to know that what they do matters. (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 120)

The codes of good results, numerical increase, desire, open door, and calling had a common theme in that they were all examples of intrinsic motivation felt by the participants. The implications and applications that came from these codes to form this theme will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Value of Partnership with Churches

Participants often spoke of the need and value of partnering with churches to accomplish their task. Participant D2 said that when school clubs first started, their chapter was not utilizing church partnership, but the idea of church partnership was crucial for them as they began to understand and catch the vision for them. They said, "Today, we are in twenty-two schools, and every one of them has an after-school Good News Club with a church partnership." Participant D5 said, "We now have about seven church partnerships officially and a lot of 'unofficial' partnerships." Participant D13 shared that her chapter held 118 clubs in 110 schools before the pandemic, and all clubs were adopted by a local church (Appendix E).

Church partnership was a newer idea for most participants, and they had to navigate the logistics, but they felt it was worth the effort. Participant D2 added, "You have to let go, and you have to delegate." This idea was a challenge for some, but most participants agree with the concept of church partnerships even if they have not yet fully implemented that strategy. Participant D10 said, "We're excited about what God is doing, and hopefully, we'll continue to see Him working and opening up more church partnerships and more schools."

Forbes magazine outlines the importance of partnerships in the business world. They said that partnerships allow a business to pursue more opportunities because the duties are shared. This pursuance can lead to increased productivity and new opportunities that may not have been possible with each entity working alone (Leonard & Bottorff, 2022). The same holds true in ministry. Sharing the vision and the burden will lead to increased productivity. In the case of this study, that productivity meant more clubs were able to be started and more children were able to be reached.

Benefits for Local Churches

Participants suggested that one of the selling points of church partnerships was that they offered mutual benefits. It was not just the CEF chapter that could minister more effectively; the churches also benefited from the partnership. Participant D6 suggested "reaching beyond the walls of the local church into the public school in order to initiate that relationship, and I think that's I think that's really good for CEF, and I think it's been really good for our local churches." Participant D5 added another benefit:

> Perhaps parents that have grown up in the church and left the church somewhere in their late teens or early twenties. Then, all of a sudden, they realize the impact of God's Word and they want their kids to learn about who God is and learn to love Him and to know Him. Good News Club has actually brought these adults who snuck out the back door of the local church back into the church.

Another noted benefit was suggested by some participants who hold clubs in nearby churches instead of inside the schools. These churches have an opportunity to use their building to reach their community. Often, they invite the children and their families to services or special events. When children attend those events, they are in a familiar place with familiar people. These factors can contribute to a family joining their church.

According to most participants, the strategy of using church partnerships centered around the pastors at the churches. The pastors are the first person they contact to initiate a collaboration. Participant D1 said this strategy has succeeded because "these opportunities are exactly what pastors want to see." Sometimes, the pastors ask how this program will benefit the church. Participant D1 summed it up this way, "They (the children) come to the club. They get saved. They join your church. That's what the pastors want to see."

Churches Caught Vision

Participants believe that because of the benefits to the local church and to the pastors, the

churches began to catch the vision as it was shared. Participant D9 found the motivation to foster

partnerships because she felt it was a logical step. They said, "I feel like the promotion of the

school to the church would be an incentive for them to actually get involved in doing it." This

participant added, "The most obvious change was not necessarily whether the school would be

open, but that we realized that this was a good mission field, an obvious mission field today."

Participant D9 spoke of the challenge at the beginning. "The churches think it's a great

idea, but to get them to actually organize and do it just seemed like they couldn't quite take that

step." Several participants spoke of the resources they were given to help churches catch the

vision. They mentioned DVDs and CDs that were provided to share with church leadership.

They could also give printed information to interested parties at a church to help them

understand the process and the opportunity.

Morden (1997) said,

Vision is holistic and is defined as an imagined or perceived pattern of communal
possibilities to which others can be drawn, which they will wish to share, and which will
constitute a powerful source of energy and direction within the enterprise. (p. 668)]

The vision was as big as the opportunity, and the participants were ready to encourage churches

to embrace and seize it. Before the Supreme Court ruling in 2001, opportunities existed to reach

children in homes, churches, and community centers. As seen above, these opportunities were

dwindling and becoming ineffective. Lewis (2011) speaks to this type of organizational change.

Some organizations self-initiate change and innovation. Change initiated within
organizations can stem from many sources, including the personal innovation of
employees (individuals developing new ideas for products, practices, relationships),
serendipity (stumbling across something that works and then catches on in an
organization), and through arguments espousing specific directions that stakeholders in
and around organizations think should be adopted or resisted (p. 23).

The participants helped the churches catch the vision of their schools as a mission field. This sharing of vision was vital to implementing the plan to have Good News Clubs in schools. This vision would lead to partnerships, volunteers, and success.

Churches Provided Volunteers

Participants shared that one of the barriers they faced in executing the new paradigm was recruiting the number of volunteers it would take to support the larger clubs, which would most likely result. The participants believed that church partnerships were the key to overcoming that barrier. Before the emphasis on school clubs, only one or two volunteers were needed per club for the small home and church clubs. With the new paradigm, many new volunteers would be required. Church partnerships provided a whole new pool of people from which volunteers could be recruited. Participant D5 said, "By adding more church partnerships each year, we have increased our volunteer base. So now we have about 200 volunteers each year!"

Bloomerang, a volunteer engagement company, believes that one of the most successful ways to recruit and retain volunteers is to employ an "organizational strategy that encourages collaboration between staff and volunteers to develop meaningful volunteer opportunities that positively impact the organization and the community." (Bloomerang.com). They also believe that if an organization is able to match their volunteers with opportunities that they are most interested in, the volunteers will be more fulfilled and have their best experience.

Participants in this study found these ideas to be true. Matching volunteers to opportunities that they were passionate about was a key to recruiting the volunteers needed. Using local volunteers to carry out the strategy also contributed to the grassroots approach. Volunteers served in their local schools and neighborhoods and knew the people, the practices, and even the local politics, which helped form strategy. Being the boots on the ground allowed

both the directors and the volunteers to observe the approach that was being implemented,

evaluate its success, and make real-time adjustments or changes as needed.

Possibilities Overshadowed Misgivings

All participants shared that they had misgivings or hesitations throughout the

implementation of the organizational change. The new strategy was unfamiliar to some of them.

Even those with the experience to draw from had never done this strategy on a large scale as they

were asked to do in 2001.

Literature on organizational change emphasized the importance of identifying barriers so

the barriers can be overcome. Ignoring fears or misgivings will not remove barriers but will only

delay them or allow them to become bigger obstacles. Participants knew that the barriers they

faced were real and had to be addressed. Some fears were simply fear of the unknown and some

were a result of unsuccessful attempts in the past. Vocalizing fears and misgivings will help to

guide decisions and will expose the barriers that need to be prioritized and addressed (Ockerman,

2019).

The majority of the participants in this study shared that although they had fears and

misgivings, the new opportunities overshadowed their hesitancies. Participant D4 shared how

they overcame their apprehension:

> I would take all the courses they had on going into the schools, and I would get all the
> material they had. Then, I would find the person who knew what was going on, and I
> followed them around to the extent that they were sick of me. I asked him so many
> questions, but I had to get this in my head. I had to understand it because if I couldn't
> understand it, I would never be able to teach it.

For most participants, information and small successes helped them overcome any hesitancy.

They were willing to try new things and stretch themselves both personally and professionally if

it meant they could be a part of what they saw as amazing possibilities.

These five codes that were found in responses to research question two from participants: partnership, benefits for churches, church vision, church volunteers, and possibilities. These codes worked together to form the theme of "extrinsic motivation", that will be further explained in the following chapter of this work.

Research Question Two Summary

Participants agreed that motivation did not hinder the strategy change they faced in 2001. The motivation came from both intrinsic and extrinsic sources. The degree of motivation varied among participants, as some were more hesitant or even afraid of facing a new paradigm. These findings are consistent with Rogers's Bell Curve (1962), which explains how people are motivated to adopt new ideas. This bell curve described those who were ready to adopt the new strategy immediately as innovators. The innovators paved the way and set the example for others who hesitated initially but soon responded. Rogers's Curve calls that group the early adopters. After seeing the success of these first two categories, other workers, the early majority, were ready to adopt the new strategy, feeling the risk had been understood.

Zorn et al. (1999) describe this process of innovation:

Organizational changes may be spread through a diffusion process where important organizational stakeholders or networked organizations select an idea, and then others in the network become aware of the choice - typically through communication in social networks. Adoption is the term we use to describe the formal selection of the idea for incorporation into an organization. (p. 26)

This description aptly describes the experience of the participants in this study. As of 2024, most chapters have adopted and are successfully using the new School Good News Clubs paradigm. A few local workers still have not adopted the new strategy of concentrating on School Good News Clubs. According to Roger's Curve, these are laggards and may never get around to making the change for various personal and strategic reasons. They will not incorporate it into their strategy if they feel no motivation to make the change.
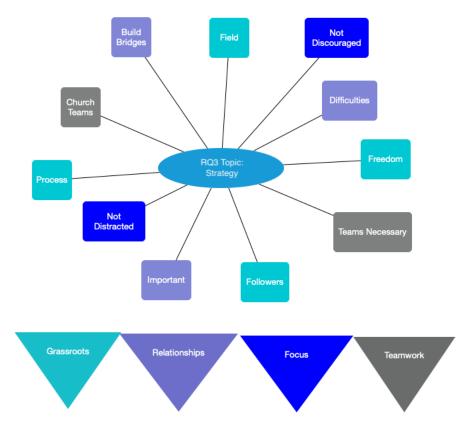
Research Question Three

RQ3 asked, "How do local directors perceive the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm?" This question aimed to examine strategy and its role in decision-making for the participants. Porter (1996) defines strategy as an organization's unique position involving their activities. He says that strategy is vital because there are many positions, and choosing the right one is imperative to an organization's success. For the participants in this study, the aim was well-defined for the directors – to find ways to take advantage of the equal access given to them by the 2001 Supreme Court ruling. It was the strategy that needed to be redefined. Four themes emerged from the data as participants reflected on the designed and implemented strategies. These themes included grassroots ministry, relationships, focus, and teamwork.

These themes emerged after initial coding found codes that addressed strategy. Those 61 codes were grouped around key words and reduced to eleven. The code map below shows the process of going from the research question to code words to themes for question three. The research question and theme are centered in the oval. The squares represent the codes, and the triangles at the bottom indicate the themes. The colors show how each code word fits into a specific theme. The code words were explained in more detail in Table 3. Below the code map is an explanation of each code and its representation in the data.

Figure 3

Code Map of Research Question 3

Many Ideas Came from the Field

In this study, the participants, without exception, saw themselves as grassroots workers involved in frontline work during their time as local directors. Some also described their role as "the boots on the ground." Participant D8 said, "Child Evangelism Fellowship is a grassroots ministry for sure. I think the energy and the creativity comes from the bottom up." Participants felt that many of their ideas and strategies came from their peers and that, in turn, their ideas and experiences were helpful to others. Participant D12 spoke of this opportunity:

> The Lord has blessed us with this privilege, and I do mean that in all sincerity. It has truly been a humbling honor for us to be able to provide USA Ministries with several different things that have worked for the good of the ministry.

Other participants stated that their local chapter had provided ideas for training, recruiting, and strategy that were passed on across the country and helped other local areas. Those who saw themselves as grassroots workers felt they had the power and passion to initiate change. For this study, the grassroots workers felt empowered to implement change and believed their efforts to be crucial to the success of the organization-wide change.

Strong leadership and success can only be made possible if the followers are just as committed as the leaders. When leaders recognize this fact and empower followers to bring their ideas and successes to the table, organizations thrive (VanRooy, 2014). When one considers that followers nearly always outnumber leaders, the importance of recognizing the ideas of these followers and implementing their best practices is evident.

