LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

PASTOR'S CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONAL CHARACTER INFLUENCE

WITHIN YOUTH MINISTRIES

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Linwood Jerome Sealey III

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2024

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ABSTRACT

Within this study, the logic was to understand the natural development of cultural Christlike character traits among youth pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. The sample population comprised between 22 church pastors within the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The sample included participants with different experience levels in pastoral and bi-vocational pastoral ministries. The guiding rationale was that the pastor's cultural Christlike character should be a positive factor in their ministry in the loneliness environment of the youth they serve. The sample covered the geographical settings within rural, suburban, and city environments. A purposive sampling method of participants was used in this study. Henceforth, this qualitative phenomenological study aimed to understand the cultural Christlike character development among youth pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the cultural Christlike character development was generally defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study were the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry.

Keywords: pastor, cultural intelligence, character, loneliness environment, leadership, youth ministry.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to *Imago Dei* (image of God) and to my family and children, who encouraged me to seek God and surrender to His will for my life. Their influence, along with their guidance, were the key pillars of this study. "But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

Stay the course.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank the Creator of the Universe for giving His Son, Christ, who died on the cross, for me and for allowing me to wake up each morning anew. I want to thank my family for their support during those late-night weekends and for taking on extra tasks so I could devote the needed time to finishing my studies. Thank you to each of my children for their encouragement, hugs, love, smiles, and cookies, allowing me the honor to be called your dad and to have insight into their daily lived experiences. Their patience, determination, and courage were critical aspects of my success in compelling this journey. I would also like to thank those members of the U.S. Navy for their continued support and motivation as I continued to pursue my lifelong learning journey. I am grateful to Liberty University for allowing me the opportunity to engage in furthering my education goals and mentorship. Lastly, I thank Dr. William Higley and Dr. Matthew Vander Wiele for their guidance, leadership, and example as I walked my personal research and writing journey out both personally and professionally.

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List of Abbreviations

Mid-Atlantic (MA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

North Carolina (NC)

West Virginia (WV)

Virginia (VA)

Maryland (MD)

Pennsylvania (PA)

New Jersey (NJ)

New York (NY)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

In the face of today's technological boom and the development of new ways for humanity to connect, the ideals of engaging within the human psyche to develop face-to-face connection still holds. As a social being, the continuation into the frontier to develop the tools for interconnection, the lack of interpersonal relationships comes at a greater cost. That cost is our culture losing sight of the value of interpersonal connection. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the premise for the betterment in interpersonal relationship connection with the use of technology still has not provided the answer to the ongoing decline within the youth ministry attendance, and it is no surprise that such an issue needs a reevaluation of the youth loneliness environment. Loneliness environment is defined as an individual's inability to connect with others in the context of interpersonal and social relationship development. As the generation continues to move forward in this age, the aim to effectively serve those affected by the cultural implications of the lack of interpersonal and social relationship development is ever-growing. Within Christendom, effective ministry strategies have developed from various collective improvement efforts to recover youth attendance within the loneliness environment. However, this work draws upon various research that encompasses cultural intelligence and personal character building in attempts to overcome the gap within the current youth culture in order to break through the loneliness environment in both interpersonal and social relationship development to improve overall church youth attendance.

Therefore, there is an ever-growing concern within the United States regarding the decline of youth ministry attendance within Protestant churches. Cole (2023) stated, "Video games and smartphones are a distraction—so distracting that when parents don't remind some kids to get off their screens, they forget to show up at church. But beyond the distraction, social media is a nightmare for youth ministry communication" (para. 5). Henceforth, the continued focus of this study will be to understand if a relationship exists between the church youth

sustainability and the pastors' cultural intelligence and personal character development controlling for the successful preservation of youth ministries.

Moreover, today, one can observe the division among race, socioeconomic status, and even political parties when it comes to the image of God. Historically, these issues have been at the forefront of American culture,

> Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream." Fifty years ago (on August 28, 1963), King spoke from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, the centennial year of Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. King told the vast audience that his dream was "deeply rooted into the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed-we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. (Skillen, 2014, p. 14)

Therefore, under the rule of Christ, the church faces the issue of how to serve in the context and knowledge of the cultural implications that these issues stem from a skewed concept of the image of God. "From a biblical point of view, therefore, what all humans share in common is their identity as God's image bears, living in God's creation in relation to the one who created them. Not everyone agrees with this judgment, of course, and that is why everything in life we share in this world is also frequently in dispute" (Skillen, 2014, p. 118).

The leadership of the church and those willing to step out to minister must face the issue of the image of God and how to challenge the culture under the landscape division. To challenge the dividing course that exists today in American society's technological boom, going back to the basics with a proper definition is required for the word church. According to Elmer Towns (2001), the church is defined as "A group of "called out ones." This has a twofold meaning: (1) they are called out from the world and their previous ungodly lifestyle. (2) they are called for a purpose. This purpose is to carry out the Great Commission" (p. 627).

Amid the Western culture, there is a decline in Christian church attitudes. According to Earls (2021), "In 2019, approximately 3,000 Protestant churches were started in the U.S., but 4,500 Protestant churches closed, according to estimates from Nashville-based Lifeway

Research" (para. 1). With the decline in youth ministries' attendance in the church, the research expresses a need for an in-depth investigation into the cause of this decline. Perhaps the pastor's cultural intelligence and personal character development may be critical in establishing and sustaining a ministry among the youth populous. It is important to note that "No real missionary work takes place apart from the Holy Spirit" (Mayers & Grunlan, 2016, p. 20). Thus, there is a need to comprehend and employ a balance while being a Spirit-lead church pastor. In fact, with the population growth in the United States increasing in recent years, the landscape has become a fertile ground for "planting seeds" (1 Cor. 3:8). It begs the question, is the postmodern culture seeing innovation through progression or slowly decaying? Does the church pastor need a specific Christlike character development trait? "It is widely believed that there is a general correlation between personality and position. That fits may differ from occupation to occupation, from organization to organization, and from culture to culture" (Greenhalgh et al., 2016, p. 141).

Moreover, there is a need for a pastor's development of cultural intelligence alongside their character development to minister to the unique culture of today's youth effectively. This study's cause is that "When Christianity is tested, we discover that it alone explains and makes sense of the most basic and universal human experiences. This is the confidence that should sustain us when we bring our faith perspective into the public arena, whether in personal evangelism or our professional work" (Pearcy, 2008, p. 396).

Background to the Problem

The researcher sought to investigate the declining landscape of unsuccessful youth ministry attendance in the specific geographical location within the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In light of research, those seeking a resolution to the decline in youth ministries' attendance continue to express concern. According to Earley and Wheeler (2010), "Even though America has more people, it has fewer churches per person than any time in its history. And while the number of churches in America has increased by 50 percent in the last century, the

population has increased a staggering 300 percent. There are now nearly 60 percent

fewer churches per 10,000 Americans than there were in 1920!" (p. 340). Therefore, it begs the

question, how can a church pastor improve their Christlike character development to carry out

the command set forth by Christ in Matthew 28:16-20 while successfully ministering to today's

youth in efforts to curb the decline of attendance? According to Mayers and Grunlan (2016),

"Mission is the total mandate of the church of Jesus Christ. Mission is local assemblies or groups

of assemblies sending authorized persons to other cultures to evangelize and plant indigenous

assemblies" (p. 21). To further explain, "Mission is the church in one culture sending workers to

another culture to evangelize and disciple" (Mayers & Grunlan, 2016, p. 21).

Ministry to Young People

In the face of the ongoing development within the United States regarding youth

loneliness environments, "As Christian parents, pastors, teachers, and youth group leaders, we

constantly see young people pulled down by the undertow of powerful cultural trends. If all we

give them is a "heart" religion, it will not be strong to counter the lure of attractive but dangerous

ideas" (Pearcy, 2008, p. 19). Thus, Christendom has a challenge in understanding the cultural

implications that a church pastor may face regarding character development when being sent out

to establish or maintain a culturally enriched youth ministry entity "Moving from one culture to

another, not from one nation to another" (Mayers & Grunlan, 2016, p. 21). However, upon

discovery, the youth ministries' environment standard remains unchanged. Thus, those

in church leadership must understand the attitudes and biases that may develop within a culture.

Therefore, according to Clinton and Hawkins (2009), "Prejudice is an emotional response based

on fear, mistrust, and ignorance. It is usually directed at a racial, religious, national or other

cultural group, although it can also focus on other differences, such as financial" (p. 202). In

efforts to shape a new approach to the concept of church culture development, "Ecclesiastical

Dogmatics consist of authoritative statements of doctrine put forth by some body of Christians

claiming to be a church of Christ. These are to be found in creeds, symbols, decrees, apologies, and resolutions" (Boyce, 2006, p. 5-6). As a result, church pastors today need to set forth a new resolution to develop character awareness and cultural intelligence to maintain a Christ-centered youth ministry entity. "Christians need to own our responsibility in creating a negative cultural environment, but over time a lie has emerged, one that we need to reject just as passionately as we accept that we've contributed to the current climate" (Stetzer, 2018, p. 57).

The Issue of Culture

Leaders must realize that one's local culture can reveal a need to understand the human condition within the target areas. Brooks (2012) stated, "Anthropologists tell us that all cultures distinguish colors. When they do, all cultures begin with the words white and black. If the culture adds a word for a third color, it is always red. All humans, for example, register the same basic facial expressions for fear, disgust, happiness, contempt, anger, sadness, pride, and shame" (p. 150). Therefore, "When people have been raised in the context of their own culture, everything they do seems natural and logical to them. When encountering a new culture, they often see it strange, inconsistent, illogical, and even bad" (Mayers & Grunlan, 2016, p. 58). Leaders are more inclined to experience an increase in the individual's inconsistent behavioral patterns within the ministry environment, and this acknowledgment cannot go unnoticed due to the ever-growing behavior that human beings are sojourners. "The more they move about in a variety of cultures and encounter a variety of lifestyles, the more they become accustomed to differences and the more willing they are to accept them" (Mayers & Grunlan, 2016, p. 58).

The researcher has found many theological manuscripts identifying cultural intelligence within the Bible. "Second Chronicles 19:7 states: "Now therefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you…for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality. "Romans 2:11 says that God does not show favoritism: There is no partiality with God" (Clinton & Hawkins, 2009, p. 203). The image of God throughout the biblical text has faced the challenges of prejudice and

favoritism amid human culture. Thus, the Apostle Paul provides insight into becoming culturally aware of bias and favoritism, as shown with the biblical text 1 Corinthians 9:20-22,

> To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

A biblical scholar, John MacArthur, shared critical insight into Paul's cultural intelligence when stating, "Within the bounds of God's Word, he would not offend the Jews, Gentiles, or those weak in understanding. Not changing scripture or compromising the truth, he would condescend in ways that could lead to salvation" (MacArthur, 2005, p. 1585).

Again, one can observe the cultural awareness theme in Acts 10:34-35. According to Polhill (1992), "Peters sermon at Cornelius's basically followed the patterns of his prior sermon to the Jews, but with several significant differences, it is found at the very outset, where he stresses that God shows no favoritism, accepts people from every nation, and that Jesus is "Lord of all" (p. 260). Along with the believer's awareness of cultural differences, 1 Timothy 2:2 provides significant insight, "To pray for "everyone" does not suggest that we must mention each human being by name, but our prayers should include all groups of human beings. All needy sinners-without distinction of race, nationality, or social position -must receive our prayers" (Griffin & Lea, 1992, p. 87).

Missional Perception

Furthermore, in understanding the ministry's cultural and theological implications, David Bosch, a leading missiologist, provides critical insight into the Christian church missional process and the cultural impact from a theological perspective. With the onset of post-modernism and the greater need to share the redemptive story of Christ with the unbelievers, Bosch (2006)

stated, "The practice of mission constantly needs the critical guidance of the theology of mission, whereas the latter, in its turn, has taken the practice of mission seriously into the account, naturally without process, elevating mere efficiency to the highest norm" (p. 22). Henceforth, the cultural context within a given mission field must inherently seek theological guidance. However, the theological perspective and practical application must be balanced, for "There exists more than mere imaginary danger and the two aspects may become so mutually estranged that theological reflection would, almost as a matter of principle, reject any practical application, and practice, similarly, refuse to be guided by theological reflection" (Bosch, 2006, p. 22). Bosch's work sets the course to grasp the ongoing need to develop cultural awareness into the theological understanding and practical application of the subject matter.

Missiologist Paul Hiebert examines the different scopes of worldviews that have transcended human history, intending to put forth a biblical worldview for today's culture. In the area of missions and cultural awareness within his work, the author provides a fundamental understanding of the development of a biblical view and those the postmodern culture continues to impact. According to Hiebert (2008), "The mission of the church is to bear witness to what it knows and believes. It is to point to, report, and affirm a new reality that stands over against other realities" (p. 285). The beginning of cultural awareness stems from an individual's worldview. Apart from this strong assertion, Sherwood Lingenfelter expresses the ongoing issue and theological implication of leading a community of believers in a cultural context. "When culturally diverse people try to work together towards mutual goals, their assumptions about structure and working relationships may create serious issues of conflict and disagreement" (Lingenfelter, 2008, p. 20). However, "When people disagree about deeper values, such as those regarding one's relationship to God, ancestors or community, or those of satisfying personal and corporate interests, the gulf of mistrust may become so wide that working together becomes impossible" (Lingenfelter, 2008, p. 20). It should be noted that while addressing the cultural

implications, the goal was to understand a pastor's cultural Christlike character development and the unity it may bring in loneliness. At the same time, further investigation into the relevant theoretical approaches must continue to be developed.

Cultural Intelligence

Moreover, the latest research on the theoretical approach to comprehending cultural intelligence, the prolonged study conducted by Shannon and Begley, aids in understanding the theoretical approach to the subject matter. However, "Given that the concept of CQ has been introduced relatively recently, there are only a limited number of empirical studies that have examined this specificity type of intelligence" (Shannon & Begley, 2008, p. 57). Again, expressing the need, "Our study adds to the growing literature on international experiences by providing an initial empirical assessment of the relationship between international nonwork experiences and CQ" (Shannon & Begley, 2008, p. 68). Similarly, in adult intellectual development, cultural intelligence may showcase some personality trait clues in the cognitive process. Within the work of Ackerman, the theoretical investigation stemmed from the groundwork in efforts to understand the motivation and prediction of adult intellectual and cultural development. According to Ackerman (1996), "The theory explicitly states that differentiation of intellect occurs over adult development, a hypothesis that can be directly evaluated with a battery of traditional intellectual ability measures coupled with a battery of knowledge-structure tests" (p. 251). Thus, the theory was cast before the study group used to understand the ongoing improvement was the PPIK theory. Again, "The PPIK theory (intelligence-as-process, personality, interests, and intelligence-as-knowledge) draws on earlier intelligence theory and provides a depiction of personality-interest-intelligence relations that are concordant with the extant data. Numerous predictions can be inferred from the theory about the nature and development of adult intellect" (Ackerman, 1996, p. 251). This theory has found

some valid inquiries into cultural adult intellectual development among the process to integrate

intelligence and the individuals exhibited personality attributes.

Furthermore, to apply a robust perspective into the cultural context that leadership may

experience, Albert Bandura's article from Stanford University expresses the critical theoretical

approach to understanding the cognitive process from a social-cultural context. According to

Bandura (2002), "Beliefs in personal efficacy contribute to productivity by members of

collectivist cultures just as they do by those raised in individualistic cultures. But cultural context

shapes how efficacy beliefs are developed, the purposes to which they are put, and the social

arrangements through which they are best expressed" (p. 35). Therefore, within the empirical

research current data, the need to understand the variables of the cultural Christlike development

of a church pastor constitutes the investigation into the intended goal within the researcher's

study.

Glenn Sunshine provides an in-depth analysis of how Western philosophical thought has

profoundly affected American ideological and cultural development within society. Thus, to

understand the implication cultural intelligence employs within Western cultures, such as the

United States, the author expresses the more significant need: "As Christianity's influences on

the Western worldview has declined, it is no accident that our thinking has become more like of

Rome. And since ideas and even their most implications are eventually put into practice, it is also

no accident that people in our culture are acting more and more like the Romans" (Sunshine,

2009, p. 203) and alluding to further development for church pastors to understand the

worldviews affecting the growing cultural environment within the United States.