Slow Process That Needed Different Approaches

While recognizing that they were prepared for the change, participants also noted that, in many cases, the change came more slowly than they would have liked. Participant D5 admitted, "It doesn't happen by itself. You have to pray, and you have to encourage." Other participants felt prepared, but the schools were slow to move. Participant D4 speaks to one of these instances. "Some school districts were wide open and welcomed us in. At others, we had to get Liberty Counsel involved. That slowed things down."

Participant D9 added that they had to "look at the ministry from an angle and realize that for a lot of people, it's not just a matter of them wanting to do clubs. It's a matter of the timing." Participant D4 said that when they started, they did not have enough workers for every school, so they concentrated on the open ones to start and saved the more difficult ones for later. Participant D6 said that as a worker on the field, they recognized the "need to be wise and be sure to start the clubs in a way that will be there over the long haul."

Karlson (2019) compared change within an organization to a runner. Sometimes change can happen quickly, but often it is more of a marathon. Each company has to find the pace that works for them. Sometimes that means going more quickly that feel comfortable and sometimes it means moving slower. Karlson cautioned that moving too quickly can lead to resistance and moving too slowing can be frustrating.

The participants in this study agreed with this metaphor. They had to find the pace that was right for their local work. Often that pace seemed too slow, but they did not allow themselves to get discouraged by the pace. The participants kept in mind that the ultimate goal was long-term results, not quick results.

Followers Were Ahead of Leaders

Participants who self-identified as followers recognized that, in many cases, they were ahead of the leaders. They attribute this fact to their grassroots or boots-on-the-ground involvement. The participants got immediate feedback on what was successful or challenging and could adjust immediately for a smoother path to implementing the change. They often passed what they had learned to the leaders, who could subsequently share these results with others to help those facing similar circumstances. The feedback of grassroots workers was vital to a successful rollout of the new paradigm of ministry.

One example the participants noted was the visuals they were using. For many years, CEF relied on flannel graph boards and figures to teach their clubs. As the School Good News Club model began to catch on, these figures were no longer practical. Workers needed larger visuals that could be easily moved from place to place. That feedback led to quick changes from CEF headquarters. Participant D6 was one who noticed this change. "All of our visuals got bigger over the first three to five years that we were in the schools and there was just this

movement realizing we're reaching more kids. We need to have visuals that fifty or sixty kids can see at a time." Soon after that, digital resources were made available to help larger clubs have visuals that all could see.

Leadership theory addressed this phenomenon of followers being ahead of leaders in certain situations. Greenleaf realized this phenomenon and introduced a new leadership theory in the 1970s to reflect observed changes in leadership theory. He called this idea *servant leadership*.

> Servant and leader—can these two roles be fused in one real person, in all levels of status or calling? If so, can that person live and be productive in the real world of the present? My sense of the present leads me to say yes to both questions. (Greenleaf et al 2002, p. 21)

This new term and paradigm took root in the ministry context as many defined this method as leading how Jesus would lead. In ministry contexts, the elevation of followership naturally follows because servant leadership recognizes and values followers. As Ledbetter et al. (2016) observed, "Reversing the lens of leadership from leader to follower opened up a whole body of fresh and lively research" (p. 13). However, it is important to note that an emphasis on followers is not a de-emphasis on leaders (Ricketson, 2009). In the case of CEF, participants felt their leaders followed them with servant leadership attitudes when the leaders recognized the need to do so.

Freedom was Given

Participants agreed that an essential part of a grassroots strategy was the freedom it gave local workers to implement what they felt was best in their area. Since the organizational change was taking place in every state in the United States, there had to be freedom for local areas to use methods that worked best for them. The participants found these methods through experience, trial and error, and persistence. They were thankful for the freedom to try new methods and keep

the most successful ones. The experience gained through grassroots ministry is valuable to future ministry. Participant D6 observed that there were "benefits of going through this process of making the mistakes in one place learning the right way and the wrong way to go into the public schools."

Hallenbeck (2022) believed that employees should have freedom to try things the way they feel is best because experience, whether the results are good or bad, is helpful. Experience can help a worker when they face a similar phenomenon later in their journey. These workers can relive their past experiences, reflect on what they learned from them, and discover ways to do things better the next time. The lessons learned through experience often cannot be learned any other way. Participants appreciated the freedom to map out their own experiences and to either succeed or fail as they followed that map. Some mentioned that just as much was learned from failure as from success.

Grassroots movement was the theme that emerged from the codes for the first part of research question three. This grassroots movement was summarized by the codes that spoke of the best ideas coming from the field, the process being followed, the ingenuity of the followers, and the freedom the participants felt to make needed adjustments.

Difficulties Came from Schools

Even though the Supreme Court ruling in 2001 was to be legally applied immediately to all public schools, participants struggled with getting schools and administrators to understand the law and its implications. The schools' unfamiliarity with the new law often held back their progress. Participant D12 said, "The struggles really didn't come from within the CEF family. It came from the administration and hierarchies of the various school districts." Some of the

participants spoke of having to obtain legal help or legal documents to convince the administrators of their rights.

Participant D3 said, "After the Supreme Court decision, we were able to get into the schools, but it did take some time for the schools to realize that that was our opportunity as well. There were a couple of schools that we had to contact with a lawyer." Participant D5 said, "It seems like many of the controversies were settled just because we had a couple of documents going back and forth."

Even when administrators understood the law, the clubs were hindered in other ways. Participant D4 said, "Some of the schools let us come in, but they made it very difficult or expensive, so we couldn't afford to do it. Some schools say you can come in, but then they have all these stipulations." Participant D6 had similar experiences but said, "It got easier and easier as time went on because the administrators talked to each other and shared their experiences."

Relationships Were Most Important

Even as participants identified school administrators as their biggest challenge in implementing their strategy, they also recognized that these same administrators were the most important relationships they needed to nurture. Several participants emphasized the importance of relationships over rights regarding the schools. Participant D4 spoke about a current situation where they have been working for one year to start a club in a local school. He said, "I would rather spend a year trying to build a relationship with the school as opposed to going to Liberty Counsel and legally forcing our way in." They go on to say, "We could have pushed our way in, but then you don't have that good relationship, and they might make it hard for you to get kids to come." Participant D7 agreed. "I would not want to force myself into a school and then try to have a relationship. I know that doesn't work." Participant D3 added, "We're trying to kind of

play nice and do this the way [the schools] want. We don't want to fracture that or do anything to jeopardize that."

Cross (2019) cautioned that "People tend to overestimate the importance of the *what* when they should be focusing on the *who*" (abstract). Participants in this study agreed that prioritizing the people over the mission was crucial to their plan.

Build Bridges for Long-Term Success

Participants referred to new relationships formed with school administrators, teachers, and staff as critical to success. They also cited relationships with the children, their families, and the community as a positive motivation. Participant D2 said, "I think it's personal. I think it's relationships." They also noted that forming relationships with the partnering churches was critical. The churches do not need another group asking them for things; they already have plenty of that. The requests had to follow a relationship that demonstrated mutual benefit.

The participants also related the importance of relationships with the local children and their families. Participant D6 said,

> We are making a difference and impact in their children's lives. We're making an impact on those parents' lives and what they think about. Good News Club has excelled in building that relationship, and all our volunteers give their time, their talent, and their treasure to love these kids and share the truth with these kids.

In each case, the participants approached the other parties with long-term bridge-building in mind. They only felt these partnerships would work if they built them to last from the beginning.

The difficulties they experienced along with the importance of relationships and bridge-building were the codes that led to the theme of relationships. The importance of relationships along with literature connected to this idea is explained in Chapter 5.

It Was Important Not to Get Discouraged

Participant D7 said, "Fears and misgivings were easily overlooked by what could be the possibilities. We put fears behind us because this meant we were going to reach a lot more children." Participants noted that at the beginning of the organizational change, they were very encouraged by the number of schools they could access. As time passed, the more resistant or harder-to-reach schools were the ones left for last, and they were sometimes discouraged by the slowness with which their approach had to be with these schools.

Participants shard that having success in some schools and school districts encouraged them to keep working on the harder ones. They knew the benefits that were possibly ahead. Their sense of calling and love for the children and the ministry of CEF also kept them from being discouraged.

It was Important Not to Get Distracted

Participants spoke of the importance of keeping "the main thing the main thing" and sticking to consistent goals. The main thing they were referring to was School Good News Clubs. Participant D2 said, concerning school clubs, "It's not the only thing that we do, but it should be the main thing that we do September through May." They went on to say the focus on schools should be, "For as long as we can be in, as many as we can be in, and as many as the Lord wills us to be in. That's where we need to be." Participant D3 agreed, "It's a successful model as long as we're allowed to be in the schools. I think it's the best model."

The disagreement with leadership on focus came from those participants who thought sometimes the leadership tried to focus on too many strategies at once or introduced new strategies or initiatives that were distracting. One participant called these ideas "divergent," and another, "They distracted from the primary ministry." They were not saying that the ideas

themselves were bad but that they were tangential to the main focus of school clubs. Another

participant felt that sometimes the leadership was chasing down rabbit trails and forgetting that

the emphasis was to be on the primary ministries.

Scripture speaks about becoming discouraged or distracted. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul exhorts

Timothy to not lose sight of his calling bey discouragement of distraction. Paul lists the attributes

of a worker who does not fall prey to these things.

> Remind them of these things and charge them before God not to fight about words. This
> is useless and leads to the ruin of those who listen. Be diligent to present yourself to God
> as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word
> of truth. Avoid irreverent and empty speech, since those who engage in it will produce
> even more godlessness. (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, 2 Timothy 2:14-16)

Participants spoke of discouragement and distraction as things that needed to be avoided. They

shared that when they allowed themselves to get discouraged or distracted, they would lose their

focus. Remembering to focus was the theme that emerged from the codes in this section.

Teamwork was Necessary

The participants in this study agreed that teams were essential because school clubs were

bigger and required more legwork and volunteer participation than the typical clubs previously

held in a home or church. Participant D6 described the change this way, "Good News Clubs are

now taught by a team of people, and the responsibility for teaching doesn't fall on just one

person or two people as it did in neighborhood clubs."

Participants shared that teamwork was not an entirely new strategy for them. With

emerging child protection laws and requirements for background checks, clubs were already

encouraged to have two or more adults present in every club. By 2001, churches had also been

using teamwork in their ministry settings – especially those that involved children. So,

participants were familiar with the teamwork strategy but had not used it too much in their

ministries with Good News Clubs. Participant D6 said they noticed that teamwork "appeals to people much more today than it did before."

Church Teams was the Best Approach

A considerable part of the plan for starting school clubs involved recruiting a team for each school. Ideally, these teams all came from one church, and the church adopted the club. Participant D6 on to describe some benefits of teamwork. "You're working on a team often all from the same church or people from various churches, and that's really brought the Christian community together to reach their community for Christ." Participant D2 spoke of the importance of a team when they said, "If you're going to really do this, gone is the idea of just one or two people teaching Good News Club because you need a team." This participant told of the success of their strategy by sharing that their local work currently had ninety-three School Good News Clubs, and sixty of them were being led by church teams.

MacMillan (2001) said that "teams are, in the very truest of terms, volunteers" (p. 6). Working in teams has seen rising use and success within organizational settings. Like all theories, before adapting them to church or ministry, one must first be sure that the theory is supported by scripture. The concept of teamwork is no exception. Successful teams can be found in both the Old Testament (Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha) and New Testament (the disciples, Paul and Barnabas). Hartwig (2015) claimed, "Not only does God work as a team, but he calls his church to function collaboratively as well" (p. 45).

Teamwork was a reoccurring theme that emerged from the codes for research question three. The codes showed that teamwork was necessary, and they showed how best to recruit those teams. This concept will be examined further in the next chapter.

Research Question Three Summary

The responses to the third research question show that the local directors perceived the influence of leadership as helpful and encouraging. The participants in this study found the recommendations from leadership to be timely, practical, and motivating. Participant D5 believes, "They (leadership) did everything they could to make it possible for us to be in our schools." Participant D8 added that the leadership provided encouragement, practical resources, and help." Curriculum, programming, and strategy changes motivated local workers to adopt the new paradigm.

Participants saw their own role as very important as well. Because they were on the front lines and forming relationships, their decision to adopt the new paradigm had more to do with their own observations and experiences than the influence of leadership. The local workers knew how to define their focus, work with volunteers, and implement teams. They appreciated the help from leadership but saw themselves as quite confident and able to implement the needed changes. These conclusions are supported by Suda (2013), who said followership involves workers cooperating in working towards a common goal. He added that followership also requires a demonstration of teamwork and a clear focus among the organization's members.

Research Question Four

RQ4 asked, "What are the perceived organization-wide long-term results of the paradigm shift of the Good News Club ministry to both leadership and followership?" This question shifted the focus to long-term results as it encouraged participants to look at the phenomenon as part of the bigger picture of their ministry and not just as a stand-alone event. The themes that emerged from this data were that the long-term results of this organizational change were the importance of following success strategies and the importance of being prepared.

These themes emerged from 35 initial code phrases and were then grouped into six distinct topics. These six topics were organized to produce the two themes for this research question: follow success and be prepared. The codes are explained in detail following the concept map. The themes will be expounded upon in Chapter 5.

Figure 4

Code Map of Research Question 1

Change was Positive

Participant D11, whose area had been doing school clubs for many years before the Supreme Court ruling, said, "Once it became a national issue, people would come to us and say, 'What are you doing?' 'How does this work?' So, we were able to advise a lot of directors on how we were doing it and what worked for us." The directors wanted to follow the success they

observed and heard about from other chapters. Participant D6 spoke of a national conference where many directors were present. They said, "Everybody wanted in on that and get started. When we get together for conferences, that was the thing everybody was talking about in the lunch line."

Workers took this successful strategy back to their home areas of service and began to experience their own success, so they became passionate adopters of the idea. Their own success motivated them to implement the strategy in more places. In reflecting on this event, twenty-three years later, the participants were pleased that they had taken the risk to follow the success of others and try it for themselves. The participants seemed to agree that the changes have been difficult, but as they look back now, they were positive.

Change Impacted All of CEF

Participants represented twelve states from various geographical areas of the continental United States. Despite the apparent differences that would be present with these diverse groups, there was a universal agreement that their local areas needed a change to keep up with the changes they observed in their neighborhoods. All participants stated that the local clubs being held in homes, community centers, daycares, and the like were no longer having the success they once had. The reasons the participants gave were also universal. They said children were no longer home after school as they were in daycare or aftercare. They also noted that even in places where children were home, people were no longer open to having children go to private homes. Security and liability often came up as deterrents to the old model.

These realities paved the way for a change. This change would need to be as universal as the problems they observed. The change needed to find a way to reach children where they were

already gathered. It needed to be a safe place and a familiar place. Participants said that with these thoughts in mind, it was easy to see that the school buildings were the answer.

For these participants, the answer was obvious, and now the answer was also legal. The new paradigm impacted CEF chapters across the country. Each chapter responded in the way they thought best for their area, but all responded in some way. Participant D6 said of the change, "I think that Child Evangelism Fellowship is a stronger organization because of the momentum that's been created a going and doing clubs in the public schools."

Although the impact was nationwide, participants shared that they knew of some local areas that, to this day, have still not adopted the new School Good News Club Strategy. The main reason was that these areas were still succeeding with the old model. These areas were urban areas that already had access to government-sponsored after-school programs in community centers, parks, and similar places. According to the participants, for these few exceptions, the organizational change in CEF did not affect them as it did in most states.

It Was an Overall Successful Change

Participants who took part in this study had the benefit of hindsight as they were interviewed more than twenty-two years after the Supreme Court ruling. Every participant felt it was a success and continues to be a success to this day. The participants also see it as a successful strategy for the near future. Participant D6 said, "I didn't look at this as a short-term opportunity. I look at it more long-term and realize that we don't have to get into a hundred schools in a single year. We can build these clubs and thrive and grow the ministry." They added, "The right decisions were made. The right steps were taken." Participant D7 also believes, "It's a successful model as long as we're allowed to be in the schools. I think it's the best model."

The codes in this part of the research were that the change the participants experienced was positive, that the change had wide impact, and that the change was successful overall. These three codes were combined to form the theme that success should be followed. This theme is important to implementing change as will be explained in the application found in Chapter 5.

Stay Focused on the Main Thing

While participants agreed that the ministry of CEF is on the right path, many also cautioned about focusing on the main thing. The participants felt the main thing is maintaining and growing the School Good News Club strategy. Participant D4 said, "I think that as long as the schools are open, it will be a viable way of reaching the children, and children want to be there." Other strategies and opportunities come along and can be helpful to supplement the main focus. Still, participants cautioned against following a fad or a new idea if it diverged from the main focus. That is not to say that participants are close-minded to other ideas, but they carefully weigh each one and its value before acting too quickly.

Schleckser (2015) said that one of the best ways to stay focused is to constantly remind yourself why your organization exists. What is its purpose? Participants agreed that any time they felt like they were getting discouraged or distracted, a refocus on their mission helped them to realign and move forward. The focus of CEF during the school year is very clear. That focus is to reach children in public schools through the tool of School Good News Clubs (Estevez, 2023). When participants remembered that focus, they found it easier to move forward in their plans to accomplish it.

Long-Term Solutions Will Be Needed

One topic that came up with every participant and must be included is long-term solutions. Participants recognized that the doors that were opened in 2001 by the Supreme Court

ruling may not remain open indefinitely. Some participants have already observed some negative

repercussions of the Equal Access Clause. This clause states that religious groups must be treated

equally as all other groups regarding access. Participants shared that schools are now forbidding

all religious or secular organizations from meeting on school property. There are no legal

avenues for the clubs to meet in these cases. Some participants are already looking for new

places and plans to continue the ministry in these circumstances. Participant D12 shared what

others thought as well,

> This is just my perspective, but it is a shared perspective with a lot of others that are spoken to, and that is with the trajectory that our nation is on I can very clearly see in my mind's eye that the door to the public school will soon close.

Participants, although still hopeful about School Good News Clubs, saw the need to start

thinking of ways to diversify. Participant D10 said, "I think we can stay on a steady course for

the after-school clubs, but I think we need to be looking ahead to the time when that door may

get closed." Participant D10 said, "If we're not allowed in the schools, what is our game plan?"

Participant D9 summed up what other participants said: "I'm flexible. I know God has His plans.

If someone came up to me and said we can have a GNC somewhere else, I'd do it."

Be Prepared for Future Change

The need to be prepared for future change was made evident to all participants during the

COVID-19 pandemic. The sudden and unexpected closure of schools meant all school clubs

were also closed down. Participant D3's experience was common among participants.

> Our plan worked really well until COVID hit, and we've basically had to do a restart. We are now only in four or five schools, and it's just been hard. Not just to get into the schools but also to get people to want to come has been the other part of it.
> We even got a call from a parent asking who teaches your clubs and what are they teaching, and you know just a lot more cautious, a lot more careful.

Despite the setbacks, some participants shared that they were able to start back up late in 2020 or in 2021; others said they have not fully recovered to pre-COVID numbers to this day. It was a wake-up call for all of them to be more prepared should a change, whether planned or unplanned, happen again.

Being caught off guard by COVID-19 restrictions spurred participants to implement plans to make sure they are not caught in a similar situation in the future. Participant D6 said they must be "always looking for what's next. What next pioneering effort can we pursue if this one is no longer possible?" Participant D10 agreed and said, "I think we can stay on a steady course for the after-school clubs, but I think we need to be looking ahead to the time when that door may get closed. If we're not allowed in the school, what's our game plan?"

Participant D12 is worried about the future, "I don't know if we are making the transition quickly enough. I am afraid that the local chapters are still so focused on reaching the masses of children through the after-school program that it's just easy to do what you are used to doing." Participant D6 agreed that workers must be "always looking for what's next. What's the next pioneering effort that we can pursue, and honestly, are our jobs in the public schools. It's not finished. Yeah, I think we still have a lot to do in all of our cities all of our towns across the country."

The final codes found in the transcripts from the participants was that they must be prepared. The codes offered two things to be prepared for. The first is to that they must keep an eye on the long-term and not be shortsighted in their plans. Long term solutions will be needed. The second code was that the participants must be prepared for future change so as to not be caught off guard as they were with the pandemic. Applications of this theme will be shared in Chapter Five.

Research Question Four Summary

The answers to this question were important because they showed how the workers perceive the long-term results of the work that they had been a part of for more than twenty years. Their answers reflected both positivity and a sense of trepidation. The positivity came from the success of the changes that have been implemented since 2001. They saw these changes as continuing in a positive manner for the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the participants warned about becoming too comfortable with one method or mode of operation. They saw the importance of being prepared in case another organizational change is on the horizon. Followers still do not have the same authority as leaders, but they have more power and influence than ever before in future strategies and decisions (Kellerman, 2019).

Evaluation of the Research Design

This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to explore the importance of followership in relation to an organizational-wide change that involved a group of participants having various degrees of experience. This study was qualitative because of the limited pool of eligible participants and because the information sought could best be found by analyzing the data collected from the lived experiences of those who experienced the phenomenon first-hand. Although a quantitative study may have been helpful to gather information in a more scientific way, it would have been limited as there was not a large pool of eligible people to be surveyed. Nor was there enough existing followership vocabulary and background information to form the surveys and questions that would be needed for this type of study.

A phenomenological approach was utilized because phenomenological research aims to identify themes and personal experiences associated with a central phenomenon. For this study, the central phenomenon was an organizational change in strategy initiated by a Supreme Court

ruling in 2001. This qualitative phenomenological approach was best for this study because the detailed responses from the participants provided deep, meaningful, and detailed data based on their lived experiences. Creswell (2014) said that a phenomenological design "culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon" (p. 14). That was found to be true in this study. Having experienced the phenomenon personally, and because the organizational change was so wide-reaching, each participant had a good memory of the event and the details leading up to and following the event.

Data Collection Trustworthiness

The data collection used for this study was in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) said that the process of collecting interviews is one of the most used strategies for collecting qualitative data. The interviews were done using the *Zoom* application, and each was recorded with the participants' permission. Each participant was made aware that their names would be held in confidentiality so they could speak freely without worrying about retribution if an unpopular opinion was shared. Interviewing thirteen people from twelve states helped boost trustworthiness and show how the emerging themes were not just local but common nationwide. Participants were asked the same questions (Appendix D) to ensure a uniform and nonbiased process.

Evaluation of the Research Model

This research was done using a qualitative phenomenological research model based on interviews of participants who experienced an organizational change first-hand. The participants were eager to share their experiences and were knowledgeable about the circumstances and decisions that were involved. The process of using open-ended questions was helpful because the

participants felt free to share their observations and experiences without feeling there was a

certain agenda or expectation. Husserl (1970) recognized the importance of knowing that

phenomenological research seeks to describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective

free from hypotheses or preconceptions.

Phenomenology was a good fit for this study because this type of method is especially

effective at utilizing perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives to draw conclusions

that may challenges structural or normative assumptions (Lester, 1999). Organizational change,

by definition, is challenging to the normal way of thinking, so the phenomenological interview

process fit well into this process.

Participant Selection

Purposive sampling was a successful method for identifying those who were eligible to

participate in this study. Since the researcher had no access to the names or contact information

of eligible participants, the help of CEF leadership was critical to the process. The three leaders

who helped with the process helped in different ways. Ms. Wockenfuss provide raw data of any

current worker who was also working for CEF in 2001. Mr. Estevez and Mr. Pry worked

together to remove those from the list who were not directors in 2001 but served in some other

capacity as employees. This effort on their part meant that the names passed on to the researcher

were all eligible to be contacted for interviews. The sampling provided workers from various

geographical areas in the USA including the East Coast, New England, South, MidWest,

Southwest, and Pacific Northwest. There was one recommendation from the West coast, but they

declined to participate. There were no eligible candidates from Alaska and Hawaii.

The potential flaw in this method of sampling was that CEF leadership could have

excluded workers if they had chosen to do so. The researcher had to rely on their integrity in this

process. The fact that the study was not about CEF leadership during this organizational change, but what role followership played meant there was little incentive to exclude certain people or opinions.