Along with the changing cultural landscape, a leading expert in church growth and

evangelism Soong-Chan Rah challenged the ever-growing polarization within the church and the

effects of the lack of cultural intelligence in his texts. The church of the West is facing a

crossroads among those lacking cultural intelligence to address the need to express the gospel

over biases that blind the leader. "The first step towards cultural intelligence and competency for the church is an examination of what preconceived ideas we may harbor, and then developing a biblical-theological understanding of culture" (Rah, 2010, p. 21). While addressing the biases and the need for cultural intelligence among Christian leaders, further development into the cognitive process that creates this basis continues to be researched. Dave Mitchell, a leading international speaker, trainer, and writer, encapsulated the dynamic of understanding people in relationships. "Meta-cognitive self-awareness is an understanding of how our life experiences have shaped our cognitive schemas-which, in turn, determine how we derive meaning from our reality" (Mitchell, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, in understanding human behavior, a leading American anthropologist analyzed the many ways humans communicate while focusing on the use of silent language and metacognitive development. In so, "There is a growing accumulation of evidence to indicate that man has no direct contact with experience per se, but there is an intervening set of patterns which channel his senses and his thoughts, causing him to react one way when someone else with different underlying patterns will react as his experiences dictates" (Hall, 1959, p. 121-122). In addition, this source expresses the need to develop the importance of cultural awareness among Christian church pastors while working to eliminate biases.

Statement of the Problem

Cultural interaction in recent years has become a topic for those researchers to clearly understand the dynamics of human behavior and a predictor for successful leadership models in a loneliness environment. In a recent comprehensive study, researchers compared emotional and cultural intelligence to determine if collaboration between the two aids in leadership success. According to Roskstuhl et al. (2011), "We define cross-border effectiveness as the effectiveness of observable actions that managers take to accomplish their goals in situations characterized by cross-border cultural diversity" (p. 826). Thus, in this study, to understand the difference between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence takes part in leadership success, the

researchers "Tested our hypotheses with field data from 126 military leaders and their peers studying at the Swiss Military Academy at ETH Zurich" (Roskstuhl et al., 2011, p. 829). During the studies measurement of CQ, "We assessed CQ with the previously validated 20-item CQS (Cultural Intelligence Scale: Ang et al., 2007), which is highly reliable and generalizable across samples and cultures (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008). Sample items include I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from Cultural intelligence and Cross-Border Leadership Effectiveness different cultures; and I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it (= .89). CFA analysis of second-order model demonstrated good fit to the data: 2 (40df) = 58.13, p < .05, RMSEA = .061), so we averaged the four factors to create our measure of overall CQ" (Roskstuhl et al., 2011, p. 830-831). The study was conducive to leaders working in the domestic organizational framework as the element for cultural capabilities as found in emotional awareness.

In contrast, when leaders work extensively in international or cross-border settings, organizations should emphasize the development of cross-cultural capabilities, such as CQ (Ng, Tan, & Ang, 2011)" (Roskstuhl et al., 2011, p. 835). However, "Dealing with humans and there are so many variables, his or her predictions are usually in gross terms or terms of the average person." (Mayers & Grunlan, 2016, p.36). Thus, according to Rockstuhl et al. (2011), "The deficiency in the research, "It is possible that situational stressors function as an important boundary condition that qualifies the relationships demonstrated in our study. Given that EQ (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008) and CQ (Tarique & Takeuchi, 2008) are influenced by prior experiences, it is possible that EQ and CQ are especially important in high-stress situations" (p. 832). Therefore, during this study, the CQ predicted cross-border intelligence in leadership effectiveness, while the EQ is found in domestic leadership effectiveness. This qualitative study is warranted to understand the Christlike character development of a church pastor during a high-stress, culturally different situation, loneliness youth ministries environment. Conducting a self-

awareness assessment in a cultural Christlike character development is necessary to reduce assumptions in a loneliness environment.

It should be noted, in efforts to discover the more significant impact, only collaboration among the target pastor group will provide accurate data in identifying the specific area of growth expressed in Galatians 5:22-23 and issues consistent with the present loneliness phenomenon problem and the lack of knowledge base in cultural awareness applications.

As Malphurs (2003) stated, "Howard Hendricks observes, "The greatest crisis in the world today is a crisis of leadership, the greatest crisis of leadership is a crisis of character" (p. 18). In the character development of a church pastor,

> Since, for the most part, the nature of man inclines towards evil, and furthermore, no nature is so blessed at birth that it cannot be corrupted by perverse training, how can you expect anything but evil from a prince who, whatever his nature at birth (and a good lineage does not guarantee a mind as it does a kingdom, is subjected from the very cradle to the most stupid ideas and spends his boyhood among silly women and his youth among whores, degenerate comrades, the most shames flatterers buffoons, street-players, drinkers, gamblers, and pleasure-mongers as foolish as they are worthless. In this company, he hears nothing, learns nothing, and takes in nothing except pleasure, amusement, pride, arrogance, greed, irascibility, and bullying; and from this schooling, he is soon installed at the helm of the kingdom. (Jardine, 2008, p. 8-9)

In so, character development is at the heart of leadership effectiveness and, through modeling, presents a standard for those in one's sphere of influence to emulate. As the Apostle Paul stated, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Again, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:1-2).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among youth pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the

cultural Christlike character development was generally defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study are the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry.

Research Questions

The following Research questions will guide this study:

RQ1. What do pastors perceive to be the essential behavioral elements for their effective character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade of age youth ministry?

RQ2. What are the perspectives, if any, among pastors about using their cultural intelligence for personal character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ3. How do the pastors perceive the significance of developing their Gal. 5:22-23 personal Christlike character traits in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ4. How do the pastors perceive the impact of their Christlike character development practices for personal sustainability in a 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ5. How do pastors perceive that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

Assumptions and Delimitations

This research study was conducted with the initial assumptions below.

Research Assumptions

The first assumption was that church pastors in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States would cooperate with the study. Secondly, an assumption was that each church pastor independently developed a character development strategy. Another assumption was that the pastor accurately reports their perspective ministering to the loneliness environment. An

assumption was that character development and cultural intelligence are significant in reaching today's youth. The assumption was that character development and cultural intelligence are necessary to minister to the 6th-12th grade youth. The final assumption was that the pastor would provide information from a non-biased rationale while participating in the study.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This research study was delimited to the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Secondly, this research study was delimited to church pastors and studies the character development within the sample. This research study was delimited to examine the loneliness environment phenomenon. Lastly, this research study was delimited to examine youth ministry church sustainability.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions are presented as clarification for this study.

1. *Image of God:* "Involves the powers of personality that make humans, like God, beings capable of interacting with other seasons thinking and reflecting and of willing freely" (Erickson, 2015, p. 188).

2. *Culture:* "All behavior that is learned and transmitted by the symbols (rites, artifacts, language, etc.) of a particular group and that grows out of certain ideas or assumptions that we call a worldview" (Elwell, 2001, p. 227).

3. *Worldviews:* "The framework you use to interpret the world and your place in it" (Sunshine, 2009, p. 13).

4. *Cultural intelligence:* "The capability to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures" (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015, p. 3).

5. *Universal Church:* "All those who, in this age, have been born of the Spirit of God and have by the same Spirit been baptized into the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12:13; 1 Peter 1:3, 22-25)" (Enns, 2008, p. 364).

6. *Invisible:* "Indicate that its exact membership cannot be known" (Enns, 2008, p. 364).

7. *Character:* "The impression your life leaves on others" (Merritt, 2020, p. 15).

8. *Spiritual Leadership:* "Person who is ready to lead, to commit to full discipleship, and take on responsibility for others, that person is used to the limit" (Sanders, 2007, p. 18).

9. *Servant*: "Personification of the mission and ministry of the community" (Laniak, 2015, p. 230).

10. *Youth Ministry*: Youth participants range from 6th-12th grade students.

11. *Loneliness Environment:* An individual's inability to connect with others in the context of interpersonal and social relationship development.

Significance of the Study

With the onset of cultural division within society, the church has continued to express concern over cultural wars and how one defines the image of God within each worldview. According to Wills (2008), "There would have been truces called-during the century's wars, and during the dazed state of comity in the 1950s-but the culture wars would come roaring back in the Sixties (over racial integration, Vietnam, and school prayer), the Seventies (over abortion and feminism), the Eighties (over gay rights and pornography), the Nineties (over creationism and the Supreme Court), and into the twenty-first century (over all of the above)"(p. 382). In lieu of the different concepts of the image of God and cultural wars, "According to Genesis 1, God created *Adam*. Who exactly is this *Adam* that Genesis 1 describes using the "image of God" language? Adam here refers not only to a single man named Adam but also to humanity as a whole" (Kilner, 2015, p. 85). Kilner (2015) strongly asserts, "Contemporary readers can easily miss this point if they are located in societies like the United States that emphasize individualism, personal freedom, and autonomy" (p. 85).

Thus, within the onset of the new Christian worldview, the set of supra-cultural Christlike behaviors are defined in the biblical text of Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law" are above culture. The "*Fruit*," Christ, is the model of these new cultural intelligence markers in developing Christian character. Therefore, "Christians must take

the worldviews of other people seriously, not because they agree with them, but because they want to understand the people, they serve in order to effectively share with them the good news of the gospel" (Hiebert, 2008, p. 69). A strong assertion was made that the character development of a church pastor will naturally replicate the Gal. 5: 22-23 functional Christlike traits effective ministering to the 6th-12th grade loneliness environment and model behavior for the subgroup to emulate, as a result, affirm the knowledge that "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (Jn. 3:16-17).

This study constituted the purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study to understand the cultural Christlike character development among pastors within the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. This study investigated church pastors' metacognitive cultural Christlike development to provide awareness of the "*Fruit*" described in Galatians 5:22-23 working within the Christian leader for sustainability, adding to the ongoing literature in the scientific fields of cultural intelligence and Christian leadership.

Summary of the Design

The researcher has found the qualitative research method to be the necessary framework when studying a prescribed subject matter under investigation for data collection, analysis, and reporting of the findings. Therefore, the researcher utilized the qualitative method to collect essential knowledge about a predetermined pastoral sample group. While implementing the qualitative method, the researcher employed the face-to-face method in observing and interview-based protocols to examine the research questions, the data collected, and an analyzing coding system.

Moreover, during the observation phase, the researcher took field notes on the behavior and activities of the sample participants. Among the notes, behavior patterns among each

representative in the pastoral sample group and broad questions were asked to understand each person's perspective on the cultural Christlike character development to minister to the youth loneliness environment. The observation process made by the researcher encompassed a predetermined timeframe to understand intentional behavioral patterns to help further the youth ministries among the pastoral leadership participants. Furthermore, to understand each pastor's cultural Christlike character development beliefs in the essential behavioral elements of effective leadership within the 6th-12th grade youth loneliness environment setting, the collected data was analyzed to discover themes and descriptions utilizing the computer software MAXqda in the coding process located at *"www.maxqda.com"*. Upon completion, the themes and descriptions were reported clearly for readers to comprehend while contributing to the ongoing literature within scientific fields of Christian leadership, cultural intelligence, and youth ministries.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This comprehensive literature review provided the reader with an in-depth analysis of the relevant research framework on the subject matter that was warranted for the study. The task of developing the literature review was challenging; however, the journey was found to be rewarding. This work expresses below the framework for critical insight, understanding, and the necessary background information for this study.

Overview

Within Christendom, the declining attendance landscape into the unsuccessful preservation of established youth ministries needed a critical evaluation. The researcher aimed to understand the cultural Christlike character development of the pastors to better grasp the significance of the changing loneliness environment due to the population growth of diverse cultures within the studied area. Therefore, the subject matter was evaluated through a solid biblical worldview lens, while this investigation will use a qualitative phenomenological research study methodology. This literature review provided the general framework for this study. The researcher has framed this chapter into five sections as follows: 1) Theological Framework for the Study, 2) Theoretical Framework for the Study, 3) Related Literature, 4) Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature, and 5) Profile of the Current Study.

Theological Framework for the Study

The concept of theology has found its value in the science of studying God from a biblical, systemic, cultural, contemporary, and practical worldview lens. Erickson (2015) arrests, "Literally, theology is the study of God. It is the careful, systematic study, analysis, and statement of Christian doctrine" (Erickson, 2015, p. 4). Henceforth, developing a theological framework for this literature review was essential and was the foundation on which all knowledge was based. "The Bible is the constitution of the Christian faith: it specifies what is to be believed and what is to be done" (Erickson, 2015, p. 7). A proper examination of biblical

leadership, biblical character development, cultural theology, and church governance is warranted to grasp a comprehensive biblical worldview and significance within the study of theology. Each subsection focuses on the biblical framework of the subject matter to further express to the reader the importance of the Bible as the authoritative measuring rod of truth.

Biblical Leadership Theology

In this section, the researcher explores the biblical framework of leadership while grasping the extent of the concept within the study of theology and the specific practices that are developed from the inspiration of scripture. Biblical leadership stems from the appointment from God while the believer is willing to surrender to the divine guidance to serve their fellow man. Again, God's Word is "The authoritative guide for the Christian believer in every realm of life, including how one grows into and conducts oneself as a leader of others" (Howell, 2003, p. 1). The concept of biblical leadership theology is the Christian leader's purpose to serve in accordance with God's standards. "Leaders are appointed by God for his purposes (2 Sam. 7:7), and when his followers are willing, God desires to gently leads his people with care (Ps. 23:2)" (Forrest & Roden, 2017, p. 31). However, when examining the foundation of leadership from a biblical worldview, it is essential to note a proper definition. Christendom has provided many different concepts and definitions on the subject; however, Howell's definition constitutes the most straightforward etymology of the term biblical leadership. According to Howell (2003), "Biblical leadership is taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and to passionately promote the extension of God's kingdom in the world" (p. 3). Upon review of Howell's definition for use, the motif of shepherd leadership is found throughout the biblical text and incorporates the theological framework of biblical leadership.

Shepherd Motif

The scriptures under investigation provide a lens into the theological framework that aids a Christian leader in comprehending the shepherd motif presented within the biblical text. In the

book of Genesis, the theological framework of shepherd leadership begins with God. According to Laniak (2015), "Two traditions provide prototypes for leaders who follow. Moses and David are prototypical leaders. More importantly, YHWH reveals himself as the true Shepherd Ruler of Israel" (p. 25). Therefore, within the evaluation of the Old Testament, YHWH is the source and model to emulate while answering the call to lead as a shepherd. Moreover, critical insight into the motif is expressed in that "The law of Moses declares that "The LORD reigns forever and ever" (Exod. 15:18) and even the aftermath of the horrifying experiences of divine judgment. The writer of Lamentations acknowledged, "You, LORD, reign forever" (Lam. 5:19)" (Forrest & Roden, 2017, p. 30). Other examples, such as YHWH placing rulers over Israel, reflected the standard of shepherding leadership. Timothy Laniak provided a robust analysis with biblical evidence into YHWH placement of shepherds. "Moses became an extension of the 'hand of God' leading his people (Ps. 77:20 [H 21]; cf. Exod. 9:3; 13:14)" (Laniak, 2015, p. 87). The care for the people of God was given to men to act out the shepherd model. The characteristics set forth by God are the required attributes and behavioral patterns that point to the intended shepherd leadership style required by the Christian leader. "Leadership is given by spiritual examples and wise decisions, not by doctrinal decree (1 Pet. 5:1-4), or as Peter describes it, "not lording it over the flock"" (Towns, 2001, p. 684). The shepherd motif that follows the principle of care and guidance of God's people is further revealed within the New Testament.

Within the New Testament, the motif of shepherd leadership continues; Forrest and Roden (2017) stated, "The idea of the shepherd as nurturing guide is retained in New Testament Greek in the usage of the word *poimen* in Ephesians 4:11, which most English versions translate "pastor"" (p. 303). However, this interpretation could be more associated with the term, shepherd. Even more, one can comprehend the shepherd motif in the form of the leadership style within the Synoptic Gospels. The example of Christ is predominantly the model of servanthood within the shepherd motif. Although there is no particular term, such as shepherd leader, given to

man within the New Testament, the implication of the ongoing theme is prevalent. Within the New Testament scriptures, "Jesus is also called the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20), and Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4)" (Towns, 2001, p. 686), providing the necessary understanding of the shepherd motif, which is held within the attributes and characteristics of Christ. Furthermore, an example of the shepherd leader and Christlikeness is the exemplified life of the Apostle Paul.