Had this study included workers that are no longer affiliated with CEF, but were local directors in 2001, the results may have been different. A mix of both current and former workers might have also produced different results. This approach was not possible however, because there is no data that contained current contact information for this those in these situations. For this reason, the participants were restricted to current CEF workers suggested by CEF leadership who allowed CEF to share their contact information.

Research and Interview Questions

The research questions that guided this study were sufficient to explore the topics of followership and organizational change. When reflected upon after the fact, this researcher feels that questions two and three could have possibly been combined as they were similar in many ways, but analyzing them separately produced needed results, to that decision is not regretted. Each research question led to between two and four interview questions. Having the research questions to guide the interview questions was helpful for the researcher to keep the topics organized.

It was apparent during the interviews that participants preferred some questions more than others. This was determined by the amount of time they spent talking about certain questions over others. A flaw that was observed with open-ended questioning was that sometimes participants would get caught up in telling stories that were not always relevant to the subject matter. This was a minor inconvenience as it demonstrated that they were comfortable

sharing. The only time it became a worry was if time was running out and there were still important questions remaining.

Transcribing and Data Analysis

The transcribing process was quick and mostly accurate. Only minimal changes needed to be made by the researcher to the transcripts. Uploading the transcripts to *NVivo* was a simple process and the software helped to organize and provide visual representation of the data. The researcher misunderstood the saving process in *NVivo,* which meant she had to redo certain graphs and tables that were not saved correctly, but that was a learning process. The coding process was not too difficult because the participants shared many common words, phrases, thoughts, and ideas. No participant was an obvious outlier, and all interviews contributed to the codes. Overall, the model worked effectively to produce what was needed to contribute to coding and forming of themes.

Overall Experience

The overall experience with this research design and method was positive for this researcher. A surprising factor was how quickly the participants responded to the original contact email and also how quickly they were able to schedule interviews. This was a great help during the data collection process.

This researcher learned several things about research during this process. The first was that following the research is a difficult task. When the study began, the research felt she had some ideas of where it was going to go and what some of the conclusions might be. In the end, the research revealed results that were surprising and unexpected. Secondly, the researcher learned that research, and specifically data analysis takes a lot of time and patience. It is a process that cannot be rushed, but must be done carefully and meticulously.

If this researcher had the ability to start over or go through this process again, she would do a few things differently. First of all, she would have traveled more often to Lynchburg to utilize the Jerry Falwell Library. There were simply not enough books online to do a full literature review, so she ended up purchasing many of them. Time spent traveling to and using the LU library would have been a better strategy. Secondly, she would have worked harder to get all requirement into the IRB sooner so that the approval would not have been delayed by the holidays. That delay had a ripple effect that carried on to the end of the semester.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of the research study. This review included an overview of Chapters 1-3 as well as a reiteration of the research questions used to guide the study. Next, this chapter outlined the process for recruiting participants as well as the methods of data analysis employed. The bulk of this chapter shared the themes that emerged while coding the interview files. These themes aligned with the research questions and topics. They were organized by research question for clarity. Lastly, the research design was evaluated. The conclusions and results of this study are covered in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS
Overview

This study examined an organizational change that was made in response to a specific phenomenon and the role that followership played in that change. In Chapter Four, the codes shared by the participants were presented along with supporting data from which the codes surfaced.

Chapter Five will reiterate the purpose of the study and the four research questions used to guide the study. The themes and conclusions that emerged from the codes during the data analysis will also be identified and described. Then, the researcher will propose several implications and applications that can be made from understanding the data. These propositions will provide insight into both theory and practice. Although the conclusions, implications, and applications will be centered around the organization that was the focus of the study, they may also be relevant to other organizations that hope to understand and utilize the principles of followership as they navigate change. Next, this chapter will provide any limitations that were discovered. Lastly, recommendations for future studies will be made.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to describe the impact of followership upon an organizational change that was initiated by a 2001 Supreme Court ruling, *Good News Club v. Milford Central School,* on the Good News Club ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship. Organizational change is defined as a change that is far-reaching and impacts Research Questions

The following Research Questions guided this study:

RQ1. Are there discernable differences in how local directors describe their experience of the organizational structures of Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling and the School Good News Clubs established in response to the ruling?

RQ2. How do the local directors describe the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries?

RQ3. How do local directors perceive the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm?

RQ4: What are the perceived organization-wide long-term results of the paradigm shift of the Good News Club ministry to both leadership and followership?

Research Conclusions

The focus of this study was followership and its relationship to organizational change. As noted in the literature review, a common understanding of the concept of followership is that it is "a process whereby an individual or individuals accept the influence of others to accomplish a common goal" (Northouse, 2019, p. 295). Most of the participants in this study were unfamiliar with followership as a word but understood the concept and spoke using followership principles and language. The participants expressed views like Hamlin (2016), who said,

> At its heart, the leadership-followership dynamic is about division of labor. In any project and for every organization, there are various tasks to do, decisions to be made, relationships to navigate, items to communicate. Followers handle some of these tasks while leaders take care of others. (p. 30)

The researcher examined the data collected from the participants for followership language and ideas. Through studying the role of followers during an organizational change, followership principles emerged that contributed to the overall study of the topics of followership and organizational change. These principles led to the development of themes that emerged when similar codes were grouped together. The responses to each research question provided codes that led to several themes per question.

Research Question One

The first research question asked if there were discernible organizational differences experienced by local directors in Good News Clubs that met before the Supreme Court ruling

and School Good News Clubs established in response to the verdict. The participants all noted that there were differences in the organization before and after the decision. The degree of the differences varied from place to place, but all noticed a discernible difference. The disparity in the differences depended on the chapter's previous experience, their situation at the time of the ruling, their understanding of an unprecedented opportunity, and their response to the challenge they received from leadership entities.

Previous Experience

The first theme that emerged from the coding of the first research question was that of previous experience. The participants who had been involved in Good News Clubs held in or for public schools in the past had no trouble understanding what the Supreme Court ruling would mean for their ministries. They had seen how the paradigm worked and had witnessed its success. Those with previous experience can be compared to the innovators, as depicted in Rogers's Bell Curve (2003). As others saw the success of the innovators, they began to see how the changes might help them as well. Zorn et al. (1999) called this process diffusion. They described it as "the process involved in sharing new ideas with others to the point that they catch on" (p. 37). As more and more workers caught on to the new ideas, they began to adopt at a greater pace.

Literature on this topic agreed with the concept that followers often gain expertise over the years through their various experiences. Martin (2015) said, "The line between leader and follower has become increasingly blurred as leaders become increasingly reliant upon the knowledge and expertise of the followers" (p. 1). The knowledge and expertise of the followers in this study were mainly gained through their experiences. These experiences gave them the motivation and courage to initiate organizational change.

Present Circumstances

The second theme that emerged was that of present circumstances. In the years leading up to the 2001 Supreme Court ruling, CEF saw a decline in the number of children reached each year. This decline was attributed to the failing strategy of trying to reach kids in neighborhood and churches where they were no longer gathering as they were in the earlier years of the ministry. Local workers saw this decline and sensed that it was a trend that would continue.

Maroosis (2008) observed that good followers who are interested in learning "are not afraid to voice their doubts, fears, and apprehension. Followership calls for surrender to others and their ideas. Riggio et al. (2008) said this type of surrender requires "insight, forethought, physical and mental discipline, and the ability to put that understanding into action" (p. 23). The reality of declining ministry results in CEF ministry just before 2001 caused followers to examine their strategies and be open to new ones.

The participants knew the current model was outdated and ineffective. This reality was the impetus for their willingness to accept an organizational change. Many workers had already been making small, incremental changes to try to adjust to the changes already happening, which were out of their control. These adaptive changes were not what was needed in this situation. A more significant, transformational change would have to be implemented to set the ministry on a new course. This type of change involved preparation, implementation, and follow-through (Stobierski, 2023). Even though this type of change was a significant undertaking, the failing landscape of their current strategy was enough to encourage the workers to implement large-scale change.

Unprecedented Opportunity

The third theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was that it was a time of unprecedented opportunity. The Supreme Court ruling in 2001 offered opportunities that had previously been unheard of for many workers in CEF. Even though they knew a new strategy was needed, they had not imagined it would be so different. They had to catch the vision for a new way of doing things.

When implementing a new strategy and facing unprecedented opportunities, followers must trust themselves and their leaders. Wong and Law (2002) said that good followers who trust their leaders and themselves will respond to challenges with better performance and will also find they are increasingly satisfied with their work. Participants in this study spoke to the truth of this statement as they responded to the challenge with few regrets.

Scripture also emphasizes the importance of vision. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (King James Bible, 1768/2017). Leaders, such as Moses, the judges, the prophets, and kings provided vision for their followers in the Old Testament to encourage and exhort them to move forward in battle or some other endeavor. In the New Testament, Jesus gave a vision for the world through His teachings and challenges. He told His disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Matthew 9:37-38). This challenge, as well as the five instances of what is known as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 20:47-48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8), were shared as visions for future work that would continue after Jesus was no longer on earth.

Vision, according to those who were interviewed, was clearly communicated and essential to the organizational change they were called to implement. The provision of vision did

not just come from leadership but also from their own calling and their understanding of their role in the organization.

Challenge Provided

The last emerging theme from the first research question was that leadership clearly provided the challenge. Some were able to adapt quickly because of experience from previous success. Others believed in the challenge but hesitated as they observed the success of others or until their dwindling ministry left them with little choice. Still, others were challenged but chose not to respond. Whether the participants were innovators, early adopters, or lagged behind, they were never unsure of the vision. It was clearly presented by the organization and received by the followers. "The most effective competitors in the twenty-first century will be the organizations that learn how to use shared values to harness the emotional energy of employees" (Tichy & Sherman, 1994, p. 195). The experience of the participants supported this statement.

The challenge of making an organizational change came from all levels, which helped facilitate the speed and success of the change. The followers' actions in this organizational change showed the leaders and the followers that followers have many talents and experiences, and these will be valuable in the overall picture of the organizational goals (Hamlin, 2016).

Literature on the leadership/followership dynamic emphasized the importance of leadership communicating vision. Mayo (2007) believed that successful leaders will always find ways to visualize and articulate what they see as the future of their organization. Conversely, leadership's lack of vision or the ability to communicate that vision in organizations has led to the fall of both leaders and organizations. Followership will not just enhance leadership. "Capable followership can also act as a counterbalance to poor or even disastrous leadership" (Chaleff, 1995, p.10).

This idea aligned with literature on the subject of followership. Hamlin (2016) defined the typical follower as someone who wants to use their skills to engage in work that aligns with their personal values and passions. Followers desire to serve within their calling, and in the position of follower, they are allowed to serve as they feel called. Bunch (2012) said,

> Jesus did not call His followers to be mindless laborers who waited for constant commands prior to acting. He did not call them to abandon thinking for rote obedience…Rather, He sought followers who wanted to learn to think as He did, followers who didn't merely follow His commands but who recognized and prioritized the good. (abstract)

Participants respected and valued the leadership recommendations in this strategy decision. Still, they were also motivated by their own sense of calling and the responsibility that calling placed upon their lives and ministry.

Research Question Two

The second research question asked how the participating local workers described the recommendation of the Executive Leadership Team to shift to a new paradigm in their grassroots ministries. This question was centered around the theme of motivation. Motivation refers to the driving force behind an action. It tells why someone does something (Cherry, 2023). Motivation can be found in both internal and external sources. Cherry refers to these two sources as extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Cherry defined extrinsic motivation as something that comes from the outside, such as a reward or other positive event. Often, this type of motivation is tangible and easily recognized. Tranquillo (2016) defined intrinsic motivation as motivation that comes from within an individual. In the case of the participants of this study, they identified both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations as factors in their decisions. Leaders played a role in these motivations by providing spiritual and personal inspiration and being available and willing to assist as needed.

Intrinsic Motivation

The intrinsic motivation came from the participants' spiritual understanding of their calling to ministry. The participants were sure of their calling and saw that calling as from God. They also perceived their calling as personal and something worth dedicating their lives and career to in fulfillment of it. Because of this strong calling, they were dedicated to stay on that path no matter the circumstances. This idea is closely related to the vision and calling discussed in the conclusions of the first research questions. Another motivation that came from the participants themselves was that of results. As ones who had dedicated their lives to a cause, it was personally fulfilling to see positive results. For these participants, positive results meant more opportunities to reach children, more volunteers to get involved, more children to enroll, and more schools to open their doors. Every time one or more of these things happened, those results motivated the participants to work harder. The results encouraged them and spurred them on to try more things. This intrinsic motivation worked together with extrinsic motivations to help participants be open to organizational change, despite the complications it might bring.

Literature on motivation was consistent with these findings. Cherry (2023) explained why motivation is vital in both personal and organizational settings. Cherry said motivation will increase efficiency, encourage action, help one feel more in control, and improve the overall success of the endeavor. Those who respond to motivation will have more focus, be more confident, and avoid self-doubt. Motivation is a key factor in making change, no matter how big or small the change might be. The more significant the change, the more motivation might factor in its ultimate success or failure. Most people will not change simply because they were told to

do so. They need to have some motivation before they will be willing to inconvenience themselves or change how they are accustomed to doing things.

Extrinsic Motivation

An extrinsic motivation that emerged from the data was that of partnerships. At its inception, CEF was holding its club mostly in homes. (Oberholtzer, 1938). Although this strategy was successful, the organization was lamenting the loss of partnership with the local church. Estevez said, "We need to serve the church, and together (the church and CEF), we can fulfill the purpose of CEF. It is the purpose of God. CEF cannot achieve the stated purpose of CEF without the church" (2022, p. 22). The paradigm shift from homes to schools meant the local workers needed to see the local church get involved to provide the workers and the finances to meet the unprecedented opportunity.

With this reality in mind, CEF issued a manual entitled *Church Partnership Manual,* which guided the local workers through the practical steps of involving the local church and encouraging them to adopt or partner with a school club. CEF also provided video training and information to share with the churches. The idea of enlisting church partnerships was an excellent motivator for CEF workers. The definition of church adoption/partnership varies slightly from place to place. According to CEF policy, the church manages the finances and personnel needed to start and maintain a club in a chosen school (Phares et al., 2023).

Churches may be burdened to reach the children in the public schools but need a conduit to do so. CEF wanted to provide that conduit. Ultimately, it was a win/win situation as CEF established partnerships and churches found outlets for those called to ministry (Bachelder et al, 2023). The extrinsic factors of numerical success and church partnerships motivated workers to implement organizational change.

Research Question Three

The third research question examined strategy and asked about the influence of executive leadership and strategies on local chapters and their decisions to adopt or ignore a new paradigm. Azhar et al. (2013) claimed, "Less than 50% of formulated strategies get implemented because of lack of leadership skills" (p. 33). The leadership of CEF played an essential role in developing and effectively sharing their strategy ideas. In response to this, the participants complimented leadership on the practical information and ideas that were helpful to the local workers.

Literature on strategy emphasizes the importance of leadership in developing and sharing strategy. It also stresses the importance of moving the strategy from ideas to reality. This movement requires the leaders and followers to work in cooperation. Strategies alone are not enough if they do not offer ideas and resources to be implemented efficiently. Leaders can use well-planned and honest strategies to motivate followers. Ultimately, "the leaders who offer blood, toil, tears, and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and good times" (Azhar et al., 2013, p. 37).

Grassroots Ministry

The participants recognized the first theme, grassroots ministry, as one of the most crucial strategies they implemented. Although most commonly used in political terms, the term grassroots is also widely used in ministry situations. Spaulding (2023) described grassroots movements as working from the bottom up instead of the top down, like roots growing from the ground. Grassroots movements start at a local level and gather support there instead of relying on leadership to provide all support and guidance. This strategy goes against the normal way of thinking that "influence, authority, and responsibility flow downward, not upward" (Hamlin, 2016, p.18).

Grassroots movements require an organizer (Kupferberg, 2023). The participants in this study often saw themselves as the organizers of the movements they believed in. As organizers, their job was to help the proposed change in strategy gain momentum. This momentum came about by gathering like-minded people to work together on a shared vision and to turn that vision into action.

Relationships

Secondly, an important strategy that emerged from the data was that of relationships. Weymes (2002) said that the success of an organization depends greatly on its ability to form sustainable relationships. Russell (2003) referred to these encounters as having a relational purpose and defined this purpose as "what the various participants hope to gain from the relationship and the needs or purposes they hope the relationship will fulfill" (p. 152). The relationships were mutual and vital to the process of connecting with schools, parents, and children.

Organizations recognize the connection between good relationships and success. Forbes magazine said that acquiring and using soft skills such as empathy, compassion, and honesty are just as important as the hard skills of understanding business (Kaufman, 2023). These soft skills are often undervalued but are the best ways to make and grow crucial relationships. Relationships are essential in business, leading to long-term partnerships and financial success. In ministry, these same relationships open doors to previously improbable opportunities.

Focus

The third strategy that emerged as a theme was that of focus. Taylor (2013) said that focus lets a person pay attention to things that will help achieve a goal. Focus will also help a person avoid distractions that may hinder work efforts. In this area, some of the participants

found they disagreed at times with their national leadership, and they felt leadership sometimes got distracted by other ideas and lost focus on what the participants believed should be the main focus.

Taylor (2013) believed that when workers take control of their ability to focus, it will help them perform at high levels. They also say the ability to block out distractions and sharpen focus will allow workers to be more efficient and effective. Participants in this study agreed with both of these premises. Keeping focus sharp and not being distracted by other tangential ideas or tasks contributed to the participants' success.

Teamwork

The fourth theme that emerged when discussing strategy was the importance of teamwork. All participants agreed that teamwork was essential to the strategy of implementing School Good News Clubs. The idea of teamwork was a relatively new strategy for CEF, but it reflected a paradigm shift taking place all over the country. In 1980, only 20% of work done in the secular workforce was done by teams (Hollenbeck et al., 2012). Thirty years later, in 2010, that number had reversed, and 80% of the work was done in a team setting (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2015).

MacMillan (2001) defined a team as "a group of people committed to a common purpose who choose to cooperate in order to achieve exceptional results" (p. 33). MacMillan said that the purpose of teams is to work together to accomplish an objective in a way that demonstrates high levels of performance. A team requires a clear task to be set before them. These were the types of teams CEF hoped to implement. Their decision to use teams was practical and biblical. Hartwig (2015) claimed, "Not only does God work as a team, but he calls his church to function collaboratively as well" (p. 45).

Research Question Four

The fourth research question looked at the long-term results of the paradigm shift and the effects of those results on both leaders and followers. It was concluded that the organizational changes made in the years surrounding the Supreme Court decision were not just successful but were crucial to the survival and future success of the organization itself. No participants regretted implementing the change, and participants applauded the process and results of the change.

Literature on this topic showed that success is a great source of encouragement within an organization. Organizations are often set up to learn from mistakes and failures, but learning from success is also valuable. Myers (2021) said that when people see the success of others, they want to find out more about their success and hope to duplicate it in their own sphere. Learning from the success of peers and their own success was an important factor to the participants as they navigated their journeys into organizational change.

Follow Successful Strategies

The first theme that emerged from the fourth research question was that it was essential to follow strategies that were experiencing success. As noted earlier, the previous success of holding clubs in homes and churches faced many challenges. It was no longer a successful or desired strategy in many places. Some early adopters had been doing clubs in schools and were finding great success with the strategy. As others heard about this success, they became more willing to try it in their areas. It was a difficult decision for some, as they felt they were being pushed out of their comfort zones. Some participants admitted they would rather stick with the familiar then try to do new things.

As success of others was shared, those that were hesitant previously became more open to stop out of their comfort zone. For many of them, this step was hard, but they were glad they

took the step as they reflected on their situations. These participants agreed with Cremades

(2019) who said that if people were not willing to step out of their comfort zones, they would not

grow and would not have the opportunity to do the most amazing work they could do. (Rogers

(1962) described his observations, "The experience of the early adopters of an innovation,

transmitted through interpersonal networks, determine the rate of adoption of their followers" (p.

67). It was through interpersonal networks that most of the success was shared between

participants. Sensing the excitement of the early adopters and hearing of their success was a

motivation to try it for themselves.

Be Prepared

The second theme that emerged concerning long-term results was that of being prepared.

When the Supreme Court ruling was announced in June of 2001, many local workers were

unprepared to take advantage of the doors it opened. They were slow to understand the process,

get a strategy in place, and implement the strategy. When asked about the future, they indicated

they need to be prepared for whatever may come next, whether it be more open doors or closed

ones.

Change does not always come quickly or easily in organizations. Foster and Suddaby

(2017) said that decisions made previously will influence present decisions. They also said that

over time, opportunities for change, if not implemented will "inexorably narrow into a

deterministic form of path dependence" (p. 21). In order to escape this narrow path dependence,

organizations must be prepared for upcoming change. Often, change may call for a shock or

"some form of profound intervention that forcefully disrupts the constraining influence of

history" (Foster & Suddaby, 2017, p. 22).

This truth was most poignantly learned during the years of COVID-19 restrictions. When schools closed, there was no Plan B for the workers. They were unprepared for a change that came quickly and without warning. The unwelcome change gave the organization an opportunity to implement Lewin's (1947) description of facilitating change by "unfreezing" the organization, making the required changes, and then "refreezing" the organization. Some participants stated they are still not completely "unfrozen" as their ministry currently lags behind its pre-pandemic status.

Zorn et al. (1999) said,

> There is sometimes a fine distinction between planned change and planned responses to unplanned change. For example, the death of a founder CEO would count as an unplanned change, but the processes involved in replacing that founder with a successor would be considered planned change. Major unplanned changes in the circumstances of organizations often require responses that are more than mere crisis intervention. In some cases, lengthy and complex planned changes are necessary. (p. 37)

Participants who had experienced both planned and unplanned change during their tenure identified with this idea. They saw the need to be prepared for all change and not be surprised and slow to respond when change came, no matter the type of change.

Implications

The implications of research have to do with the significance of what was discovered from the data collection and analysis. For this research, the implications will be examined in four categories. First, empirical implications will be examined. Then theoretical implications, theological implications, and practical implications will complete this section.

Empirical Implications

The participants' observations and experiences led to the codes and themes that shaped this study's empirical implications. These implications are that those who perceive themselves as followers have several common characteristics. These characteristics fall into the three

classifications of the role of a follower, the description of a follower, and the expectations of a follower.

Empirical Implications of the Role of a Follower

Followers that do not see themselves as individuals with unique roles will believe that their leaders are the only ones responsible for success or initiative within an organization. This kind of thinking can result in followers just reacting and doing exactly what they are told without engaging any further. This kind of thinking can also ultimately hurt an organization. (Carsten et al., 2012).

Followers must see themselves as not just the opposite of leaders but having a distinct purpose in an organization. "This new perspective has promoted investigation into the synergistic interplay between the role of follower and leader" (Leonard & Bottorff, 2022, p. 68). The research done for this study not only defines followers or puts them into groups or types but also examines the characteristics that most followers share and their expectations of themselves and their leaders. Participants in the study all believed they filled a unique role in their organization and felt they were responsible for their own success in many ways.

Empirical Implications of the Description of a Follower

The followers interviewed in this study described themselves as having a desire to be practical, useful, competent, and satisfied. First, followers like to be practical. They liked to use their time practically without feeling it is wasted in bureaucracy. They wanted to be the boots on the ground and be involved in the actual ministry process. They were less concerned with policy and more concerned with getting things done. They found unique ways to accomplish their desires and were open to learning from others to find practical ways to get the job done.