The Apostle Paul

Within the New Testament, the Apostle Paul is an example to the Christian leader of the concept of shepherd leadership and the lifelong journey to becoming more like Christ's character. It is important to note that Paul's character is described as an example: "His authentic missionary passion helped him leap over all cultural and racial barriers. All people were his concern" (Sanders, 2007, p. 45). Therefore, as one continues to examine the life of Paul through a shepherd leadership lens, the biblical mandates for pastoral leadership qualifications are found within his inspired written work. "In 2 Timothy 2, Paul uses even different metaphors to describe the rigors of leadership. Minister as a teacher (v.2), a soldier (v.3) and athlete (v.5), a farmer (v.6), a workman (v. 15), a vessel (vv. 20, 21) and slave (v.24)" (MacArthur, 2005, p. xii). However, upon review of the biblical text, Paul further expands upon these qualifications within 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, expressing the qualification of an overseer, and in Titus 1: 5-9, the personality and character virtues of conduct. Among the list of qualifications within 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, a proper definition of an overseer is warranted to comprehend the use Paul intended for the overseer biblical leadership position. "The word "overseer" receives such translations as "bishop" (KJV, ASV), "Presiding officer" (TCNT), "superintendent" (Goodspeed), or "pastor" (Williams)" (Griffin & Lea, 1992, p. 10). Apart from this, the overseer position qualification is expressed in further detail. Concerning the functionality of the overseer within the church, the leader must be viewed as above reproach. (1 Tim. 3:2). Even more so, the leader is of good character outside the church. "The character of the elder should command the respect of the

unbeliever, inspire his confidence, and arouse his aspiration" (Sanders, 2007, p. 46). However, mental, morality, and maturity are qualities that Scripture mandates (1 Tim. 3: 1-7) and were found to be embodied within Paul's character as an example for a Christian leader to develop. It is interesting to note that "Paul puts himself forward as an example to the churches because of the confidence that his motives, actions, and teaching are in imitation of God's love revealed in Christ's sacrifice (1 Thess. 2:4-6a; 1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1-2)" (Howell, 2003, p. 265). Paul's example of shepherd leadership is a model for emulation within the character development of a Christian leader.

Biblical Character Development Theology

Biblical character development is critical for both those within leadership and as followers. One vital aspect of character development is in the way one treats the image of God, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Jn. 13:34-35). Furthermore, the scriptures continue to express, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Thus, an evaluation of the image of God is essential to grasp further the foundation of biblical character development.

Image of God

The image of God has been at the forefront of debatable matters among Christians for decades. This biblical concept is vital to a Christian leader's character development. An individual's very worth and value can be summarized by understanding God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). However, the image of God Francis Schaeffer (2009) stated, "For the twentieth-century man, this phrase, the image of God, is as important as anything in scripture, because men today can no longer answer that crucial question, "Who am I?"" (p. 46). Historically, there are three major views regarding the image of God. According to Millard Erickson (2015), "1.) Some consider the image to consist of certain characteristics within the very nature of humans, either

physical or psychological /spiritual. The substantive view. 2.) The experiencing of a relationship between the human and God or between two or more humans. The relational view. And 3.) A human is or experiences because of something that a human does. The functional view" (p. 187). Although each view presents a valid case, the substantive view continues to provide the necessary validity to its claim that the image of God, "In light of the foregoing considerations, should be thought of as primarily substantive or structural" (Erickson, 2015, p. 192). Therefore, "Their intrinsic value, however, is rooted in the fact that they possess a soul, whether or not its capacities are exercised" (Boyd & Eddy, 2009, p. 101).

Nonetheless, an investigation into the origins of sin is required and its effects on the image of God. Within the biblical text, sin appeared with the experience that transpired in the garden between Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-24). Furthermore, Elmer Towns (2001) argued, "Adam's actions would affect not only himself, but all of mankind" (p. 493). It is essential to note that there is a debatable understanding of the sinful nature traits among humans; as Kilner (2015) stated, "Whatever those traits or capacities are, some people inevitably demonstrate them more than others, leading to the conclusions that people are more God's image than others are, and that sin damages God's image (more in some than in others)-neither of which the Bible ever affirms." (p. 93). However, this assertion laid claims that people's value only matters based on individuals' implied bias while abandoning scriptural evidence.

In addition, sin altered human nature, and "As humanists are fighting today against prejudice, they have little philosophical base for their battle. But as a Christian, I do: No matter who I look at, no matter where he is, every man is created in the image of God as much as I am" (Schaeffer, 2009, p. 51). Moreover, understanding the sinful nature of the image of God allows the Christian leader to reflect on personal character flaws that may arise in comparison to the prescribed biblical standard of character (Gal. 5:22-23) and the necessary footing into the importance of both value and worth of those individuals they may encounter from other cultures.

Historically, Kilner (2010) stated, "Dietrich von Hildebrand was one of a relative few in Germany who recognized that it was precisely the biblical teaching that all of humanity continues in the undeformed image of God that offered the greatest defense against Hitler's destructive initiatives. As he wrote, soon after being forced to flee Nazi Germany in 1933: "All of the Western Christian civilization stands and falls with the words of Genesis, 'God made man in His image'" (p. 616). This statement is one of profound insight into the accurate value of the image of God and for the Christian leader to keep at the forefront while making an impact in service to others. Additionally, there is a need to acknowledge the redemptive narrative within the scriptures. It is important to express that through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, which was established in the beginning in the redemptive narrative as articulated in Genesis 3:15 to the Cross event in Matthew 27:32-56, the image of God who believes in Christ's sacrifice as the Son of God is now a new creation as in the scriptural statement by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17 being led by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, as created new beings in Christ, the implication for character development is found within the framework of expressing one's love for one another (1 Pet. 4:8) and understanding the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 22-23). Schaeffer (2009) stated, "People should see a beauty among Christians in their practice of the centrality of personal relationships- in the whole spectrum of life and in the whole culture" (p. 173). In so, as Paul clearly stated, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Biblical Christlike Character

Within the biblical text, the need to develop Christlike character qualities is warranted. However, understanding the context of Christlike character is necessary for a Christian leader's personal growth and development. When first observing the context of what character is, the foundation of the qualities and attitudes of Christlike character is found within God himself. As prescribed, a fair assessment noting the ability to develop Christlike character is that human beings are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). One significant aspect of developing Christlike

character is found in Matthew 22:37, 39, under the term love. Even more so, the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans expressed to the target audience through encouragement that character is built amidst trials and suffering. "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Rom. 5:3-4). To further evaluate the context of Paul's statement, "A better translation is "*proven character*." The Greek word simply means proof. Used of testing metals to determine the purity, the proof is Christian character (cf. Jm. 1:12)" (MacArthur, 2005, p. 1519). In addition to the reference that suffering builds the Christian leader's Christlike character, the process of developing self-control stems from the concept of discipline set forth within the Apostle Peter's writings. "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love" (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Again, the attribute of self-control is noteworthy to the development of Christlike character. According to Pettit (2008), "Self-control is a foundation of godly behavior, including the love we share among our brothers and sisters in Christ" (p. 145). The link between the love expressed to others created in God's image and self-control is vital to the Christian leader's Christlike character development. Paul continues to make a strong case for self-control and other attributes that are the necessary guideposts for Christlike character development in Gal. 5: 22-23, the "Fruit of the Spirit."

Fruit of the Spirit

Scholars and leaders within Christendom continue to study the Fruit of the Spirit to grasp the concept of the Holy Spirit working in the Christian leader, developing the necessary traits for biblical Christlike character. Upon reviewing the list of the nine inward traits in Gal. 5:22-23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control," are critical in developing Christlike character. According to

Dörnyei (2022), "Virtue lists were meant to perform such as modeling function" (p. 24). Therefore, from the Christian perspective, the Christian model of Christlike character traits is found in the "Fruit of the Spirit" virtues and is developed through practical application. The context in which Paul was writing to the Galatian church was based on the effects of fulfilling the flesh with worldly vices and how they would hinder the Holy Spirit's work to develop the necessary Christlike character virtues. According to Gillies (2013), "Paul no doubt saw these vices at work amongst the Christians to whom he was writing, and he would also see the destructive effect of them upon those Christians and upon the faith and faithfulness of that church" (p. 398). However, it is essential to note that each attribute stems from the biblical concept of love. "Love, *agape*, is the love of choice, referring not to an emotional affection, physical attraction, or a familial bond, but to respect, devotion, and affection that leads to willing, self-sacrificial service (Jn. 15:3; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:16, 17)" (MacArthur, 2005, p. 1676). The choice of love is the primary virtue in developing a Christlike character. Therefore, "To love and to love well requires the involvement of the mind" (Dörnyei, 2022, p. 43). The Christian leader in the development of biblical Christlike character begins with the condition to be guided by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the conscious activity in choosing to love.

Condition

Within Paul's theology, the condition that is expressed is that the Christian must continue to "Walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). According to Lea and Black (2003), "Paul emphasized that it was imperative for Christians to keep step in with the Spirit (5:25)" (p. 374). In fact, one can observe the transformation process of Paul's thinking in Acts 9. Paul's example of transformation and Christlike character development was expressed during his Damascus Road encounter with Christ and his choice to begin to walk by the Spirit. "His Entire personality was in mutation. He was being turned inside out as he let Jesus light the recesses of his soul" (Pollock, 2012, p. 33). However, in keeping with the theme of the condition "Walk by the

Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), Paul held to the premise that the old man is in battle with the new man and the cognitive choice to submit to the Spirit's guidance daily is necessary for Christlike character development which is found in the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23). Enns (2008) asserted, "Living in the sphere or under the domination of the old nature, believers are exhorted to conduct their lives in the sphere of the Holy Spirit" (p. 292). As a result of "Walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), the necessary practical Christlike character virtues will become cultivated within the Christian leader. Collectively, Christians are called to be different from the world's standard of conduct and deeds. Even more so, "The promises of Christianity are the joy and power of an integrated life, transformed on every level by the Holy Spirit so that our whole being participates in the great drama of God's plan of redemption" (Pearcey & Johnson, 2008, p. 95). By showing dedication to the works of the Holy Spirit, the Christian leader and the choice to abide (Jn. 15:1-17), the "Fruit of the Spirit" will begin to develop while living out Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will". Moreover, "We should still strive to develop a character of such quality that people can see a difference between the redeemed and the unredeemed" (Pearcey & Johnson, 2008, p. 91). Thus, holding to the condition to "Walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), going out into the culture, and making an impact while embodying Christlike character is critical for the Christian leader.

Culture and Christian Theology

The examination of culture and Christian theology is warranted to grasp the biblical concept on the subject matter and the implications of how culture drives human behavior. However, determining the difference between the world's definition of culture and the Christian theological definition of culture needs further evaluation. Dyrness (2001) stated that to define the word culture, "The word "culture" originally referred to cultivating the ground, and it has never completely lost rapport with natural productivity" (p. 227). However, society has defined culture

as relevant to human development and behavioral patterns. "Culture includes all behavior that is learned and transmitted by symbols (rites, artifacts, language, etc.) of a particular group grows out of certain ideas or assumptions that we call worldviews" (Dryness, 2001, p. 227). In the context of culture, Paul addressed the church regarding how the Christians would engage culture in Romans 12:2a "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". The call to the renewal of the mind is not one of complete isolation from the context of how society defines culture. Thus, "It is impossible to commit oneself to Christ in isolation from our culture" (Dryness, 2001, p. 231). However, the Christian leader needs to comprehend that "Scripture is the norm for all peoples in times, but the supra-cultural element must always be expressed in some particular cultural form, even if those forms are transformed as the Holy Spirit applies the reality of the kingdom" (Dryness, 2001, p. 231).

Moreover, Evangelicals had developed a theological framework for transforming the culture for Christ while facing the challenges of applying the necessary fundamentals. Even so, "Evangelicals have been properly concerned that cultural influences do not challenge or dilute the authority of Christ and his Word" (Dryness, 2001, p. 231). Therefore, the evaluation stands on the standard set forth from the biblical context: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5: 14-16) when engaging culture.

On the other hand, in conjunction when establishing the theological framework of culture and Christianity, Pearcey and Johnson (2008) make a critical observation regarding cultural worldviews "James's injunction to "keep oneself unstained from the world" (James 1:27), we tend to interpret that strictly moral terms-as an injunction not to sin. But it also means to keep ourselves "unstained" from the world's wrong ways of thinking, its faulty worldviews" (p. 121).

Thus, a fair evaluation of the theological implication of Christian's transforming culture can conclude that "We are to be like missionaries, actively translating the language of faith into the language of the culture around us" (Pearcey & Johnson, 2008, p. 67) while applying the biblical command outlined in Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth."

Church Governance Theology

The concept and attributes of church governance stem from a proper biblical interpretation of the foundation and formation of a community. Culturally, those in Christ, as Pual described, have developed communities that influence behaviors and attitudes into a single organic entity (Acts 2:42-47). The function of these communities has been the premise for physical, cognitive, and soul development. However, historically the Catholic church holds its governance to the hierarchical framework. It is interesting to note that during the Protestant Reformation, one critical evaluation of hierarchical governance was found to be based on power, which was abused and scrutinized by prominent reformers such as Martin Luther. Thus, an evaluation of church governance was warranted. The two critical principles examined were 1 Corinthians, the principle of orderly worship, and Romans 12, that each believer is vital to the overall function within the community and cultural development. The book of 1 John 4:1 affirms that all believers within the church must correct church doctrine by testing the spirits. Thus, within the growing Protestant movement, church governance would find its significant reform and guideposts within the teaching that all believers are priests (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:23-28; 10:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:9). Traditionally, from the reform, there have been predominantly three common church governance that has found their premise based on scripture. Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational are the three major biblical-supported governances; however, this review will only evaluate the framework that constitutes congregationalism.

Congregationalism

      The rationale for this study was that within scripture, the framework for congregationalism is found in the example of the Apostles collectively solving an issue within the community. "So, the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables" (Act. 6:2). According to Polhill (1992), "To solve the problem, the Twelve gathered all the disciples together. Even though the Hellenists had the main grievance, the problem involved the entire congregation and the apostles wanted total participation in its resolution" (p. 180). Thus, the foundation for a community governed by the people was established from the example fitting within the early church. Erickson (2015) stated, "An ideal form of church government will fulfill the biblical principles of order and the priesthood of all believers" (p. 408). To continue the theological framework for church governance by the collective whole, which has been deemed the coined term congregationalism, Morris (2001) expressed, "Congregationalism is much wider than the church that bears the name. Baptists, for example, usually have congregational polity. They see the local congregation as independent and not subject to any outside authority" (p. 258). Although this governance holds to a strong scripture evidence-based theological framework for establishing an independent community, each covenant community must keep within the foundational premise that Christ is the head of the church while not neglecting participation from all believers in solving issues (Col. 1:18). Even more, within the Baptist church congregational governance polity, Kevan (2001) asserted, "The Baptist belief is that the church is to be governed not by an order of priests, nor through higher or central courts, but through the voice of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the members in each local assembly" (p. 139). Although the Baptist congregational governance strongly represents a biblical framework, it is interesting to note that "Local congregations are not to be equated with the humanistic concept of democracy. Democracy is too low and too small of a word" (Kevan, 2001, p. 139).

Summary of the Theological Framework

Developing a theological framework for this literature review study is essential and is the foundation of all knowledge. "Because humans are finite and God is infinite, if they are to know God, that knowledge must come about by God taking the initiative to make himself known" (Erickson, 2015, p. 27). Thus, the proper examination of biblical leadership, biblical Christlike character development, cultural theology, and church governance was achieved to grasp a comprehensive biblical worldview and was significant for this study of theology. It is essential to note that the typology of biblical leadership, character development, culture, and governance patterns are found in the "Imitation of the divinely ordained pattern exemplified first in Christ (Jn. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21), then in the apostolic band (Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:9), and the community itself (1Thess. 1:7)" (Osborne, 2001, p. 1222).

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The development of leadership theories within the social science communities continues to make headway into understanding the relationship and character virtues development involving leaders and the framework in which they function within the context of culture. According to Northouse (2019), "Some researchers conceptualize leadership as a trait or as a behavior, whereas others view leadership to form an information-processing perspective or relational standpoint" (p. 1). Thus, based on researched literature, the need to understand the use of a theoretical framework within a biblical worldview lens is warranted for this study. However, a proper definition that will constitute this section is acceptable in comprehending the notion of the theoretical framework. According to Varpio et al. (2020), "A theoretical framework is a reflection of the work the researcher engages in to use a theory in a given study" (p. 990). Again, the continued focus of this study will be to understand if a relationship exists between the church youth sustainability and the pastors' cultural intelligence and personal character development controlling for the successful preservation of youth ministries. Therefore, a proper

examination of the theoretical framework of authentic leadership, character virtue development, cultural intelligence, and governance theory is necessary to grasp a comprehensive biblical worldview and comprehend the connotation within this study. Each subsection focuses on the subject matter under investigation to further prompt the reader in comprehending the historical and current importance of social science theories and character virtue development for the Christian leader.