Secondly, followers described themselves as useful. They served with servants' hearts and were willing to be put where they could be most useful. Participants shared that this may mean they are in meetings with school administrators one day, training volunteers the next, and standing in front of a group of children the next. They may just as likely find themselves leading a club for children or being the janitor for that same club. They shared that they felt that nothing was beneath them if it was deemed useful and contributed to the more significant cause they believed in.

Thirdly, followers felt that they were competent. They may not have had training, education, and experience at the level of the leaders above them, but they were experts at what they did. Their ideas, feedback, and suggestions come from real-time exposure and experience that can best be found on the frontlines.

Lastly, the followers described themselves as satisfied. Only three of the thirteen participants interviewed for this study have left their followership role to pursue a higher leadership role since 2001. The remaining ten have an average of 30.7 years of serving in a followership role, and most plan to retire in that role. These workers found value in a follower role and prefer it to a leadership role, which many feel would remove them from the grassroots part of the ministry.

Bastien (2021), described followers as being proactive, reliable, self-directed, and committed to the mission of their organization. In short, followers put the needs of the organization about their own. These observations imply that followers can be described in positive and uplifting language instead of ideas previously accepted which through of followers as less important that leaders.

Empirical Implications of the Expectations of a Follower

Traditionally, leaders have been viewed as creators and initiators of change and renovation, while followers are viewed as reactors (Avolio, 2007). The followers that took part in this research had expectations of both themselves and their leaders. These expectations involved their work environment as well as their work relationships. In their work environment, they expected that they would be workers who are involved in the front lines. This expectation went hand-in-hand with their desire to stay followers. They expected that, as followers, they would be involved in what they felt was most important. They enjoyed the day-to-day routine and wanted to stay close to the action.

These followers said that they value relationships over results. Even if leadership is pressuring for an increase in numbers or success, followers preferred to slowly form relationships and delay success if deemed necessary in order to build or strengthen relationships. Closely related to this idea was the idea that followers preferred options to orders. When given options, they can factor in their own experience, wisdom, and calling instead of ignoring those instincts to mindlessly follow orders they may not understand or agree with. Followers expected inspiration and information from their leaders. They were eager to do what is asked of them as long as they were given a realistic vision and the proper tools to make it happen. Leonard (2009) suggested that the best followers display high levels of independent thinking as well as more active participation in an organization.

Lastly, followers found that they desired affirmation. Most of them preferred it to promises of advancement. Many of them found themselves happy in their roles would have found no incentive from advancement promises. Simple acknowledgment and affirmation what they felt would most encourage them. Most followers appreciate it when leadership concentrates

less on the behavior and more on the strategy and successful outcomes they can produce. (Leonard, 2009).

When simple expectations are met, followers will diligently complete their tasks. Kouzes and Posner (1993) noted that "leadership is a reciprocal relationship between those who choose to lead and those who decide to follow" (p.35).

Theoretical Implications

In order to examine the theoretical implications of this followership study, the previously referenced topics of role, descriptions, and expectations of followers must be examined. The theoretical implications are important to both leadership and followership, which are two sides of the same coin.

The theoretical assumption that a follower is someone who operates only to fulfill the wishes of a leader is becoming outdated. Followers must be recognized as ones who can produce independent thoughts and make decisions without a leader's influence (Gardner et al., 2005).

Theoretical Implications of the Role of a Follower

Linville and Rennaker (2022) emphasized the importance of realizing that followers fulfill a role. They said that, too often, followers are seen in a negative light. An understanding of followership will not be complete until followers are seen as those who fulfill roles in an organization. These roles must also be recognized as being as crucial as leadership roles. Once those two facts are acknowledged, everything changes. (Linville & Rennaker, 2022).

Hamlin (2016) described his misconceptions about followership as a role and not just a step toward leadership. He said that he once mistakenly thought that to truly fulfill his ideas of passion, ambition, and influence, he would have to become a leader. He believed many are trapped in the thinking that being a follower was only ever a temporary role on the way to

becoming a leader. Many workers today believe the same. They believe that the measurement of their success is based on how close they are to achieving a leadership role and that to stay in a followership role is a sign of personal and professional failure (Leonard, 2009).

Viewing followership as an independent, legitimate role redefines the leader/follower relationship. Linville and Rennaker (2022) said that when followership is viewed as a role, the nature of the function changes because with roles come responsibilities. Just as leaders are expected to fulfill specific responsibilities, so too are followers. Kelly (2008) said,

> We need to rethink this outdated script. What societal purpose does it serve? Is it still functional in today's world? What personal purpose does it serve for the people who promulgate it or for the people who actually follow it? We need to ask ourselves whether we need a new script. Can we start to reframe the entire conversation in a new way? If so, what does the new script sound like? What words and imagery do we use to suggest either a more accurate or a more desirable relationship between followers and leaders? (p. 14)

Redefining followership as not just a role but also a desired and permanent position is challenging for current leadership theory. It goes against many years of teaching and writing to the contrary. Yet, this study and current literature reveal that followers are ready to be defined this way. As one of the very first researchers to write about followership, Kelley believes it can be done. He says,

> I am confident that fellow travelers will generate their own ways to rethink the followership field and create novel research agendas. Collectively, we can grow the followership field so that it makes powerful contributions to society and to the individuals who make up society. (Kelley, 1988, p. 15)

The participants in this study were recognized as having a unique role in the organizational change. Many of them felt that the decisions were rightly given to them to make simply because they were the most familiar and the most experienced in what they were doing. Another factor was that the change was so large, leadership did not have the manpower or the capacity to implement it without using the followers as resources and as front-line workers. This

leader/follower partnership was believed by many participants to be a factor in their success.

Theoretical Implications of the Description of a Follower

Earlier in this chapter, followers were described as practical, useful, competent, and satisfied. These four characteristics have theoretical implications in the study of followership. As practical people, followers can offer solutions that leaders may not have envisioned or even realized a need for. Followership often relies on character more than skill. Followership is about saying and doing the right things and acting properly in all situations through both words and actions. (Riggio et al., 2008). Followership also recognizes that followers can be in a position to recognize better the day-to-day events within an organization as they are closing observing them. Bennis (2010) believed that developing and finding good followers might be more difficult than leading.

In the study of CEF, one participant shared that it was followers who wrote the blueprint for what would become the manual used to guide organizational change across the country. More specifically, it was a group of workers in a state that saw the need and developed the materials. It was also followers who encouraged a change in literature in order to make it easier to travel and set up quickly in the new club paradigm. This was suggested by several participants in the study. These practical solutions came from the front lines and participants were proud to share those accomplishments. Followers shared ideas and resources without hesitation, recognizing that they may be as helpful to others as they were to themselves. Often, they did not seek or get credit but found satisfaction in providing valuable and practical solutions. "Leaders have their own vision and passions and motivations, but they cannot accomplish the work all on their own. At the very least, followers can do the nuts-and-bolts work needed to fulfill a leader's grand aim" (Hamlin, 2016, p. 34).

Followers are also competent. As the leadership ideology begins to adopt followership as a role, it will emphasize the competency of followers. The idea that followership is intrinsically valuable is reinforced by followers' reputations and competence in what they do. This idea also holds true as it has become more common to see the roles of leaders and followers become interchangeable.

With the rise in the use of teams within organizations, it is not uncommon for someone to be a leader on one team and a follower on another based on their experience or area of expertise. Ott (2004) said that teams are among the most efficient and effective approaches to ministry that exist in the church today. Followership is crucial within these teams because there is often no defined leader, or the leader may fluctuate within the team or according to the task. For this reason, each team member must be there for the collective good of the team and the task. Driskell and Salas (1992) observed that when this happens, "collectively oriented team members were more likely to attend to the task inputs of other team members and to improve their performance during team interaction than were egocentric team members" (abstract).

Many followers that participated in this research described themselves as satisfied with the followership role. They felt fulfilled in their position and had little desire to ascend to a leadership role. That is not to say that organizations should have no leaders and should only be made up of followers. There is, however, a paradigm where the leadership role is flexible and varies within the organization based on the team's skills or the task's demands. Having all leaders will not work. Having all followers will also not work. Good leaders cannot compensate for poor followership, just as excellent followership cannot replace inadequate leadership.

Followers and leaders have unique roles within an organization. Kelley (1988) said that just because someone is a boss, they are not necessarily a good leader. Nor are those who are not

in leadership always effective followers. Some people would prefer to avoid either role. Others accept they have been given and perform it badly because they never desired it in the first place. The two roles must be complementary to one another. Good leaders and competent followers, have distinct skills they bring to the table. The key to a successful organization is balancing the two roles.

Theoretical Implications of the Expectations of a Follower

This study identified the expectations of followers in a specific organization. The standard expectations were that the followers were grassroots workers who valued relationships, were given options, received relevant information, and appreciated affirmation.

The implication of followers seeing themselves as grassroots workers is important to the study of followership because it sheds light on how they see themselves and their role. Hamlin (2016) said that followership is rarely associated with influence. He said followers may be asking themselves, "If I'm content in my role as a follower, am I setting aside any real possibility to positively affect and shape the organization and people around me?" (p. 16). This study suggests that followers think they have influence and perceive themselves as having the most direct impact. They are involved in real-time decisions and can give valuable feedback based on their experiences. Although they may not always be the ones who are recognized, they are the ones who have influence.

Followers shared that they expect to have relationships, and that they value those relationships. One implication of this characteristic is that followers must be free to establish and strengthen the relationships they deem essential, even if it seems that relationships are slowing down the process or hampering the ultimate goal. Because the followers are on the front lines, they want to nurture relationships for the long haul. They will choose people over policy and

relationships over regulations. This understanding is valuable to organizations because policies or regulations often change, but carefully maintained relationships can last through these changes.

Followers shared that they also expect to have a relationship with their leaders. For many years, the understanding of leadership and followership was that leaders and followers did not have much in common and did not spend much time working together. Recently, followership studies have begun to describe the relationship differently. Essa and Alattari (2019) said that the relationship between followers and leaders flows in two directions. There was a time not very long ago when followers were to be quiet, do their jobs, and stay unengaged (Kellerman, 2008). Suda (2013) said this concept is no longer the reality in organizations. Leaders and followers have both changed their expectations and now work together, but the formerly clean lines of authority are becoming blurred (Suda, 2013).

Theological Implications

In addition to theoretical implications, theological implications can be articulated on the basis of this study. These theological implications relate to religious organizations, such as churches or parachurch organizations. These implications would not be valued in the secular world, which does not see value in God's Word or biblical teaching. For organizations that value these truths, this section will speak to the theological implications of a follower's role, description, and expectations.

Theological Implications of the Role of a Follower

The same assertions that were addressed concerning the theoretical implications of followers apply to the theological implications of the role of a follower. As in the secular business world, it is also true in the ministry world that the majority of the attention is focused on

the leaders. Followers are sometimes considered passive, easily manipulated, and in need of direction and motivation (Bunch, 2021). Even those writing in favor of biblical followership do not always see it as a unique and complete role. (Steffens et al, 2018 & Bufalino, 2018) believed that followership is rooted in biblical concepts.

However, Gërhart (2021) believed that discipleship, calling, and following are all equally important themes in the Bible. Bunch (2012) said the Bible is clear that being a follower is a worthy and even honored position. A biblical example of followership as a distinct and needed role is that of Barnabas. In the early part of the book of Acts, a team of evangelists is consistently listed as Barnabas and Paul. In these verses, it seems clear that Barnabas is the leader of the two, as his name is always listed first. At the beginning of their ministry, Barnabas spoke for Paul's legitimacy.

> Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the apostles and explained to them
> how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that the Lord had talked to him, and how in
> Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. (Christian Standard Bible, 2017,
> Acts 9:27)

Based on this testimony, the church leaders commissioned Barnabas and Paul to go on their First Missionary Journey in the area of Cyprus and Southern Anatolia (Acts 13:2). The team is also listed with Barnabas' name first in Acts 11:30, 12:25, 13:1, and 13:7.