Authentic Leadership Theory

The researcher will examine the authentic leadership theory in Christlike character virtue construction. Historically, the authentic leadership model within social science remains in its infancy. However, individuals and corporations are at a loss for a model leaders can use as a guidepost as society demands trustworthy leadership. The philosophical premise of the authentic leadership theory model stems from the concept of being true to oneself while leading others. The original developer of this theory was contributed to Warren Bennis and his works on leadership**.** Bennis conveyed the authentic leadership concept in his work entitled "*On becoming a leader*." A fundamental point from the text is that becoming authentic within an honest assessment of the self requires work, and a single event does not constitute its end for leadership growth. George (2010) expressed, "Crucibles are the real test of your character and can be transformative experiences that empower you to reframe your life's meaning" (p. 62). Therefore, the willingness to learn from experiences while engaging the culture aids in becoming an authentic leader. To expand upon further the notion that authentic leadership will be developed while engaging in culture, George (2003) stated, "Leading an authentic life requires openness to all that life has to offer and a willingness to go with the flow of life" (p. 55). Developing a growth mindset that leads to personal and professional Christlike character virtue development is critical to the theoretical framework within this theory.

Furthermore, Bennis (2009) stated, "I also, believe, however, that everyone, of whatever age and circumstance, is capable of self-transformation" (p. xxxvi). The ideals of self-transformation and development transcend the concept of other leadership models, such as the trait approach. One criticism of the trait approach to leadership is that, according to Northouse (2019), "People who possess certain traits that make them leaders in one situation may not be leaders in another situation" (p. 31). However, development within the authentic leadership theory is an ongoing process, as this theorist prescribes. The concept of human development and daily growth is foundational to leadership and character virtue development.

Moreover, according to Northouse (2019), "Authentic leadership is composed of four districts but related components: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency" (p. 196). Specifically, the pillar of knowing oneself holds to the notion that the leader develops the necessary self-awareness tool to navigate through a culturally enriched environment to strengthen the core of one's identity. Thus, in becoming authentic, the leaders must engage one's sphere of influence with purpose and, in return, make a lasting impact that is distinctively theirs. In its most simplistic form, this authentic leadership concept can be explained as leaders being true to themselves while living within a cultural framework.

Culture and Empowerment

Further development within the theoretical framework of the authentic leadership theory is culture and empowerment. Authentic leadership theory articulates the importance of constructing a cultural and empowerment environment. An authentic leader, according to George (2010), "Needs to reward leaders at all levels who empower their colleagues and subordinates and recognize them publicly" (p. 229). As Christian leaders continue to develop their self-awareness skillset and navigate the world around them, being present while recognizing those within their sphere of influence is critical for cultural change and Christlike character virtue

development. According to George (2010), "Empowering leaders to engage actively with their colleagues by counseling them, offering suggestions, or assisting them in making vital contacts" (p. 229). It is interesting to note that Bennis (2009) asserted, "Creating a flexibility environment in which people are not only valued but encouraged to develop their full potential and treated as equals rather than subordinates" (p. 176) gives increased significance to both the leaders and their followers to develop **authentically** while engaging in the process of developing Christlike character virtues. Thus, assessing the theoretical framework of character virtue development is warranted to apply the authentic leadership model theory properly.

Character Virtue Development Theory

In character development, many different philosophical thoughts have developed various groundwork approaches to character virtue development theory. Subsequently, as the image of God, human beings are born into a social world that allows for freedom, and the choice of the type of character is based on behavioral patterns that stem from what is desired. According to Hamel and Himes (1989), "The spiritual person can only attain basic, free self-realization when he emerges for his spiritual unity into the physically conditioned diversity of his development in space and time, to which his personal freedom of choice is directed" (p. 190). As observed in the authentic leadership model theory, similarly according to Hamel and Himes (1989), "We recognize that man can gain character by responding in significant ways to events beyond his control" (p. 155). However, having character and the word character are reliably two different terms. According to Hamel and Himes (1989), "To speak of a man "having character" is not to attribute to him any specific traits; rather, the point is that whatever activity he takes part in or traits he exhibits, there will be sort of control and consistency in the manner in which he exhibits them" (p. 154). Therefore, for this study of character virtue development, a proper definition is warranted for understanding the etymology of character. Character will be defined as an individual exhibiting the nine virtues found in the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5-22-23).

However, examining the classic historical view of virtues and the historical view of Christian virtues is needed to comprehend character development.

Historical Virtues

Throughout history, philosophers such as Aristotle and Epictetus have created numerous written works that focused on virtuous living and character development within society. To further grasp the philosophical implications for character virtue development, an examination of the works of Aristotle and Epictetus is necessary.

Aristotle

The Greek philosopher Aristotle is a prominent influencer in human virtue development. According to Thomson (1953), "Students of moral goodness must presumably determine the limits of the voluntary and involuntary" (p. 111). The ideals of voluntary and involuntary behavioral responses within the image of God are critical to understanding the rationale behind the theoretical framework of character virtue development. Lane (2006) stated when discussing the development of virtue, "Fundamental to both Plato and Aristotle is the distinction between *being* and *becoming*. In this world, everything is subject to change and decay. Nothing is unchanging -it is always *becoming* something else rather than simply being what it is" (p. 6). Thus, the concept of *becoming* regarding human virtue development paved the way for the debatable theory construction by Aristotle. According to Feinberg (2001), "Humankind does have a reason, which makes possible the apprehension of the ultimate end and guides them to it. The various human appetites must be ruled by reason" (p. 93). To further expand the notion of human reason and the philosophical premise for character virtue development, Aristotle is noted for creating the Nicomachean habituation theory, which is based on guiding character virtue development. However, in the attempt to dissect Aristotle's theory of habituation in a comprehensible understanding of the concept of human reason, Di Basilio (2021) expressed, "Reason is non-innate insofar as, unlike the case of desire, human beings are not born with it, not

at any rate in its fully developed form. Unlike desire, reason is acquired during our growth if development proceeds unimpeded" (p. 538). However, reason is the functional aspect of the ability to desire. Again, Di Basilio (2021) stated, "For the self-controlled person acts out of reason against desire, whereas, conversely, the un-self-controlled acts out of desire against reason. Both cases are natural as they spring from, and are due to, impulses that are natural to human beings" (p. 540). It is interesting to note that in the evaluation of Aristotle's Nicomachean theory of habituation Di Basilio (2021) stated, "The intended transition to acting as the virtuous person would act is achieved presumably by first using pleasure and pain as incentives to encourage certain behavioral patterns in the habitual" (p. 535). Moreover, the continued study of human behavioral patterns and reason is further developed from Aristotle's thought and was expressed in the action of virtuous conduct within Epictetus's work.

Epictetus

Epictetus historically developed a classical manual for virtuous living and character development. According to Lebell (2007), "Epictetus staunchly believed in the necessity of training for gradual refinement of personal character and behavior. Moral progress is the natural province of the highborn, not achieved by accident or luck, but by working on yourself -daily" (p. vii). The philosophical grounds for his work were based on his experiences while enslaved. However, Cochran (2010) "It should be noted that the Stoic account of moral formation represents a clear departure from Aristotle" (p. 119). Epictetus became free and was banished from Rome by the emperor Domitian for his threat of influence as a philosopher. However, he contributed to creating a philosophical school during his time in exile.

Furthermore, Lebell (2007) expressed, "Epictetus advanced a conception of virtue that was simple, ordinary, and day-to-day in its expression. He favored a life lived steadily in accordance with divine will over extraordinary, conspicuous, heroic displays of goodness" (p. xii). However, character virtues, according to Hamel and Himes (1989), "Ought to be the

progressive growth of the self into the fuller reality of God's action in Christ" (p. 159). It is interesting to note that Epictetus's philosophical approach to mastering one's life for the common good is the expression of character. Again, Lebell (2007) stated, "His prescription for the good life centered on three main themes: mastering your desires, performing your duties, and learning to think clearly about yourself and your relation within the large community of humanity" (p. xii). Moreover, from a biblical worldview lens, Hamel and Himes (1989) expressed, "Sanctification is thus the formation of the Christian's character that is the result of his intention to see the world as redeemed in Jesus Christ" (p. 159). Thus, historically, Christian philosophers have provided their thoughts on character virtue development as a counter to secular thought.

Christian Virtues

Traditionally, virtues from a Christian perspective stem from a list of cardinal virtues. This list comprises seven distinctive attributes, each with the notion for development within the Christian. According to Mounce (2001), "The seven cardinal virtues as enunciated by the medieval church are faith, hope, love, justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude. They are "cardinal" in that all other Christian virtues "hinge" (*cardo*) upon one or another of them" (p. 208). Historically, the influence of Plato and Aristotle would require a remarkable transformation from Christian thought to provide a case for virtue development to be implemented by the image of God. Therefore, prominent Christian leaders such as Augustine began to reinterpret the virtues to redirect each of them to the formation from God. Subsequently, Mounce (2001) expressed, "Even though the schoolmen return to Aristotle as a source of moral speculation, the end product is always Aristotle read in the light of Augustine" (p. 208). Other Church fathers would challenge and develop a rationale for comprehending and applying the character virtue development for the image of God. Thomas Aquinas's fathered a fruitful moral virtue theory that continues to be examined by scholars. The virtue theory stems from the foundational premise within the biblical text. Although the claims of Aristotle and Stoics' philosophical frameworks

focus on becoming, the Christian perspective aids in the necessary balance of becoming while placing focus on others. Again, Austin (2017) asserted, "Aquinas's theological, developmental virtue theory recommends an attentiveness and desire that grows from being act-focused to being also agent-focused, and finally to being other-focused. What Aquinas proposes, in the end, is an ecstatic virtue theory" (p. 4). Thus, the researcher argues that the "*Other-focused*" prescribed within Thomas's ecstatic virtue theory constitutes the necessary premise for engaging culture to develop character virtue.

Furthermore, with the development of Christian virtue thought, the evaluation of pagan philosophical thought of stoicism has been argued as a substantial place for framing virtues. The argument's premise is driven by the concept of humans depending upon each other, for they are created social beings. While maintaining a theological posture Cochran (2010) argued the case for social dependence, "The Stoics show us, need not be a threat to our moral agency's authenticity. Instead, recognizing our dependence upon God is foundational to our ability to pursue a moral living, and we can perceive moral beauty in acknowledgments of the fragility and limitations of human nature" (p. 132). In so, the image of God's dependence on God and as created social beings gives way for the necessary development of virtues while engaging culture, for the outcome is becoming transformed into living out the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Cultural Intelligence Theory

Within the landscape of the workplace and the Christian church, generally, the image of God is fundamentally known as a sojourner. Thus, the need to develop an awareness of different cultures is warranted. Cultural intelligence is not just the awareness of different nationalities and beliefs. More significantly, the image of God has an array of different assumptions, attitudes, and experiences that a very different from others. Thus, while engaging in developing Christlike character virtues, cultural intelligence is critical for the image of God as a created social being that engages an array of multicultural environments. To further understand the implications that

stem from cultural awareness in the aspect of intelligence, Sue (2012) stated, "Many marginalized groups react equally strongly when issues of oppression are raised, especially when their stories of discrimination and pain are minimized or neglected" (p. 6). Thus, to address the issue, the development of a theoretical framework that seeks to understand while informing leaders how to assess and apply cultural intelligence was introduced by Christopher Earley and Soon Ang in a book published on cultural intelligence in 2003. Since its publication, many social science fields have engaged in the theoretical development of cultural intelligence. Dr. David Livermore has recently developed an assessment model to measure cultural intelligence. As society continues to move and more cultures engage daily with each other, there is a vital need to develop cultural intelligence, even in the realm of Christlike character virtue development. According to Sue (2012), "Many well-intentioned majority persons seem disinclined to hear the personal stories of suffering, humiliation, and pain that accrue to persons of color and other marginalized groups in our society" (p. 6). In so, ANG and Livermore (2015) stated, "Many of these culture preferences for leadership style are related to the values embraced by a culture as a whole" (p. 17). Thus, developing skills while assessing areas of weakness is critical for the Christian leader to culturally grasp the needed growth in character virtue development, such as hearing personal stories from marginalized societal groups.

Furthermore, explaining the causation for utilizing the developed cultural intelligence model, ANG and Livermore (2015) expressed, "Cultural intelligence picks up where emotional and practical intelligence leaves off. It allows you to develop and apply your interpersonal and problem-solving skills when working in culturally diverse situations" (p. 34). Additionally, in efforts to justify their argument into the landscape for cultural development theories, ANG and Livermore (2015) stated, "The four capabilities of CQ provide a coherent way to measure, enhance, and apply CQ" (p. 35). Although Livermore holds to the claim that his four CQ model to assess cultural intelligence is sufficient, Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2018) expressed the results

from their study with the use of a new model to evaluate cultural intelligence, "The bi-factor CQ model provides a more complete understanding of CQ effects than either the single-factor or four-factor CQ models because it simultaneously accounts for the effects of a latent CQ factor and specific CQ factors" (p. 135). Again, Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2018) expressed, "The bi-factor model also provides a rationale for how the four CQ factors as a dynamic system with reciprocal relationships between CQ factors can give rise to a latent CQ factor over time" (p. 135). Although this model is noted for a practical assessment of cultural intelligence, the need to grasp the individual and collective worldview is warranted.

Individual Worldview and Collective Worldview

Research literature is saturated with material that stems from the subject matter of culture and multicultural leadership models. However, ANG and Livermore (2015) stated, "The majority of the world is collectivist, but the majority of leadership literature is by and for individualists" (p. 101). Therefore, assessing the two major cultural worldviews, individualism, and collectivism, is fair. According to Oyserman and Lee (2008) stated, "Within individualism, the core unit is the individual; societies exist to promote the well-being of individuals. Individuals are seen as separate from one another and as the basic unit of analysis" (p. 311). However, Oyserman and Lee (2008) expressed, "Within collectivism, the core unit is the group; societies exist, and individuals must fit into them. Individuals are seen as fundamentally connected and related through relationships and group memberships" (p. 311). Thus, each worldview constitutes various behavioral, values, ethical, and rational components in cultural differences. According to ANG and Livermore (2015), "Individualism versus collectivism is, at its core, a difference in identity" (p. 101). However, the variable of priming is conducive to influencing the thought process within the image of God for developing cultural preferences. It is noteworthy to discuss the research study conducted by Oyserman and Lee (2008), which concluded, "Current review supports the perspective that one of the ways in which meaning is organized in context is

through the meaning provided by salient and accessible culture (operationalized as individualism and collectivism) and that once a particular cultural focus is cued, it is likely to carry with it relevant goals, motives, actions, ways of interpreting information, and processing strategies" (p. 333). However, in the case of religion and worldviews of the individualists and collectivists, researchers are currently not conclusive on how cultural differences dictate the development of virtuous behaviors. According to Cohen et al. (2016), "It is interesting to consider whether an emphasis on personal faith, the moralization of internal thoughts, having born-again experiences, or a tendency toward internal attributions is meaningfully labeled individualistic, or if a tendency to emphasize community and tradition, or to consider behavior more morally relevant than thoughts, is fairly labeled collectivistic" (p. 1241). Therefore, it is noted that a study within a religious environment examining its cultural worldview to determine if a specific worldview dictates the development of virtuous behaviors needs further study. However, this study justifies the need to grasp the concept of cultural intelligence and cultural Christlike character development within the governance framework.

Governance Theory

Historically within societies, the image of God has sought out and developed theoretical frameworks to implement policies to stabilize and have authority in the form of governance. According to VanDrunen (2020), "Political institutions are common. God did not establish these institutions simply for the benefits of Christians, or simply for the benefits of people from a certain location or ethnicity, but for the benefits of all humans alike" (p. 17). However, a proper explanation that drives the concept of governance is warranted to understand the term's theoretical premise for establishing sustainability. According to Meadowcroft (2007), "Governance for sustainable development refers to processes of socio-political governance oriented towards the attainment of sustainable development" (p. 299). Therefore, examining the

political ideals of Plato's democracy and the Christian princes' governances is necessary to seek an understanding of sustainable development.

Plato Democracy

Within the premise of Plato's philosophy on democracy, building a stabilized society requires the variable of trust from those in authoritative positions. Trust is categorized as political trust within the framework of the governance of a people group. Thus, Plato's concept of governance is laid out in the people's level of trust. Mara (2001) stated, "Political trust is good for democracies in a way that goes beyond its instrumental contribution to collective action. Plato's dialogue extends this discussion to suggest that warranted trust in the outcomes of these engagements requires the presence of citizens who practice certain virtues" (p. 832). Again, Mara (2001) stated, "These are not simply the virtues reflective of a homogenous moral community, but rather those that emerge from a critical engagement with cultural norms" (p. 823). Thus, engagement within a culture that requires an act of trust aids in the development of virtue that will provide stabilization only if the virtue aligns with the cultural norms. However, Mara (2001) continues to argue, "While deliberative institutions may support qualities needed to establish the communicative bases of vertical and horizontal trust, these same institutions presuppose the presence of intellectually responsible and morally decent citizens who have been socialized by a wider array of influences" (p. 832). Those within the political governance of authority should have various experiences and cultural influences to stabilize an institute. Thus, this variable of trust within the concept of Plato's democracy is noteworthy for the possibility utilization; however, Erasmus's model of governance challenges Plato's ideals, for his case argues the use of a single prince to provide a way for sustainability within an institute.

Christian Prince

Erasmus developed the framework for governance and sustainability within his work entitled "*The Education of a Christian Prince.*" This manual was developed to guide a young

ruler in the necessary political practices as the influence of sustainability and virtue development among the governed people. According to Nowakowski (2021), "Erasmus divides the whole Christian community into three circles with one centre in Christ: the first is the circle of priests, abbots, bishops, cardinals, and popes – they draw the light of Christ directly from the source and bring it to the second circle; that is the circle of secular rulers, guarding the public peace by their power and laws; the third circle is formed by common people "(p. 104-105). However, within the community, the governance and laws of the people are held in the role of the preacher. According to Jardine (2008), "Erasmus's insistence on the necessity of virtuous conduct in all things on the part of the prince follows directly from this consensual model of lawful government" (p. vii). Although the variable of trust is of consideration within Plato's democracy for sustainability, Erasmus placed greater emphasis on the character of the individual who governs over a people group. According to Jardine (2008), "So it is with a man's character, the more promising, the more noble, the more upright it is, the more it is at the mercy of many shameful rises unless it is nurtured by wholesome teachings" (p. 11). Even more, the governance of a body of individuals is held to the premise of scriptural teachings. Jardine (2008) expressed, "Let him become convinced of this that what Christ teaches applies to no one more than to the prince" (p. 13). However, it is interesting to note that, according to Nowakowski (2021), "The ruler for him is not someone who directs the people by creating a perfectly sound system of the law, who builds an abstract order of organization over the heads of the citizens. He fulfills rather the role of educator, who, thanks to the power of his moral authority, can elevate people towards himself in the dialogue with them" (p. 107). The role of an educator with an emphasis on excellent communication aids in supporting the framework to govern a people group. Henceforth, cultural intelligence is warranted as an aspect of character virtue development in the parameters set forth by Erasmus to the prince as the necessary variable required for governance and sustainability. Even more, Jardine (2008) expressed this variable,

>Your Prince is complete with all the virtues, then monarchy, pure and simple, is the thing, but since this would probably never happen, although it is a fine idea to entertain if no more than an ordinary man is presented(things being what they are nowadays), then monarchy should probably be checked and diluted with a mix of aristocracy and democracy to prevent it ever breaking out into tyranny and just as the elements mutually balance each other so let the state be stabilized with a similar control. (p. 37)

On the other hand, a critical warning is given to the people's governance for such a ruler. Jardine (2008) stated, "Plato calls princes the guardians of the state and that they are to the nation what sheepdogs are to a flock, but if the sheepdog turns into wolves what hope is there then for the flock?" (p. 31). Furthermore, Jardine (2008) asserted, "Tyrants are happy to stir up party conflicts and disputes between their subjects and carefully feed and foster such animosity as happened to arise improperly trading on these situations to reinforce their tyranny" (p. 28). There is a substantial weakness within Erasmus's form of governance. The establishment of accountability is needed for the prince while not neglecting the fact that God is sovereign over all governance, and as VanDrunen (2020) stated, "Christians can surely agree that living just and fruitful lives that bless our neighbors is an important part of Christian responsibility in this age as we "serve the living and true God" and "wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9-10)" (p. 21).

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this literature review study is critical in providing the necessary insight into understanding if a relationship exists between the church youth ministry sustainability and the pastors' cultural intelligence character development controlling for the successful preservation of youth ministries. Thus, the proper examination of the theoretical framework of authentic leadership, character virtue development, cultural intelligence, and governance theories was necessary to grasp a comprehensive biblical worldview. In addition, the

connotations within this study accurately procure the essential theoretical awareness of the subject matter under investigation.

Related Literature

The purpose of this section is to provide the necessary critical literature review on the various subtopics that directly relate to the subject matter under investigation by the researcher. The framework is an in-depth analysis of surveyed sources that sets forth the parameters while informing the research. Thus, this section of the literature review is divided into the following: 1) Pastoral Leadership Literature, 2) Character Development Literature, 3) Culture Intelligence Literature, 4) Culture Cognitive Behavioral Skills Literature, and 5) Governance and Sustainability Literature.

Pastoral Leadership Literature

The concept of pastoral leadership is the ability to guide God's people under the standard of care set forth by the parameters within the authority of the word of God. Research on the subject matter under investigation continues to reveal various sources that focus on the type of care required for an overseer and the necessary behavioral patterns of conduct. As created social beings, the concept of pastoral character leadership development is warranted for study within the parameters of cultural Christlike traits. Therefore, within this section, the researcher will examine the relevant literature that stems from current pastoral leadership sources. As reviewed within the previous section, biblical leadership requires the filling of the Spirit, and it is held to a standard of conduct and deed to engage the image of God within the culture. Oswald (2007) stated, "A person can have a brilliant mind and possess artful administrative skill. But without spirituality, he is incapable of giving truly spiritual leadership" (p. 91). Thus, pastoral leadership is found in the ability of an individual's willingness to surrender to the guidance of the Spirit. According to Malphurs (2003), "In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter writes to elders in northwestern Asia Minor that they are to shepherd or lead God's flock as overseers. The term shepherd refers to

leadership" (p. 26). This definition constitutes the driving factor that separates biblical leadership from the ideologies of leadership held within the secular worldview. It is interesting to note Malphurs (2003), "The shepherd metaphor primarily of a leader- shepherd were leaders- however, today many people commonly equal the term exclusively with pastoral care. It is true that shepherds cared for their sheep, but they did much more than sheep care" (p. 34). Apart from this, the expression of shepherd leadership and being led by the Spirit within the biblical text is further developed as Oswald (2007) stated, "To be filled with the Spirit means simply that a Christian voluntarily surrenders life and will to the Spirit. Through faith, the believer's personality is permeated, mastered, and controlled by the Spirit" (p. 94). Thus, the image of God is emitted into the development process of becoming the standard of spiritual, pastoral leadership to guide God's people. Again, the focus is placed on the whole being approach to pastoral leadership, and as Oswald (2007) stated, "The Christian leaders' mind, emotions, will, and physical strength all become available for the Spirit to guide and use. Under the Spirit's control, natural gifts of leadership are lifted to their highest power, sanctified for holy purpose" (p. 95).

On the other hand, an example of pastoral leadership is found in the Apostle Paul. Oswald (2007) stated, "Despite his success as a missionary and leader, Paul was never without a wholesome, watchful fear that he himself might be disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:27)" (p. 196). Furthermore, Oswald (2007) expressed "Paul believed he could be disqualified not merely because or errors of doctrine or misjudgments of ethics but because of the body's passions. Paul worked toward mastering the body's appetites through disciplined moderation-neither asceticism on the other has (such as causing oneself harm by denial of basic needs) nor self-indulgence on the other (losing strength through careless diet, for example)" (p. 197). The Apostle Paul was willing to devote his whole being to the Creator while developing his leadership capabilities.

Leadership Development

In leadership development, influence and emulation are critical factors for the Christian leader to consider. However, one critical insight is how the concept of self-discipline influences character and leadership development. According to Oswald (2007), "Leaders preserve the standards through loving discipline" (p. 153). Henceforth, the Christian leader must mature and express the courage to stand up for the biblical standards while not compromising God's truth in love through the development of self-discipline practices. Clinton (2018) stated, "Ministry skills development offers a twofold: (1) to see the leading of God in each skill learned and to recognize that each is a part of a long-term process of training by God, and (2) to maintain the attitudes of a seeker in order to benefit from learning" (p. 77). Therefore, this vital component of self-discipline in pastoral leadership is necessary to engage in the ever-changing cultural environment. In so the difference between secular leadership and pastoral leadership is that, as Malphurs (2003) stated, "The Christian leader as well as many Christians in general can also operate in the power of the flesh (v.12). The difference is the Christian doesn't have too" (p. 20). This choice not to engage the flesh through self-discipline practices is a critical concept and aligns with the attributes expressed in the "Fruit of the Spirit." Moreover, Clinton (2018) expressed, "A leader is one who influences a specific group of people to move in a God-given direction. In order to influence and motivate people, a leader must learn how to relate to people effectively" (p. 87). It is necessary to grasp the relevant literature to understand how influence shapes character development within the framework of leadership.

Character Development Literature

Character development continues to be expanded upon in the determination to seek out necessary variables and connotations to the concept for practical use within society. Generally, the topic is an ongoing debatable issue regarding the ideals of what character is and how character is portrayed among scholars from both secular and Christian perspectives.

According to Sommers and Sommers (2000), "The chief question for the moral philosopher, according to Plato and Aristotle, was not so much, "What should I do?" asked at some specific juncture, but "how should I live?" or more exactly, "what sort of person should I be?"" (p. 696). However, from the Christian perspective, in understanding the concept of character and virtue development, Bredfeldt (2006) stated, "The word character comes from the Greek word *Kharaket,* meaning. "An engraver's mark or stamp." Engraver's marks were used to identify the quality of an object" (p. 89). Even more, the mark of Christian character is held to a higher standard of conduct and deed while engaging the culture (2 Pet. 1:5-8).

Furthermore, upon discovery within the literature of the contemporary work by Christina and Fred Sommers, the ideals of character are expressed in detail with the necessary framework of historical data from philosophers who challenged the idea of character and virtue for use within society. Thus, the definition of character proposed by Sommers and Sommers (2000) stated, "Character is different from personality. Personality is the style or form of a person's presentation of himself; typically, in more or less short-lived encounters" (p. 690). Again, the claims are held: "Character, by contrast, is something more deeply rooted, not innate or unalterable, but at least a fairly hard-won achievement; character is the reality of which personality is the appearance" (Sommers & Sommers, 2000, p. 690). Such claims have held to the premise that character is the inward disposition of the image of God. However, it is interesting to note that Sommers and Sommers (2000) conclude with a strong claim that "The idea of character is procedural rather than substantive" (p. 691).

On the other hand, Wilson (1997) stated, "Now by character, we mean two things: a distinctive combination of personal qualities by which someone is known (that is, a personality), and moral strengths or integrity" (p. 240). Again, "People with the best balance sheets-that is-, the most admirable characters-are usually not people who are perfect or have every single virtue to the highest degree; since the virtues -that is the moral sense -are partially in conflict, that

would be impossible" (Wilson, 1997, p. 240). However, it is noted that similar factors are found in the assertion made by Sommers and Sommers (2000) "Strengthen of character, by holding in check impulses excited by what is immediately present, allows the cognitive harvest of our reasoning powers to have an effect on what we do" (p. 691). Wilson (1997) expressed, "A good character, however defined, is not a life lived according to a rule (there rarely is a rule by which good qualities ought to be combined or hard choices resolved), it is a life lived in balance" (p. 243). Notably, while expressing the character-building process, Brooks (2015) observed, "There is one pattern that recurs: They had to go down to go up. They had to descend into the valley of humility to climb to the heights of character" (p. 13). Again, Sommers and Sommers (2000) stated, "The fact that in such self-improvement one will need to draw on qualities of character such as determination still does not generate the paradox of using a trait of character to bring itself into existence" (p. 668). Like the authentic leadership theory model, which describes leaders often developing during a crisis, Brooks (2015) stated, "The road to character often involves moments of moral crisis, confrontation, and recovery. When they were in a crucible moment, they suddenly had a greater ability to see their own nature. They had to humble themselves in self-awareness if they had any hope of rising up to transformed" (p. 13). However, Brooks (2015) alluded to the use of habit formation for character development "The essential drama of life is the drama to construct character, which is an engraved set of disciplined habits, a settled disposition to do good" (p. 53). In the development of habit-forming behaviors, Barnett and Yount (2007) stated, "Our dependence on the Holy Spirit to teach spiritual things undergirds our best efforts in explanation, illustration, questioning, and problem-solving" (p. 101). Therefore, developing the Christlike character virtues in Gal. 5:22-23 are critical to effectively relating to people through habit-forming behavior. Building upon this notion, the researcher concluded that this standard holds fast to Paul's command to "Walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16).

The Holy Spirit guides the development of Christlike character virtues and insight into the truths regarding cultural intelligence.

Cultural Intelligence Literature

Within the concept of cultural intelligence, the need to properly understand the current related literature is warranted for further investigation. Culture can be defined based on the context of the environment that society has created. However, for this study, according to Grunlan and Mayers (2016), "Culture is one of the features that separate humans from the lower animals. Of God's creatures, only humans are cultural beings" (p. 39). However, Hiebert (2008) stated, "The Christian must not deny the great difficulty in understanding people in other ethnic communities and cultures" (p. 289). Thus, to navigate cultural difficulties, David Livermore provided insight into how cultural intelligence is developed and can change to better the environment for humans to thrive. According to Livermore (2016), "Cultural intelligence allows individuals to adapt their motivations, work ethic, and communication styles while learning from the different value perspectives to create better solutions" (p. 12). Unfortunately, change is often seen within culture as threatening and challenging to implement to improve communication. Again, miscommunication from a cultural perspective stems from a lack of self-control. Livermore provided a practical framework to counter the effect of miscommunication. According to Livermore (2016), "Culturally intelligent innovation begins with reflecting on and mapping the value difference that exists across your team (p. 14). However, it is noteworthy that other training initiatives have been successful in developing cultural intelligence from a knowledge base only. Livermore (2016) continues to argue that "One of the fundamental problems with most intercultural training is that it cannot substitute for direct knowledge from interpersonal interactions because cultural values alone are not a strongly predictive feature of human behavior" (p. 17). The cultural intelligence study conducted by Livermore comprises the use of the CQ model to measure the predictor and outcome of high and low cultural intelligence.

It is interesting to note from the study that Livermore (2016) stated, "Those with high CQ can manage the difference to come up with better solutions, while those with low CQ are continually frustrated when working with diverse colleagues and customers" (p. 19). However, the study additionally revealed that "Individuals with high CQ are more likely to overcome the interpersonal challenges and anxieties created by cultural diversity. They build trust and engage in risk-taking behaviors such as voicing contrary opinions, and they do so in a way that are non-threatening to others" (Livermore, 2016, p. 24). The development of cultural intelligence is a tool to aid a Christian leader while engaging cultural differences among their proscribed people group. Brislin (1981) concluded with an assessment "In intercultural relations, people may have positive feelings about an out-group but may not behave in a friendly manner. Reasons for this might be perceived as in-group pressure to maintain social distance or simply a lack of knowledge concerning how to approach and interact with people from different backgrounds" (p. 41). Engaging in the process of becoming culturally intelligent can bridge the gap in the necessary knowledge to interact with different groups; as Grunlan and Mayers (2016) asserted, "When the habits of the people change, the culture changes" (p. 75).

Cultural Intelligence Biblical Worldview

Cultural intelligence from a biblical worldview is foundational to engaging culture. Culture is the result of worldviews. Thus, Hiebert (2008) defines worldviews as "Worldviews are encoded with languages, products, rituals, practices, and beliefs of the people. It is the underlining patterns, the gestures that link all of these together in a way that seeks to make sense of the world in which people live" (p. 275). In so, when building a case for cultural intelligence in view of a biblical framework, developing the necessary skillset and character virtues in an ever-changing environment is quite challenging. However, when expressing the challenges to engaging culture, Sunshine (2009) argued, "All of this was based on a biblical worldview which believed that human beings are made in the image of God and thus have both the potential to

understand the physical universe and inherent dignity and worth that cannot be taken away" (p. 212). The Apostle Paul is an example of a Christian leader who had to assess the culture while relying on the Holy Spirit's guidance to continue to express God's love. Paul provided a method for engaging the culture in the Book of Romans. Paul's example was not one of aggression. According to Bock (2020) on Paul's behavior stated, "He is confronting their beliefs, not with an aggressive frontal attack, but through observation that they are designed to generate reflection, to give pause, starting with where they're coming from and working from there to raise questions for them to ponder" (p. 47). In other words, Paul had to develop the necessary awareness to engage the diverse people group within Rome, knowing they were created in God's image, challenging them with non-aggressive questions for reflection. However, Paul still expressed their need for repentance and believing in Christ for salvation. Similarly, Sunshine (2009) argued, "The kingdom is not built on coercion, and since all truth is God's truth, the biblical worldview will always prevail in a free marketplace of ideas and a level playing field" (p. 215).