This paradigm changed in Acts 13:13, where they are listed as "Paul and his companions." When noting this change, Bruce (1988) said that this change of expression is due to something more than a change of source, In the following verses, Paul addressed listeners, just as Barnabas had done on Paul's behalf in the past. It seems apparent that Paul is now the spokesman for the team. For the rest of the narrative, the order is always Paul and Barnabas. Fernando (1998) believed that this seems to be Luke's way of saying that Paul had taken over the leadership in the relationship. In this subtle shift, Paul went from follower to leader, and

Barnabas became the follower. This change speaks to the legitimacy of both the role of the leader and the role of the follower as distinct and important. Neither Paul nor Barnabas is disparaged for being the follower but is recognized as filling the role in which they could best serve for the task at hand.

A follower who recognizes followership as a role will be reassured by their sense of calling. Miller (2015) wrote a dissertation analyzing the motivating factor of women entering or continuing theological education programs. The overwhelming response was that the women were not there because of promises of jobs, advancement, or to fulfill career goals. They were studying because of a strong sense of calling from God that they were to be there. Miller interviewed twenty-four women and found that all of them believed they were on the path that God had chosen for them, and that sense of calling was what gave them confidence. This strong sense of calling meant that a low grade, negative peer interaction, or other hardships did not discourage them, and the calling did not change with circumstances. Miller goes on to say, "The significance of this resistance/calling relationship is that, while the findings on resistance could suggest vocational ambivalence, they instead underscore the power of calling to encourage and empower women in the face of obstacles like self-doubt" (p. 69). Although this research explicitly studied women, Miller cites other research that shows that men in ministry also feel this strong sense of calling.

Participants in this research also cited calling as an important part of their choice to be followers. They all described themselves as working in fulfillment of a call upon their lives. It was their calling they kept them motivated and spurred them on during difficult times. Their calling was stronger than any obstacle. This gave them strength and energy to fight for what they believed in most.

If biblical followers believe they have a role in all aspects of ministry within a church or other ministry organization, they will strive to fulfill that role to the best of their abilities. They will not simply see it as a stepping stone or a lesser position but as an immediate place and opportunity to serve.

Theological Implications of the Description of a Follower

The biblical description of a follower is found throughout Scripture. In Scripture, the follower is often referred to as a disciple or a servant. Bunch (2013) said that the Christian concept of followership is rooted in the ideas of service and discipleship. Paul referred to himself as a servant (Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:10, Titus 1:10). Other early disciples, such as James (James 1:1), Peter (2 Peter 1:1), and Jude (Jude 1:1) referred to themselves as servants. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Mark 9:35).

The description of a follower would be the same as that of a servant or disciple. Paul defined a follower of Christ as one who shows "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Galatians 5:22-23). Jesus said, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Matthew 16:24). Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for not showing characteristics of a true follower because they neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Even Jesus's closest followers did not always understand this description of a follower. They desired to be favored or placed in honored places. Jesus corrected their thinking. He said,

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to

> serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Matthew 20:25-28)

As Jesus defined it, followership emphasized the heart over the position and characteristics over power. It was a complex concept for the followers of Jesus to grasp, and it continues to be so to this day. The biblical description of a follower has more to do with modifying character than collecting accomplishments.

Theological Implications of the Expectations of a Follower

There are expectations of followers as outlined in Scripture. As followers seek to fulfill these expectations, they may find the expectations differ from the traditional idea of what a follower had traditionally been expected to do. Bunch (2012) said,

> Jesus did not call His followers to be mindless laborers who waited for constant commands prior to acting. He did not call them to abandon thinking for rote obedience. His call diverged from pejorative stereotypes of followership, which involve thoughtless or slavish behavior. Rather, He sought followers who wanted to learn to think as He did, followers who didn't merely follow His commands but who recognized and prioritized the good. (p. 66)

A biblical follower's expectations are to "follow the Lord your God and revere only him; obey him, serve him, and remain loyal to him" (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Deuteronomy 13:4).

Jesus modeled the example of servanthood and followership when he washed his disciples' feet, as recorded in the gospels. Paul emphasizes the example of Christ's servanthood,

> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death - even to death on a cross. (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Philippians 2:3-8)

Ledbetter et al. (2016) said that this passage challenges Christian leaders and followers to see service and humility as part of what is required in the character of a Christian.

It is important to highlight that although some biblical followers are on the path to leadership, this is not expected of every follower. Some of Jesus's followers on earth went on to become influential leaders in the church. These leaders included Peter, James, and Paul, who were bedrocks of the early church. Others served faithfully where they were called, with no aspirations of becoming leaders. Paul recognizes Lydia, Lois, Eunice, and a multitude of names in the conclusion to Romans (16:21-23). Both followers who rose to power and those who were followers throughout their lives are recognized in the New Testament as good examples of the expectations of a follower.

Those who participated in this research felt that they strived to live as disciples of Christ. They sought to follow His teachings and be true to the descriptions of a disciple as laid out in the Bible. The believed their moral and ethical behavior would contribute to their standing in the community and help them form the needed relationships to move forward in their strategy.

Practical Implications

Having outlined both theoretical and theological implications for followership, the goal is now to derive practical implications. These practical implications will follow the same format and examine the role, description, and expectations of a follower. Peeters (2016) explained the importance of practical implications by saying that it is the practical significance that makes research most meaningful. In the case of CEF, the practical implications do not just help to explain the phenomena being studied, but also offer possible solutions for future organizational change that may be on the horizon.

Practical Implications of the Role of the Follower

When one recognizes that followership is a role and not just a stop on a more significant path, the implication is that it is a role that can be desired and satisfying. No longer does

someone in a followership role have to justify staying in that position for an extended period of time and not just buying time until they can move up the ladder. Followers can also find satisfaction in knowing they are serving as they are called.

Leonard (2009) researched the relationship between an exemplary follower and job satisfaction. His results found that those followers who were most happy with their roles also had higher levels of job satisfaction and their supervisors saw higher levels of job performance. A follower who is happy in their role will also work with more joy, better attitudes, and more results.

The CEF local directors agreed with this conclusion. Each of the twelve workers that are still employed by the organization believed their role brought them both joy and satisfaction. Even the one worker who was no longer in that role is still currently serving as a volunteer in their local School Good News Club. Participants noted they are often called upon to work extra hours for things like open houses or other school events, but they did not mind because the job satisfaction was so high.

Practical Implications of the Description of the Follower

Hamlin (2016) described followers as

> The essential supporting actors, without whom a scene is lifeless. Who wants to watch a lone actor on the big screen without others to play against, to fill in the details, to provide a backstory, and to establish a real, vibrant ensemble with which to create a powerful, artistic expression for reaching a wider audience? (p. 17)

Each person has unique gifts, abilities, and experiences within an organization. These gifts, abilities, and experiences will all contribute to an organization's overall health and success in different ways. Some people's qualities are best used in leadership. For others, they will contribute best as followers who feel they have purpose and meaning within the organizations.

Changes in organizational structures have brought to light the importance of the interchange between leaders and followers (Leonard, 2009). Leaders should be careful to describe followers in ways that highlight their importance in the overall structure and success of the organization.

Participants in this study were pleased to be recognized as instrumental people who helped to facilitate organizational change. They felt that recognition on several levels. The volunteers that served under them sought them for practical wisdom and advice. The organizational leadership above them at both the state and national level did much to recognize and promote those who were executing the plan well. Recognition came each Spring during the CEF annual meetings. Participants felt valuable as their efforts were recognized.

Practical Implications of the Expectations of the Follower

Recognizing followership as a role does not mean that followers have fewer expectations than leaders. They, in fact, have all the same expectations as anyone else regarding character and obedience. They may have fewer organizational expectations, but they are still responsible for their own personal and spiritual growth. Brown (1995) lamented that even though rising evidence has suggested that understanding the importance of followers within an organization is vital, it is still often not included when leadership examines organizational settings and assigns responsibility. In spite of this, followership is not an opportunity to be complacent. Followers should look for ways to improve themselves and the organization they work for, regardless of their position or power within a company.

CEF workers interviewed in this study felt that their role carried with it many expectations. Some of those expectations came from leadership, but many of them were self-expectations. They were goals they wanted to reach and were working to turn into reality. Participants did not feel that leadership expectations were not heavy on them during this

transition They believed that their leadership rightly understood their distance from the situation and knew they could not determine the details. The workers were happy to manage their own expectations and work to fulfill them.

Applications

This study sought to describe the role of followership on organizational change. The findings of this study contradicted some of the traditional views of the lesser importance of followers but confirmed the more contemporary views that followers are vital. In older literature, followers are seen as less critical than leaders and exist primarily to fulfill leaders' demands. More recent studies on followership challenge this idea as followers become more important to the organization's overall success. This study supported the view that followers and leaders are both influential.

While leaders exert leadership influence on followers, followers exert followership influence on leaders and other followers. Leader and follower roles shift to meet an organizational challenge even if formal titles do not change. Leaders and followers serve a common purpose. What matters most is that leaders and followers understand how best to work together to attain and sustain their shared purposes.

The researcher found there was little research published on the role of followers in organizational change, so these findings contribute to the field of research in both followership and organizational change. The findings of this study showed that the attitudes and actions of followers were instrumental in the success of the organizational change. Without the followers' cooperation and execution, it is unlikely that the change would have been as successful or even possible. This study also found that followers have knowledge and experience and can significantly benefit an organization facing planned or unplanned organizational change.

The specific applications of this study involve multiple stakeholders in an organization. Because the roles of followership and leadership are so closely intertwined, these applications will include those for both leaders and followers. The recommendation will be divided into three main categories: religious organizations, secular organizations, and organizations facing organizational change.

Recommendations for Religious Organizations

Although religious organizations possess many of the same structures as secular organizations, the understanding of leadership and followership are unique in religious organizations because they often base their ideas on ethics and morals that come from their religious beliefs. A religious worker often strives to work to please a higher power, whereas a secular worker may not have that same goal. Religious organizations can rely on ethics, morals, and values as part of their identity, but secular organizations may not value those qualities similarly. Although not always true, for the most part, secular organizations are more concerned with the bottom line as it relates to money and power. In contrast, religious organizations often do not see money and power as their ultimate goal. Because of this primary difference, the recommendations for a religious organization will differ from those for secular ones.

Practical Recommendations for Leaders in Religious Organizations

As a result of this study of followership, several recommendations for leaders can be outlined. This first recommendation is to recognize the importance of calling in the life of a follower and to affirm that calling. Acknowledgment and affirmation of a calling are motivators that many in ministry seek over promises of advancement. Participants in the study spoke often of these motivations. If one feels they are being faithful to their calling, the words and actions of leaders above them acknowledge and enforce that calling more than tangible rewards. These

followers feel that "They can trust their Father with whatever consequences follow, for his final approbation will outweigh every kind and level of sacrifice" (Howell, 2003, p. 143).

The advancement of earthly reward is not always a main motivator for someone working in a ministry situation. Paul said,

> But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death. (Christian Standard Bible, 2017, Phil. 3:7-10)

For those fulfilling a calling upon their lives and working for rewards not found on earth, it is not material gain or advancement that will motivate them to be faithful followers. Leaders over others in ministry should be quick to affirm calling and obedience to that call. Even though the followers' ultimate goal is to receive the approbation of Christ, participants noted that the encouragement from leaders gives day-by-day strength to continue their calling faithfully.

Practical Recommendations for Followers in Religious Organizations

This study revealed that a followership role can be a fulfilling one. It can also be a powerful one as followers are increasingly recognized as valuable contributors. A follower should not feel that their role is less critical simply because it is less recognized. Recognition is not always a reflection of influence. Often, the leader is the one who is recognized for success, but the followers are the ones who indeed influenced the planning and execution of the successful endeavor. Followers are happy to have influence but do not covet recognition and are often already serving in their sweet spot. Aspiring for advancement is unnecessary if a person feels fulfilled in their current role.

Recommendations for Secular Organizations

Leadership, followership, and organizational change are common to all organizations. Although this study focused on a religious organization, some applications would also apply to secular organizations as they are universal to all leaders, followers, and organizations.