Furthermore, Grunlan and Mayers (2016) stated, "One can adapt completely to another culture without abandoning his or her moral or ethical perspective and biblical lifestyle" (p. 58). Another critical point Grunlan and Mayers (2016) expressed, "All ministries are rooted in cultural practices, no matter how much these cultural practices have been elevated to the level of a biblical absolute" (p. 58). Moreover, when engaging culture with a biblical worldview Moore (2015) reiterated, "We should not seek an angry, quarrelsome cultural presence, but neither should we seek to engage the culture with the sort of gospel that the culture would want, if they, or we, were making it up" (p. 88). Therefore, within a biblical worldview, cultural cognitive behavioral-related literature is valid for understanding the necessary skillset for Christian leadership growth in cultural intelligence.

Cultural Cognitive Behavioral Skills Literature

The development of cultural intelligence skills is crucial within the context of leadership growth. According to Brislin (1981), "In a cross-cultural context, understanding is harder to achieve since people bring different backgrounds, needs, and values to the communication setting" (p. 65). In so, upon review, communication often takes on different styles of abilities, and verbal and nonverbal behaviors are variables that can become a barrier to the effectiveness of getting one's point understood. Edmondson (2019) asserted, "Being silent, on the other hand, offers the immediate benefits of not having to worry about being labeled negatively or causing damage to work relationships" (p. 322). Therefore, the examination of communication within cultural intelligence is warranted to fully grasp the ideals of effectively communicating within a cultural context with the image of God.

Communication

Communication is understood as the ability to express one's ideas. However, it is essential to note that the two variables of nonverbal and verbal communication styles are critical for cultural engagement. While focusing on the context of communication, Grunlan and Mayers (2016) stated, "Language is communication. It is a vehicle used to transport what is in one person's mind to another person's mind" (p. 90). Within the character virtue development of a Christian leader, the literature draws upon a significant awareness of the effects of how language shapes behaviors. Newberg and Waldman (2013) expressed, "Language shapes our behavior, and each word we use is imbued with multitudes of personal meaning" (p. 3). Again, according to Newberg and Waldman (2013), "Normally, when we speak, we may be the erroneous assumption that other people relate to our words in the same way we do. They don't" (p. 58). To further the claim that communication regarding the development of cultural behavioral skillsets is vital for the Christian leader, Chopra and Rosenberg (2015) asserted, "We are dangerous when we are not conscious of our responsibility for how we behave, think, and feel" (p. 21). Therefore,

when dealing with other cultural groups keeping at the forefront the concept that each subculture is created in the image of God is noteworthy for engagement. Again, Newberg and Waldman (2013) expressed, "It is easy to think we understand what another person says and means, when in fact we don't" (p. 84). To develop effective communication that benefits the image of God, literature within the realm of conversational intelligence, emotional intelligence, empathy, and active listening has provided insight within the context of cultural engagement for use in a practical sense for Christian leaders.

Conversational Intelligence

Conversational intelligence was developed to bridge the gap in poor communication with a framework that would aid in better outcomes within interpersonal relationships. Petersen (2007) stated, "Poor communication blocks access to the deeper relationships we want, and our friendships remain distant and impersonal. Such frustration and isolation may be the reason enough to sort out better intimacy-producing skills" (p. 16). From the literature, a Christian leader's goal must not impede on others from different cultural backgrounds with preconceived notions and unnecessary barriers that may block others from communicating feelings, needs, and wants. The necessary self-awareness is a required pause in the process of communicating to allow time for fully receiving transmitted information.

Furthermore, Glaser (2014) stated, "When we are in conversation, and we experience gaps between what we feel in the moment, what we think, and what we mean, we then what we hear is altered towards distrust" (p. 10). A Christian leader's willingness to choose their words demonstrates self-control and temperance. Noticing verbal and nonverbal social clues aid in the necessary premise built upon the parameters of the relationship instead of destroying them for knowing that the individual is created in the image of God and deserves to be heard. Again, Newberg and Waldman (2013) stated, "Choose your words wisely, because they will influence your happiness, your relationships, and your personal wealth" (p. 38). Thus, implementing

conversational and emotional intelligence are necessary skillsets to develop for engaging in a cultural loneliness environment.

Emotional Intelligence

On the other hand, under the framework of culture, the cognitive behavioral skillset of the Christian leader is found within the development of emotional intelligence. Again, the literature asserts that this tool is effective when engaging culture. Within the concept of emotional intelligence and its use in communicating in a cultural context, Goleman (2012) stated, "There is perhaps no psychological skill more fundamental than resisting impulse. It is the root of all emotional self-control since all emotions by their nature lead to one or another impulse to act" (p. 90). Thus, controlling one's impulse to respond to cultural differences, such as biases, attitudes, and beliefs that may be interpreted as off-putting, allows room for understanding to verify if the individual is conveying the received message. Newberg and Waldman (2013) stated, "When you learn how to master deep awareness of yourself and others, you are less likely to get caught up in destructive emotional states that can sabotage your ability to communicate effectively and compassionately with others" (p. 66). Emotional intelligence, in return, leads to the development and use of empathy toward the image of God.

Empathy and Active Listening

Under the framework of cultural engagement, cognitive behavioral skillset development for the Christian leader, empathy, and active listening are vital components of cultural engagement and their use within effective communication. Literature on the topic continues to express that empathy is an active element that enables the other person engaged in conversation to feel heard. It is noteworthy that Brislin (1981) expressed, "Empathetic people have an advantage since they can judge from the other's point of view and can modify their own behavior accordingly" (p. 59). Even more so, the Apostle Paul modeled empathy and the importance of its use when stating, "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all

people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Again, within the biblical text the importance of empathy is reiterated in the context in Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." The skillsets noted the self-awareness practice of thinking beyond oneself to focus on the conversation and cultural differences of the individual engaged in conversation. Glaser (2014) stated, "When we feel people are fair, honor our ownership, show reciprocity, are cooperative, allow us to have a voice, and honor our status in the tribe, we feel we can trust them" (p. 102). Within the literature, research studies have been conducted on how the brain acts during specific cultural engagements and the effects the differences make physiologically. The connection between two people varies based on shared cultural clues and experience. However, Newberg and Waldman (2013), in their study on the effects the human brain has on deep listening, "Brain-scan research shows the more deeply we listen, the more our brains will mirror the activity of the other person's brain" (p. 9).

Additionally, creating a reciprocal environment for effective communication to flourish. The volume of speech pattern can determine the interaction's outcome, and the results are compelling. According to Newberg and Waldman (2013), "We can also improve our communication skills by taking advantage of another neuroscientific fact: the slower we speak, the more the listener comprehension will increase. The result is less stress and greater understanding with the least expenditure of words" (p. 60).

The stress hormone cortisol can function as a barrier to effective listening, with the body becoming aroused and the flight or fight mechanism engaging. Although these mechanisms are critical when facing dangerous obstacles, they may become impeding when engaging cultural differences. Chopra and Rosenberg (2015) provided guidance on empathy and active listening with other cultures "Empathize with silence by listening for the feelings and needs behind it" (p. 124). The common theme that continues to be revealed in the context of literature is that of self-

control. The researcher has observed that self-control is one of the Christlike character virtues listed in the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23). Thus, development with the guidance of the Holy Spirit is necessary to engage cultural differences in an effective way to communicate with empathy and active listening. As Chopra and Rosenberg (2015) stated, "Learn to hear needs regardless of how people express them" (p. 168), for the individual is created in the image of God and is worthy of respect and dignity, regardless of the implications of cultural values, attitudes, biases, and beliefs. Thus, for the sustainability of Christian leaders who engage in the developmental process of Christlike character virtue development, cultural intelligence is required for a thorough investigation into the related literature to determine if an innovation of current governance is warranted.

Governance Literature

The relevant literature continues to express the notion that the image of God is a social being, thus needing social controls to guide behavioral patterns. Every society has constructed some form of governance over its people group. As created social beings, a society cannot exist without some social parameters. Grunlan and Mayers (2016) defined government as "The term we apply to a society's mechanisms and structures for the maintenance of control and communal decision-making" (p. 202). However, the context within most of the researched relevant literature on governance and sustainability is unclear on how to govern interculturally. Thus, a necessary starting point is an examination of societal structures.

Cities

The concept of governance is found within society with the development of micro-cultural establishments such as cities encompassing multiple family structures under a social control framework. Historically, according to Grunlan and Mayers (2016), "The family is the basic unit of society. For the family to function, there has to be a decision-making process and a system of social control. As groups of families begin to live together, they adopt the mechanisms

used in individual families for the use in the larger group" (p. 203). As revealed, the family structure is critical to cultural awareness development, as norms, attitudes, and beliefs stem within its framework. Leal Filho and Consorte-McCrea (2019) stated, "Cities and human settlements are the cradles of civilization. They also seem the largest systems mankind has ever created. Cities are not only the providing platform of different possibilities, facilities to support human life and activities, they also act as generators of dialogue" (p. 37). As social beings, these structures allow for human development and dialogue in expanding ideas, goods, and different cultural experiences. Again, Leal Filho and Consorte-McCrea (2019) stated, "Cities may be seen as the real-life labs on super macro-level, operating with wide-ranging and self-evolving principles of 'diversity, freedom, exchange, creation, innovation, convergence.' Unknowingly or knowingly, they may act as a base platform for people to create and foster Human Unity through the dense and complex layers of diversity" (p. 38). However, acceptable behavioral cues and cultural norms are developed within these structures. According to Grunlan and Mayers (2016), "When society finds a pattern of behaviors that meet the needs of most of its members, it will tend to reinforce that pattern" (p. 204). However, behavioral predictors may be construed based on attitudes and experiences when interacting with diverse cultures. Thus, the Christian leader must be willing to increase their knowledge base of cultural differences within one's area of influence within the covenant community.

Biblical Governance

From a biblical worldview, Grunlan and Mayers (2016) stated, "The Bible does not lay down a clear path for church polity" (p. 217). However, the concept of governance and sustainability is found within the biblical text and provides the necessary framework for constructing a system encompassing Christlike virtue, character development, and cultural intelligence. Within the written work by Chester and Timmis, ideology into the development of a Christian community and governance premise was expanded upon the evidence from within the

scripture. According to Chester and Timmis (2008), "In the Christian community, we belong to one another, and so we are responsible for one another and make decisions together" (p. 46). However, within the structure of a community, Dreher (2017) asserted, "Communities that are wrapped too tight for fear of impurity will suffocate their members and strangle the joy out of life together" (p. 139). Thus, although the concept of governance stems from the notion of developing social control over a people group, it is essential to note that the church is called to engage the culture. (Mat. 28:19-20). Grunlan and Mayers (2016) continued to argue, "What few glimpses we get of the government of the early church does not necessarily reveal a democratic process. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders for the churches. In Acts 15, a church council decided matters of faith and practice" (p. 217). In the same, Camp (2010) expressed a critical point "Allowing every person in a 50-member congregation an opportunity to speak publicly regarding an issue is one thing; allowing every person in a 500-member or 5,000-member church the same privilege is another" (para. 5). Thus, further research is required into the examination of the democratic process from a youth loneliness environment perspective.

<div align="center">**Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature**</div>

The content within the literature review constituted the necessary information driving the subject matter under investigation. The objective was to provide the reader with critical insight into the current social science field of cultural intelligence and Christian leadership. Furthermore, the rationale for this study and the gap in the literature is emerging within the two subsections below.

Rationale for the Study

Within the current geographical location, there is a growing expansion of individuals from different multicultural backgrounds, thus creating a loneliness environment among the 6th-12th youth grade. Although the focus within the church continues to maintain a steadfast posture to evangelize and minister to the youth, foreseen cultural barriers may develop due to the

increase of those within the area who have pre-established cultural norms, biases, attitudes, and beliefs. According to ANG and Livermore (2015), "An individual who can deeply analyze (metacognition) a practical situation but can't actually solve it in real life(behavior) doesn't have much practical intelligence" (p. 35). Thus, establishing awareness is critical for Christian leaders to engage in culture. Winston (2018) expressed, "The leader–follower exchanges progress, there is an ever-increasing bond between the leader and follower such that the follower begins to seek out what the leader wants just as the leader seeks what the follower wants such that the follower begins to behave in ways that achieve the leaders' goals" (p. 11). Therefore, this qualitative phenomenological study will recognize the descriptions and themes developed among the pastor's cultural Christlike character development within the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment.

Gap in the Literature

This literature review has uncovered various sources within the premise of this study on Christian leaders' cultural intelligence, character virtue development, and sustainability. According to Rah (2010), "Cultural intelligence is about changing our view of culture in a way that honors different cultural expressions and acknowledging that God is at work in every culture, not just our own" (p. 195). However, among the researched sources, it begs the question, what character descriptions and themes tendencies of a pastor's cultural Christlike character development within the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment exist? Cohen et al. (2016) stated, "People cling to or accentuate those parts of their religions that dissociate themselves from the majority" (p. 1248).

A noticeable gap within research stemmed from the field of cultural intelligence and Christian leadership. It is noteworthy that cultural intelligence studies have been conducted on secular organizations; however, the number of religious leaders and organizations is limited. Within the research study by Rockstuhl and VanDryne, the premise of the causation was "We

expect metacognitive and cognitive CQ to be stronger predictors of intercultural judgment and decision making than motivational CQ or behavioral CQ" (Rockstuhl & Van Dyne, 2018, p. 127). The finding of their proposed hypothesis was not conclusive. Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2018) stated, "There is a pressing need for future research on the moderating effects of metacognitive CQ on relationships between the other three CQ factors and intercultural effectiveness outcomes using primary data" (p. 138). Based on the observed data, the qualitative phenomenological study holds similar to the framework prescribed by the researcher for the subject matter under investigation. However, these scholars did not explore virtuous cultural Christlike character development among the leaders and the impact of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. Therefore, it is noted that a study of youth pastors examining their cultural worldview intelligence to determine if a specific Gal. 5:22-23 trait dictates the development of virtuous character behaviors is warranted. At the same time, to fill a specific gap within the literature that focuses on cultural intelligence and Christian leadership.

Summary of the Literature Review and Profile of the Current Study

Within the local landscape, it is noted that the 6th- 12th-grade youth ministry loneliness environment exists. The researcher's intended goal was to evaluate the current circumstance due to diverse cultures moving within the specific graphical area. Thus, as revealed, being led by the Spirit to develop Christlike character virtues (Gal. 5:22-23) among youth pastors, as research has shown, is necessary to engage in a loneliness environment. Regarding the aid of the Holy Spirit, Sanders (2019) "As the Spirit of truth, He leads into all truth. He will purify the afflictions and fix them on Christ, for His ministry is always Christocentric" (p. 60). This study's objective was to understand better the youth pastor's cultural Christlike character development due to the changing environment with an increased population growth encompassing different cultural backgrounds within the studied area contributing to the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. Thus, within this literature review, the subject matter was evaluated through a solid

biblical worldview lens, exploring the current theoretical implications and sources while expanding knowledge upon relevant literature to frame the qualitative research study. This literature review provided the general context for this study. The researcher established this chapter into four sections as follows: 1) Theological Framework for the Study, 2) Theoretical Framework for the Study, 3) Related Literature, 4) Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature, and the comprehensive review of each section was achieved to further comprehension for both the reader and researcher on the subject matter under investigation. As Lingenfelter (2008) expressed, "Responsible to behavior assumes that others are responsible for their own action. The leader or manager must then act with integrity and love towards others on their team" (p. 137). In the same way, this literature review expanded upon the necessary evaluation of each source to understand the importance of how cultural intelligence and character development leads to influence.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter first provides the necessary synopsis of the research design, describing the research problem, purpose statement, and research questions guiding this study. This chapter will describe the qualitative phenomenology methodology the researcher will implement. Furthermore, this chapter will encompass an explanation of the study setting, sampling criteria for participants, the role of the researcher, and the ethical considerations that informed the research framework—moreover, a discussion of the data collection process, including the interview protocol and data analysis.

Research Design Synopsis

Within this chapter segment, the research problem, research purpose, research questions and research design and methodology will be described for their use in conducting the research study.

Research Problem

Within Christendom, specifically in Western society, the declining of attendance sustainability landscape within established religious institutes among its youth members is rising. Thus, among the pastoral populous, there is a need to inquire about the cultural Christlike character development to curb the sustainability decline within the 6th-12th grade youth ministries' loneliness environment. Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) stated, "Sustainability may then be defined as maintaining well-being over a long, perhaps even an indefinite period" (p. 3441). Although individuals may express strong assertions regarding the sustainability decline within the 6th-12th grade youth ministries' loneliness phenomenon as folly, when assessing the landscape within the geographical location, this study is warranted to understand the cultural Christlike character development among pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministries loneliness environment. Entities such as churches, non-profit organizations, denominations, recreation committees, and local schools continue to invest time and resources to encourage the

youth to engage in healthy life choices. Even more, from the biblical perspective and integration of the gospel message into each entity, the lack of knowledge of the loneliness phenomenon among leaders is current. However, while examining the role of character development within pastoral leaders, Heitink (1999) asserted, "They have to solve any tension that may exist between their church role and their personal expertise. They must be able to represent the church in a more and more secularized society, with all the difficulties this entails" (p. 312). Thus, the aim is to evaluate the Christlike character development within pastors curbing the sustainability decline while making a lasting impact for Christ within the 6th-12th grade youth subculture. Considering this research study, those seeking a resolution to the decline continue to express concern in a recent study conducted by Lifeway on younger church members. The study's main thrust comprised of evaluating Christian practices among parents and their children to comprehend possible predictors of future church growth and spiritual practices among the younger generations. According to Smietana (2017), "Twenty-nine percent of the young adults regularly read the Bible while growing up, according to their parents. On average, that group has 12.5 percent higher spiritual health than otherwise comparable individuals who didn't, Lifeway Research found" (para. 6). Therefore, it begs the question, how can youth pastors improve their cultural Christlike character development to carry out the command set forth by Christ in Matthew 28:16-20 while successfully sustaining a 6th-12th grade youth ministry? Johnson and Pearcey (2008) emphasized, "The church is meant to be the "plausibility structure" for the gospel. When people see a supernatural dimension of love, power, and goodness in the way Christians live and treat one another, then our message of biblical truth becomes plausible" (p. 355) even this face of an ever-changing social dynamic within the context of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. However, it is essential to consider the understanding of worldviews and practices. Johnson and Pearcey (2008) expressed, "It is all but

impossible for people to accept new ideas purely in the abstract, without seeing a concrete illustration of what they look like when lived out in practice" (p. 335).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among youth pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the cultural Christlike character development will be generally defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study are the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry.

Research Questions

The following Research questions will guide this study:

RQ1. What do pastors perceive to be the essential behavioral elements for their effective character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade of age youth ministry?

RQ2. What are the perspectives, if any, among pastors about using their cultural intelligence for personal character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ3. How do the pastors perceive the significance of developing their Gal. 5:22-23 personal Christlike character traits in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ4. How do the pastors perceive the impact of their Christlike character development practices for personal sustainability in a 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ5. How do pastors perceive that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

Research Design and Methodology

The qualitative research method seeks its premise to study the human experience from the participant's perspective. Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "Qualitative research is focused on making sense of lived, observed phenomenon in a specific context with specifically selected individuals, rather than attempting to generalize from the sample to population" (p. 141). Within the natural setting, the researcher will engage the ecosystem with a suitable rational approach to conduct qualitative research. Within the research design, Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "Sampling designing qualitative research is not random burdened purposively to include the most appropriate participants in the most appropriate context for answering the research question" (p. 141). The rational approach stems from the researcher seeking to study a natural phenomenon. Edmund Husserl is noted for the development of the philosophical ideology of phenomenology. According to Beck (2019), "Husserl called for scientists to interrupt their natural attitudes for a phenomenological attitude where the lifeworld is still present, but now we do not take it for granted; instead, we question it" (p. 11). Suddick et al. (2020) expressed, "The theory of meaning and interpretation included key concerns relating to the hermeneutic circle, fusion of horizons and hermeneutic phenomenological attitude. This theory acknowledges that hermeneutic work can uncover and unfold meaning" (p. 2). The study aims to bring to light each willing participant's perspective, concepts, opinions and experiences ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth loneliness environment. Hence, utilizing the qualitative method is beneficial to grasp this loneliness phenomenon under investigation. However, it is important to note within this study, as Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "Although researchers can employ great flexibility in the selection of study methods, the inclusion of best practice methods for assuring the rigor and trustworthiness of results is critical to study design" (p. 141). In addition, establishing the setting, participants, researcher's role, and ethical considerations are critical elements within this research study.

Setting

This study focused on the cultural Christlike character development within the church leadership pastor while engaging the youth population in a loneliness environment. The researcher sought a broad range within any rural, suburban, or urban setting in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The study participants were interviewed in a safe location of the participants choosing and with the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application and reflected diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, although these factors do not determine eligibility for selection to engage in the interview process. In the interview setting, the participants were conducted in an area not easily overheard by others while engaging in conversation. The participants were those in the pastoral leadership engaging in the ministry's efforts to effectively encourage population growth and sustainability within the church's 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. It is essential to express the need to maintain the participant's confidentiality during the research study and accommodate a safe place for each participant to share their own phenomenological experiences. The participants did not need to belong to a specific denomination. However, the Christian pastor must had self-identify as a minister and align with the biblical qualification's mandates prescribed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 of an overseer. The participant must have held in high esteem a view of scripture and ecclesiastical policy within their given entity.

Participants

The participants in this given study comprised of Christian pastors. Upon deemed appropriate for the pastoral task, each participant must have been evaluated based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and allowed work within a youth ministry framework under the guidelines and policy set forth by respected governed authority and the state-mandated guidelines for the establishment of a 501c3 ecclesiastical non-profit organization. The research sample was participants with different experience levels in pastoral and bi-vocational pastoral ministries.

Therefore, to attempt the collection of data, a questionnaire was sent out to the clergy association and publicly accessible church entities to gather pastors who have or currently are ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth populous in the loneliness environment. In addition, the purposive sampling method was employed after the necessary pastor's data was collected, and the researcher did contact the clergy association to begin the process. Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "A typical best practice is purposive sampling methods, and when appropriate, convenience sampling may be justified" (p. 141). Thus, according to Galvan and Galvan (2017), "Purposive samples are selected based on the careful judgment of the researchers regarding the types of individuals they consider to be an especially good source of data for a particular research topic" (p. 82). Therefore, employing the purposive sampling method requires gathering the number of participants for the necessary data collection process. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) stated, "Guidance on assessing saturation and the sample sizes needed to reach saturation have been vague. Until recently, saturation had not been empirically assessed with different types of qualitative data." (p. 1). However, Hennink and Kaiser (2022) stated, "In all 16 tests of saturation with data from in-depth interviews, saturation was reached in under 25 interviews, more specifically between 9 and 17 interviews excluding outliers" (p. 7). According to Johnson et al. (2020),

> Qualitative researchers recognize that certain participants are more likely to be "rich" with data or insight than others, and, therefore, more relevant and useful in achieving the research purpose and answering the question at hand. The conceptual framework contributes directly to determining sample definitions, size, and recruitment of participants. (p. 142)

The aim for participants in this study was no more than 25 and no less than 9 pastoral leader members. The intended goal was as Johnson et al. (2020) stated, is "The research question may be best answered by persons who have particular experience (critical case sampling) or certain expertise (key informant sampling)" (p. 141).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher must evaluate preconceived notions, assumptions, and biases about cultural Christlike character development and the successful sustainability of a 6th - 12th grade youth ministry within a loneliness environment. The researcher has explored the concept of character development, the cultural intelligence theory, and the authentic leader theory within the home environment. However, Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated, "The role of the researcher is to be aware of the connection between the researcher and the participants or the research site that may unduly influence the researcher's interpretations" (p. 184). Accordingly, it is essential to note that the researcher's personal experience has been through a singular worldview lens and warrants this study for a broader understanding. Johnson et al. (2020) expressed, "Allowing the researcher to determine how they themselves may be a source of bias during the data collection process by altering the nature of how individuals behave or interact with others in the presence of the researcher" (p. 142). As the researcher who has 6th-12th grade youth within one's household, as a human instrument in pursuing the lived experiences of those pastors in the field who are cultivating character development while ministering to the 6th-12th grade, the researcher's feelings, thoughts, and attitudes during the phenomena will aid in the ability to identify the possibility of themes for the participants who will engage in the research study. The researcher continues to develop a valid concern for the Christlike character development among church leaders and the sustainability of the 6th-12th grade youth ministries effectively expressing the gospel while living out the practical Christian character communication patterns making a last impact for the Kingdom. To limit the implication of bias development with the study, the researcher will keep abreast that the data must be collected in a saturation fashion and not deviate from what the data collected reveals as themes and descriptors from the collected perspectives from each participant. Therefore, implementing self-control and accountability is the utmost priority when engaging the subject

matter under investigation during this research study. In addition, pre-established relationships with those participating in the study will be limited to prevent further development of the researcher's bias. Limitations regarding the research and interview sites will be established to prevent further development of the researcher's bias. Interview sites are limited only to the participants choosing, therefore, eliminating the possibility of researcher bias and adding variables for manipulating response outcomes among the participants based on environmental factors. Self-awareness is valid for researchers in elements like posture, questioning tone, non-body language clues, and expressions, which are noteworthy when conducting face-to-face interviews to mitigate any possible variables that may skew data collection. Heitink (1999) stated, "One must always keep in mind that the view people have of themselves in their mutual communication must always have priority over interpretations of the view of humanity" (p. 263). Therefore, active listening is critical, along with self-awareness of how bias can create a base for formulating the appropriate data into a meaningful conclusion that must be held in order. The interview process will be conducted in a fashion that is only convenient and comfortable for each participant.

Ethical Considerations

In this research study, ethical considerations are warranted for the participants who are adult human beings of the consenting age above 18. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "Researchers need to protect their research participants and develop a trust with them to promote the integrity of research and guard against misconduct" (p. 88). The researcher will only undertake this study upon proper approval from Liberty University IRB. Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "Ethical conduct refers to how moral principles and values are part of the research process. Participants' perceptions of ethical conduct are fundamental to a relationship likely to generate high quality data" (p. 142). Therefore, this study was held on the premise that interviews would only consist of those willing and consent to participate in this study. Each

participant was required to fill out the informed consent form for the study before engaging in the interview question process.

Additionally, all participants were able to terminate their consent at any time during the study. Confidentiality was a required ethical pillar within this research study. Again, Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "During each step of the research process, care must be taken to protect the confidentiality of participants and shield them from harm relating to issues of respect and dignity" (p. 142). When considering the identity of the participants, each was given a pseudonym to protect the privacy and church establishment of those within the study. Allen and Wiles (2016) stated, "Having participants choose their own pseudonyms seemed a helpful and respectful way of inviting some ownership and input into the research" (p. 154).

Furthermore, the collected data's ethical considerations were handled as prescribed within the guidelines required by Liberty University IRB. The researcher secured all composed data in a locked location, with all electronic data and manuscripts data, if warranted, backed up in a secure and password-protected location and held onto for three years from the completed study date. After three years, all hard copies of the interview will be shredded, and electronic data will be erased.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study utilized the qualitative phenomenological methodology approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges" (p. 182). Phenomenology-type studies aim to move beyond the natural concept of the current phenomena to seek an understanding of the human experience within its environmental context. Thus, this qualitative study relied on the data collected using face-to-face and with the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application interviews to understand each participant's

perspectives. The study's aim device from the participant's first-person perspective seeking a thick in-depth understanding of the proposed natural phenomenon and presenting the results discovered, aiding in the enhancement within the Christian leadership and cultural intelligence social science field. Therefore, Rasid et al. (2021) stated, "What is important is the development of a method that does not falsify phenomena but can describe as it appears. For this purpose, the phenomenologist should focus his attention on this phenomenon without being prejudiced at all" (p. 192). The specific approach to the interview method and these procedures were warranted for further clarification.

Collection Methods

In-depth, face-to-face semi-structured and or the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application for interviews were conducted within the collection method in this study to gather the required data on the phenomenon under investigation. The semi-structured interview question development by the researcher warranted for this approach allows for new questions to arise set forth by the flexible parameter within the given construct for this phenomenological study. The question allowed interviewers to employ the needed flexibility to assess the development questions and make the necessary changes to allow all the participants to experience their subjective perspectives while keeping the required framework to cover the relevant matter within this study. The researcher used the previously researched literature information to aid in developing the semi-structured questions for the necessary premise of each construction. Henriksen et al. (2022) stated, "Semi-structured interview provides the interviewer with an opportunity to hear the interviewee talk about particular aspects of his life or experience" (p. 13). Therefore, allowing the natural flow of the interview process would uncover the experiences within the phenomenon to collect data properly.

Instruments and Protocols

Upon review of the literature that stemmed from the investigation into cultural Christlike character, building the knowledge gained into each entity enabled the researcher to develop a flexible interview protocol for submission of the approval process by the IRB. All interview questions were formulated and scrutinized for their proper open-ended structure requirement before engaging Liberty University's IRB approval process. No data collection was conducted without the completed approval process held within the framework of Liberty University IRB guidelines. The researcher employed a questionnaire to the clergy association to seek out those currently engaged in ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth in the loneliness environment. The participants were required to complete the questionnaire to determine their eligibility for this study. The questionnaire was a brief that sought to collect the baseline information on the participant's demographics such as the title of position, background, education level, age, time in ministry, vocational or bi-vocational, ethnicity, previously held employment, and ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth. The researcher contacted the clergy association and public access information recruiting the selected participant in ministry in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Emails were sent to those members; each respondent was required to provide their consent as prescribed within the IRB informed consent form guidelines to participate in this research study. After completing the necessary collection of information from each participant and the required IRB documents, the researcher began the process upon approval of the IRB to contact each consenting participant to schedule their face-to-face interviews in the appropriate location of their choosing with the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application.

Observations

The researcher evaluated each participant by logging each interview's time, location, and environmental conditions in a field notebook. Cypress (2018) stated, "Naturalistic observations take place in the field in which the researchers observe and describe the meanings of what they

observe. Descriptions of observations should be factual, accurate, and thorough" (p. 306).

Through the observation implementation strategy, the researcher employed the evaluation of the

participant's nonverbal cues, tones, and gestures during each interview, recording the responses

in the field notebook in thick detail for the triangulation process of data analysis. Moreover,

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated, "The researcher records, in an unstructured or semi-

structured way (using prior questions that the inquirer wants to know), activities at the research

site" (p. 186). Equally, the researcher maintained the semi-structured approach during the

observation phase of collecting the necessary data for this study.

Interviews

The researcher conducted an approved semi-structured interview for this study to gain the

appropriate thick, detailed data from each participant's lived experience with the phenomenon.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), "Identify in advance all of the questions that will be

asked—and thereby eliminate other questions that could be asked about the issue or phenomenon

in question" (p.154). The utilization of the face-to-face semi-structured and or the use of the

Microsoft Teams computer software application interview aided in the essential fostering of a

desired connection between the interviewer and each purposive participant. Leedy and Ormrod

(2016) stated, "Such interviews yield the highest response rates—the percentages of people

agreeing to participate" (p. 153). If warranted, the researcher would conduct follow-up

interviews with each participant to clarify that the data collected was accurate from each

participant's perspective. Data gathered throughout the interview must have been an accurate

account for each participant's perspective. Thus, the researcher sought to conduct the study with

the face-to-face and or the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application interview

process to view the participants' nonverbal clues, such as facial expressions and body language,

as each answers the prescribed semi-structured questions. According to Creswell and Creswell

(2018), "Interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in

number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (p. 187). Upon the participant's willingness to engage in the research process, the researcher encouraged each individual to choose a safe, comfortable location and with the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application where no one can easily overhear and quickly become distracted during the interviews. The aim was to hear from each participant while recording each answer on a predetermined electronic device to transcribe each question's response. All devices were tested and fully charged for operational use during the interview.

The in-depth interview with semi-structured questions were conducted by asking each interviewee the developed questions from the guided list that stem from the ongoing researched literature on the subject matter under investigation. Any notes and answers to the question were transcribed and held under a developed pseudonym for each participant, along with their file.

Procedures

Before beginning, this investigation into the pastor's cultural Christlike character development of the participants in a 6th-12th grade youth ministry within a real-world loneliness environment, the researcher submitted all required documents to Liberty University Institutional Review Broad for approval of this study. Upon IRB approval, the researcher advanced into the field to conduct this study's observation and interview phase to collect data. The researcher contacted the clergy association representative, gaining access to the necessary ecclesiastical pastors within the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. A questionnaire was be sent to the chosen sample group within the clergy association and public accessible church entities.