Practical Recommendations for Leaders in Secular Organizations

Unlike the religious workplace, calling is not usually a motivation for a person to enter a job or company. Many take a job because it is the right fit, pays well, offers opportunities for advancement, or is the most convenient (Wigert, 2022). These flexible parameters can mean the workers will need to be rewarded or advanced to maintain their loyalty. It may also mean that workers will be quick to move away from a job that does not offer incentives to one that seems to provide more or different opportunities for advancement. In most cases, there is no calling from a higher power or sense of divine fulfillment keeping them loyal to a specific place or person.

There is much written in leadership theory on how leaders can relate to workers with various levels of commitment to the job or the organization. This literature will not all be covered in this work as it is out of the scope. Still, it should be recognized that the driving force behind the majority leadership theories is the attitude and expectations of the followers they lead. Understanding these attitudes and expectations and adjusting leadership styles and actions to accommodate them will significantly benefit leaders.

Practical Recommendations for Followers in a Secular Organization

For many years, followers have been seen as less important than leaders. Kellerman (2008) said that followers were once described as "subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors, and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line"

(p. 213). Although most would no longer agree with this definition and its derogatory nature, many may still subscribe to this thinking.

If followers want to break this stereotype, they will do it through influence, talent, and experience. With the rise in teamwork in the business world, followers are getting more and more opportunities to showcase their abilities. As they take advantage of these opportunities, they will become more vital to the organization, and the definition will begin to change. This is demonstrated by a new and more recent definition of followership, which is those who are willing to cooperate to accomplish a mission, who work in teamwork, and who build cohesion within an organization. As followers' attitudes and behavior reinforce this new definition, it will become the preferred understanding of a follower or employee.

Recommendations for Organizational Change

Organizational change cannot be avoided if an organization seeks to remain relevant and successful. Understanding how to navigate change instead of refusing to accept it will contribute to the overall success of an organization during transitional times.

Practical Recommendations for Leaders in Organizational Change

The results of this study revealed that organizational change is sometimes necessary for an organization to thrive or perhaps even survive. Leaders should not actively avoid change simply because it seems complicated or inconvenient. Leaders should remember that organizational change is called such because it affects the entire organization. MacNeal (2022) said that organizational change will not just affect company culture, infrastructure, and strategy but will also be reflected in day-to-day practice. Leaders should be aware of both the micro and macro effects change brings. Although organizational change is often planned, it can also come without warning, so leaders should have plans in place for both scenarios.

Practical Recommendations for Followers in Organizational Change

This study showed that the attitude and actions of followers were vital to the success or failure of an organizational change. Those working on the front lines have much to contribute when it comes to organizational change. Followers should be aware of their influence and make their voices known. Followers should be open to new ideas and should provide feedback to leaders so that change can be done smoothly and correctly.

Research Limitations

The limitations of this study stem from the fact that it was a qualitative study, in which data was collected solely through interviews. In interviews, the research can be limited by the participants themselves. Brutas et al. (2013) called interviews a form of self-reporting and noted four factors could limit the results. These factors are selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggeration. That is, participants may unintentionally forget things from the past, confuse timelines, attribute positive or negative events incorrectly, or embellish ideas or events in order to make their role more or less important. Having thirteen participants throughout the country helped mitigate these limitations, as much of the data was consistent or similar across all regions.

Further Research

Kelley (2008) said, "The field of followership is still in its infancy. It is rare that people get a chance to build and shape a new area of inquiry" (p. 14). With this in mind, the following recommendations are presented as areas for future research in the study of followership and organizational change:

- Explore the role of followership in another organizational-wide change made in CEF in 2014 concerning governance to see if similar followership characteristics are found.

- Examine another ministry organization that participated in an organizational-wide change to see how followership contributed to that change.

- Study a secular company that implemented organizational change to see if the followership applications apply in secular companies in the same way as religious organizations.

- Consider the importance of followership in an organization going through another challenge unrelated to organizational change to understand the role of followership in other situations.

- Compare followership traits to leadership traits to understand the characteristics that contribute to understanding each role.

- Examine the roles of followership and leadership in the context of teamwork to shed understanding on the fluctuating roles teamwork situations may require.

Summary

Existing research on the topics and leadership and followership indicated that there was a disparity in the amount of research that had been done on the two topics. Although leadership literature can be found in abundance, it is not the case with followership. It was for this reason that this study was aimed at understanding followership and the role of followers in organizations. This study focused particularity on followership during a time of organizational change.

Done as a phenomenological, qualitative study, the research focused on thirteen participants who experienced an organizational change while in a followership role. Their experiences were recorded through interviews which led to the development of codes and themes. These codes and themes provided explanations for the results of this an organizational

change. They also provided conclusions and applications that contribute to the overall understanding of followers, their roles, and their influence on organizational change. The conclusions that followers have a distinct role, description, and expectations is important to the understanding of followership theory.

While this study contributed to understanding the importance of the role and responsibility of followers, it is just a small contribution in an ever-expanding understanding of followership. It is the hope of this researcher that more study will be done to contribute to and improve upon the concept of followership and its contribution to the overall study of leadership theory.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Current and/or Former CEF Director,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research on the role of followership upon an organization-wide change during the years following the 2001 Supreme Court Case of *Good News Club v Milford School District* which allowed CEF equal access at public schools. The purpose of my research is to better understand the impact of followership upon organizational change, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must have been in the position of local director of a CEF chapter with successful weekly Good News Clubs during any or all of the years of 2001-2005. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, in-person interview. It should take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

If you meet the study criteria and would like to participate in this study, you are invited to contact Michelle Russell at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ to schedule the interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Should you choose to participate, please sign the consent

Michelle Russell
PhD Candidate
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT NOTIFICATION EMAIL

Dear _____,

Thank you again for your expressed interest in this study on the role of followership on organizational change within Child Evangelism Fellowship.

This email is your official invitation to join the study.

Getting Started

If you are interested in moving forward, you will need to schedule an interview appointment. Please reply to this email or call ████████████ to schedule this appointment. You will be able to choose between a variety of day, evening, and weekend appointment times. You will receive an email confirmation once you have completed this step.

You will additionally need to download, print, and sign a copy of the informed consent document attached to this email. Please read the consent form carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, I can be contacted by phone at ████████████ or by email at ████████████.

Interview

There will be just one interview, lasting no longer than one hour. You will be sent an invitation by email with a code to join a Zoom call. During this interview, you will be asked open-ended questions about your time as a local director with CEF and your response to the strategic changes implemented during that time.

Although the information being shared is not highly personal or sensitive, your interview will still be a safe, supportive, and nonjudgmental space for you to share your experience.

Your Participant Code

Your name will be kept confidential, and you will be referred to as participant X throughout the study.

Lastly, please accept my thanks for your willingness to partner with me on this endeavor. I am hopeful that our work together will provide valuable feedback on the role of followers to both CEF and other organizations facing organizational change.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: A Study of Followership in an Organizational-Wide Shift of the Ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®

Principal Investigator: Michelle Russell, Ph.D. Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be an individual who served as a local director with Child Evangelism Fellowship at any time between 2000 – 2005 who served in a chapter which had Good News Clubs meeting weekly under your supervision. 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 better understand the relationship between followership and organizational change in order to contribute to existing literature on the topics. This study will seek to identify principles and practices that led to successful organizational change and determine their relationship to the followership.

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. You will be asked to take part in an online interview which will be recorded. During this interview, participants will be asked to share their personal experiences with the organizational change proposed by CEF as it related to their local chapter. (45-60 minutes)
2. You will be invited to review the transcripts from the interview and check them for corrections or clarifications. (15 minutes)

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. You may find that sharing your experiences will be beneficial to you in some ways, but this benefit is not guaranteed in any way.

Benefits to society include providing insight into the relationship between followership and organizational change. They may also include practical application for organizations facing organizational change.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Interviews will be transcribed using a live transcription feature. Transcriptions and audio recordings of these interviews will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these transcripts and recordings.
- Participants will receive a copy of the transcribed interview to confirm the accuracy of the transcription and/or to clarify any responses as needed.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Michelle Russell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Alvin Dockett at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

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

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

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

Your Consent

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

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

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

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Topic 1: Organizational Change

These questions correlate to Research Question #1 of this study.

- Please describe how Good News Clubs in your chapter operated before the Supreme Court ruling in 2001, including location, staffing, and organization.

- Please describe how Good News Clubs in your chapter changed or did not change after the 2001 ruling.

Topic 2: Motivation

These questions correlate to Research Question #2 of this study.

- Please explain how CEF leadership impacted or inspired your decision to implement a strategy of School Good News Clubs.

- Please describe any barriers or reluctance that your chapter experienced as you navigated the decision to change your strategy.

- Please explain how you dealt with any difficulties and if CEF leadership was a part of that process.

Topic 3: Strategy

These questions correlate to Research Question #3 of this study.

- Please explain how you navigated the details for the strategy change. Describe how much of the change was done independently and how much it relied on help from CEF leadership or other entities.

- Please describe organizational changes that had to be made in your chapter to navigate this change. Do you feel that resources provided by leadership helped with those logistics?

- Explain what CEF leadership did or said that helped you be successful. Was anything shared or expected that seemed unrealistic or hindered progress?

Topic 4: Long Term Results

These questions correlate to Research Question #4 of this study.

- As you reflect on the decisions and changes made during this transition, what do you feel was done well by both your chapter and the CEF leadership?

- As you reflect on the decisions and changes made during this time of transition, what do you feel could have been done differently by both your chapter and the CEF leadership?

- Do you believe the organizational change implemented in the years following the Supreme Court decision was an overall positive, negative, or neutral change for your chapter and for CEF as a whole? Please explain your answer.

- Do you believe that there are principles that could be learned from this experience that would be valuable if CEF faced another strategy change in the future? If so, please share those principles or ideas.

APPENDIX E

Sample Statistics from One Participant

Good News Club Ministry

2000-01	Clubs	Enr.	Prof.
Community Clubs	18	600	81
AAS Clubs	2	130	19
# school-1			

2001-02			
Community Clubs	19	567	123
AAS Clubs	5	237	79
# schools-3			

2002-03			
Community Clubs	14	345	87
AAS Clubs	21	1008	277
# schools-13			

2003-04			
Community Clubs	11	232	45
AAS Clubs	39	1913	464
# schools – 25			

2004-05			
Community Clubs	11	258	29
AAS Clubs	69	3538	667
# schools – 52			

2005-06			
Community Clubs	9	188	35
Pre-School	2	20	0
AAS Clubs	75	5009	955
#schools – 71			

2006-07			
Community Clubs	8	234	40
Pre-School	2	46	1
AAS Clubs			
(Beach Clubs 26)	98	6078	1158
# schools-93 (Beach Clubs-20)			

2007-08			
Community Clubs	8	247	39
Pre-School	2	35	2
AAS Clubs	89	6395	1048
# schools-82 (Beach Clubs split from us)			

2008-09			
Community Clubs	6	227	16
Pre-school	2	25	0
AAS Clubs	114	6921	1299
# schools-93			

2009-10	Clubs	Enr.	Prof.
Community Clubs	7	277	43
Pre-school	2	55	0
AAS Clubs	97	4734	772
#schools-86 (We lost several churches- one church split they had 7 clubs)			

2010-11			
Community Clubs	8	330	55
Pre-school	0	0	0
AAS Clubs	101	4890	712
#schools – 88			

2011-12			
Community Clubs	7	375	78
AAS Clubs	104	5909	1187
#schools-95			
Kids starting church-51			

2012-13			
Community Clubs	9	299	19
AAS Clubs	107	6370	1210
# schools-95			
Kids starting church-57			

2013-14			
Community Clubs	11	317	46
AAS Clubs	118	6573	1339
# schools-96			
Kids starting church-152			

2014-15			
Community Clubs	14	534	111
AAS Clubs	130	7021	1145
# schools-99			
Kids starting church-104			

2015-16			
Community Clubs	13	391	41
AAS Clubs	128	7355	985
# schools-105			
Kids starting church-83			

2016-17			
Community Clubs	10	388	19
AAS Clubs	118	6993	1194
# schools- 110			
Kids starting church- 129			