The questionnaire and an informed consent form were also be sent as an email attachment to the clergy association and public accessible church entities selected participant. The questionnaire was a brief survey to gather information on each participant's demographics, such as the title of position, background, education level, age, previous employment, time in ministry, bi-vocational or full-time, ethnicity, and ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth. Once the

assessment of the collected data from the questionnaire was complete, the researcher contacted

each participant with the use of a cell phone to set up a time to collect the informed consent

forms and schedule a time for the participants to engage in the face-to-face interview data

collection process for this study. At the appropriate time and the place that each participant

selects, the researcher prepared the audio recording device, field notebook, and external hard

drive to store all electronic data collected from each interview. The researcher personally

formulates semi-structured interview questions within this study to gain the appropriate thick,

detailed data of each participant's lived experience with the phenomenon. To begin, the

researcher engaged the participant in a pre-interview dialog. After conducting the engagement

process of the interview, Mahat-Shamir et al. (2021) stated, "The interview should begin with

questions the interviewee can easily answer and then move slowly into more difficult or sensitive

topics. The interview thus may begin with some introductory questions regarding the

interviewee" (p. 85). The researcher recorded all interviews as digital files with the recording

function on the electronic derive of use. All digital files were password protected, stored

separately on an external hard drive, and placed physically in a secured location. Furthermore,

the researcher checked each transcript to make the necessary judgment that each does not contain

recognizable errors during the required transcription process.

All the comprised data from the transcripts of each participant was given critical

oversight. This study avoided disclosing each participant's identity and church association. If the

participant identifies other pastoral leaders during the interview process, the same process of

pseudonyms would be applied to those names. The formulated semi-structured interview

questions developed by the researcher were from the current literature on the subject matter.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected was critical in this study to understand each

participating pastor's cultural Christlike character development of the participants in the context

of a 6th-12th grade youth ministry within a real-world loneliness environment. According to

Fearnley (2022), "Qualitative data are the backbone of multiple disciplines' research processes,

often resulting in more nuanced, context rich and representative data than those used in

quantitative research" (p. 4). Thus, the following expressed the methodology of the data analysis

processes that the researcher used in conducting the study. Dyar (2022) stated, "Data analysis is

not a hasty undertaking; the researcher should expect and plan to spend extended periods with

the data, often listening to or viewing recordings, reading and rereading transcripts or documents,

reviewing observation records, and making notes" (p. 196). The researcher audio recorded all the

participant's face-to-face interviews and each response in a transcript. The researcher compared

the audio-recorded interview with each drafted transcript document for accurate original work.

Upon completion, each participant was given a pseudonym and file number as an identity marker

for data analysis. The researcher employed the member-checking process and gave each

participant the transcript data to review for precision. The intended goal of the data analysis was

to seek the necessary conclusion from the collected data this qualitative study demands.

Analysis Methods

The researcher began the analysis protocol by using the demographic information

collected from the questionnaire, interview transcripts from each participant, and the observed

field notes the researcher takes. The researcher analyzed the collected data using the MAXqda,

"www.maxqda.com" computer software program. The interviewed transcribed data was first

analyzed independently by the researcher as the human instrument in tracking the lived

experiences of those pastors in the field who are cultivating cultural Christlike character

development while ministering to the 6th-12th grade. The researcher effectively utilized the five-

step process for data analysis in a systemic approach. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated,

"Organize and prepare the data, read and look at all that, start coding all of the data, generate a

description and theme, and represent the description and theme" (p. 193-195). Additionally, each

step in the analysis process was described in thick detail to develop the themes and descriptions of the data in this research study.

Organized Data

The researcher prepared all required data collected documents systematically for easy organization. The preparation of each document enabled the researcher to view each data collected as initially observed during the interviews and assess the proper organizing of all collected data in an orderly presentation. Therefore, the researcher developed typed-out documents of the field notes on each participant and verified each interview transcription collected. Upon completing the collected data in this study, the researcher moved forward within the required process to read each data source for missing information or questionable errors.

Observed Data

During this phase, the researcher took the collected, organized data and independently analyzed each set. The transcripts from each interview were read to grasp the initial underpinning of the participant perspective allowing the necessary natural inquiry of new data to emerge. Furthermore, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "This first step provides a general sense of the information and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning" (p. 195). This process enabled the researcher to take the necessary step-back approach to the data and allow room for personal reflection to curb the development of an individual bias toward the collected data from each participant during this phenomenological study.

Coding

The researcher reviewed each collected data transcript in the coding process one at a time. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "Taking data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with the term, often based in the actual language of the participant" (p. 193-194). Even more, Cypress (2018) stated, "The process involves building detailed descriptions,

applying codes, developing themes, and providing interpretations in the light of the researcher's views and perspectives from the literature" (p. 307). Thus, each generated code identified comprised of single words from the study's participants of collected linguistic text from the prescribed data collection method. Furthermore, the researcher completed the coding of each data using "Tesch's eight steps in the coding process" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 196) to process each collected document. The researcher moved to the data placed into the computer software program MAXqda, "*www.maxqda.com,*" to assess the development and accuracy of the themes and descriptions that had arisen collectively among the transcribed data for each participant.

Descriptions and Themes

Upon review of the data within the computer software program results, the researcher examined the description and themes that were revealed. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated, "Inductive process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the database unlit the researcher has established a comprehensive set theme" (p. 181). Moreover, the researcher employed a triangulation strategy. Cypress (2018) stated, "Triangulation of data is crucially important in naturalistic studies. This process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective" (p. 308). The critical aspect of using the triangulation of the study's collected data was to develop the necessary validation of the disclosed themes. To better grasp the themes and descriptions of the collected data, the researcher comprised the appropriate analysis with the field observations made during the interview process and the transcript data to understand the thick, detailed findings. The researcher included the interpretation of the findings, themes, and descriptions into a lesson-learned summarization. Creswell and Creswell (2018) expressed, "These lessons could be the researcher's personal interpretation, couched in the understanding the inquirer brings to the study from a personal culture, history, and experiences" (p. 198).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is vital in conducting qualitative research. The premise of trustworthiness is found in the researcher's ability to maintain reliability, precisely report, and systematically conduct the study's appropriate data analysis. The researcher was as objective as possible in interpreting the collected data within this qualitative phenomenological study and express each finding accurately to contribute to the ongoing literature within the Christian leadership and cultural intelligence social science field. Therefore, Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "Thick and rich descriptions, where robust descriptive language is used to provide sufficient contextual information, enable the reader to determine credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (p. 145). Trustworthiness was the guiding framework of the required qualitative research pillars of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility was highly esteemed for the legitimacy of this research under study. Credibility accounts for the appropriate research design framework and methodology usage. Thus, Johnson et al. (2020) stated, "The process of demonstrating the credibility of research is rooted in honest and transparent reporting of how biases and other possible confounders were identified and addressed throughout study processes" (p. 145). To ensure credibility, the researcher utilized member checking to ensure each participant views these specific descriptions and themes developed throughout the study. Therefore, in doing so, each transcript was sent to the participants to verify that each represented perspective when answering the guided questions were valid to their prescribed responses. In addition, triangulation was implemented to aid credibility. Stahl et al. (2020) stated, "Data triangulation, the use of more than a single type of data to establish findings (i.e., data from transcript audits, test scores, protocol analyses, all focused on the same phenomenon)" (p. 26) and was used by the researcher during this study which validates credibility.

Dependability

Dependability was a crucial element within the trustworthiness of this qualitative research study. Klem et al. (2022) stated, "The researchers need to keep a detailed log of all the activities undertaken and decisions made during data collection and analysis" (p. 61). Therefore, the researcher examined each transcript for errors and gaps within the collected data and ensured that each participant completed the same verification. The verification standard completed warranted the premise of dependability that this study can be repeated for future use. Additionally, to enhance dependability, the researcher used the computer software MAXqda, "*www.maxqda.com*," in a coding process to analyze the themes and descriptions.

Confirmability

The researcher ensured confirmability by providing a detailed, auditable trail from the data collected during the analysis. Klem et al. (2022) stated, "Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that the researcher's interpretations are derived from the participants' voices. A reader should be able to look at the data, understanding that researcher's lens and the findings should make sense" (p. 61). Additionally, confirmability was derived from the standard of accurately reporting the data collected from each participant while minimizing research bias. Furthermore, Klem et al. (2022) stated, "Member checking: participants can provide feedback on whether the researcher is interpreting their experiences correctly or editing the original transcript" (p. 61). In so, the researcher utilized the member-checking processes to confirm that each participant's interpretation of their responses was correct and original.

Transferability

Transferability was an essential element within this research study. According to Klem et al. (2022), "Qualitative researchers need to provide readers with a comprehensive picture of the study sample and setting, which will inform readers of whether the findings will be useful" (p. 61). The researcher attempted to provide the necessary data-finding reporting in a thick

description of the phenomenon under investigation. In doing so, the reader can digest the understanding and assess the information provided to consider if the themes and descriptions can be applied to their ministry environment, workplaces, or household context. In so as Stahl et al. (2020) expressed, "If one cannot learn from study extensions that might fit with a subsequent set of circumstances, the impact from the original study is limited" (p. 27).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the necessary synopsis of the research design, describing the research problem, purpose statement, and research questions guiding this pastor's cultural Christlike character development within the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment study. The researcher described the qualitative phenomenology methodology that will be warranted for implementation within this proposed study. Furthermore, in detail, the researcher provided an encompassing explanation of the study setting, sampling criteria for participants, the role of the researcher, and the ethical considerations that informed the research framework. Additionally, the researcher provided the necessary framework for the data collection process, including the interview protocol and data analysis, justly expressing the causation for this qualitative phenomenological study.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among youth pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the cultural Christlike character development was defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study were the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th -12th grade youth ministry.

This study utilized the qualitative research methodology using the prescribed phenomenological developed interviewed questions that each participant expressed the subjective realities experienced while serving the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. The researcher held to the premise that each interview conducted by pastors currently ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth would provide the necessary illumination to developing cultural Christlike character traits as prescribed in Gal. 5: 22-23 to effectively serve the image of God.

The following Research questions will guide this study:

RQ1. What do pastors perceive to be the essential behavioral elements for their effective character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade of age youth ministry?

RQ2. What are the perspectives, if any, among pastors about using their cultural intelligence for personal character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ3. How do the pastors perceive the significance of developing their Gal. 5:22-23 personal Christlike character traits in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ4. How do the pastors perceive the impact of their Christlike character development practices for personal sustainability in a 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ5. How do pastors perceive that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

This chapter will provide a detailed comprehension of protocols and measures, the collected sample's demographic data gathered analysis and reported findings. Additionally, the chapter will evaluate the use of the study's research design.

Compilation Protocols and Measures

Within this chapter segment, the protocols and measures will be described for their use in conducting the research study. The following sections are observation, interviews, transcription, and the required coding protocol.

Observation Protocol

The researcher evaluated each participant by logging the interview's time, location, and environmental conditions in a field notebook. Through the observation execution protocol, the researcher evaluated each participant's nonverbal cues, tones, and gestures during the interview, recording the responses in the field notebook with a thick detail to aid in the triangulation process to conduct a data analysis.

Interview Protocol

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview, gaining the appropriate thick, detailed data from each participant's lived experience for this study's phenomenon. The utilization of the Microsoft Teams computer software application for interviews aided the interview process. Follow-up interviews with each participant to clarify that the data collected

was accurate from each participant's perspective was achieved. Each consenting participant was encouraged to choose a safe, comfortable location using Microsoft Teams computer software application so no one could easily overhear and quickly become distracted during the interviews. The aim was to hear from each participant while recording each answer on a predetermined electronic device to transcribe each question's response. All devices were tested before each interview was conducted for continuity and functionality.

The in-depth interview with semi-structured questions was conducted by asking each interviewee each question from the guided list. All notes and answers to the questions were transcribed and held under a pseudonym for each participant, along with the prescribed file for their pseudonym.

Transcription Protocol

During this study, each interview was conducted using the Microsoft Teams application, which aided in the process with the use of a webcam and transcribing each interviewer's answers to each developed question. The researcher reviewed the transcribing and sent each developed transcript to the participants with the use of email in order for the participants to verify that the information that was collected was indeed correct. Once returned, the corrected transcript would be used to begin the qualitative coding process for this study to examine the thick detail of themes and descriptions revealed during the conversation.

Coding Protocol

The purposive sampling method was used to collect participants. The coding and data analysis were critical in this study to understand each participating pastor's cultural Christlike character development of the participants in the context of a 6th-12th grade youth ministry. Each collected data transcript was coded one at a time. Every generated code identified comprised

single words from each study's participants, who collected linguistic text using the prescribed data collection method. The data of each participant transcription was moved into the computer software program MAXqda, "www.maxqda.com," and a review of the content of the developing themes and descriptions was conducted.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Demographic and Sample Data</h2>

The following table transcribed the necessary visual aid of the demographic information from each participant engaged in the interview process for this study. Each participant was given an in-depth summarization of their collected demographic data.

Table 1

Participant Data Demographic

Pastor	Time	Training	Vocational	Ministry Size	Ethnicity	State
Kelly	1.6 yrs.	Certificate	Full	~25	Caucasian	WV
Allan	13 yrs.	Certificate	Full	~65	Caucasian	WV
Sean	1 yr.	Bachelor's	Bi-Voc.	~50	Caucasian	MD
Elliott	6 yrs.	Master's	Full	~8	Korean American	MD
Charles	1.5 yrs.	Master's	Bi-Voc.	~45	Caucasian	MD
Gray	2 yrs.	Master's	Full	~50	Caucasian	NC
Will	3 yrs.	Bachelor's	Bi-Voc.	~25	Caucasian	PA
Johnny	2 yrs.	Master's	Bi- Voc.	~38	African American	MD
Rolling	3 yrs.	Bachelor's	Bi-Voc.	~12	Caucasian	NC
Aiden	14 yrs.	Master's	Full	~250	Caucasian	VA

Samuel	6.5 yrs.	Bachelor's	Full	~12	Caucasian	NC
Sawyer	8 yrs.	Bachelor's	Full	~60	Caucasian	VA
Jack	5 yrs.	High School	Bi-Voc.	~10	Caucasian	WV
Jasper	5yrs.	High School	Full	~25	African American	.WV
Ava	17 yrs.	Master's	Full	~15	Caucasian	NC
Jacob	3 yrs.	Bachelor's	Full	~30	Caucasian	VA
Ace	9.5 yrs.	High school	Full	~45	Caucasian	NC
Max	1.3 yrs.	Bachelor's	Full	~19	Caucasian	PA
Archer	6 mos.	Bachelor's	Bi-Voc.	~30	Caucasian	PA
Aubrey	7 yrs.	Bachelor's	Full	~35	Caucasian	WV
Copper	1.4 yrs.	Master's	Full	~100	African American	NY
Cade	1.7 yrs.	Bachelor's	Full	~20	Caucasian	NJ

*As of June 17, 2024

Twenty-two youth pastors participated in this qualitative phenomenological study to further recognize the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. Each participant within this given study comprised of Christian pastors who were deemed appropriate for the pastoral task evaluated based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and were allowed to work within a youth ministry framework under the guidelines and policy set forth by their respected governed authority and the state-mandated guidelines for the establishment of a 501c3 ecclesiastical non-profit organization. Each participant had different experience levels in vocational and bi-vocational pastoral ministries. A questionnaire was sent out to the clergy associations and

publicly accessible church entities to gather those pastors who were ministering to the 6th – 12th grade youth in the loneliness environment at the time of this study. In addition, the purposive sampling method was employed after the necessary pastor data was collected. Therefore, all the participating pastors were engaged in serving their local youth during this study. Fifteen pastors were noted as working in a full-time ministerial position, while seven reported that they were bi-vocational. The educational background of the youth pastors varied at different levels. The highest education achievement for three pastors was a high school diploma, two with a post-high school certificate, ten with a bachelor's, and seven with a master's degree. Twenty of the twenty-two participants reported that they were married. Each participant stemmed from seven states in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, such as North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. The ethnic demographic among the participating youth pastors was eighteen Caucasians, two African Americans and one Korean American. The range of ministry experience among the youth pastors was from six months to seventeen years, serving the 6th-12th grade youth.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section will discuss the method used by the researcher to investigate the transcripts and the presentation of the data analysis developed during this study.

Code Groups

Within this study, six major code groups expressed the over-arching theme present in the collection of the transcribed data from the participants. The following code groups revealed were influence, essential behavioral elements, cultural intelligence for personal character, Christlike character, personal sustainability, and governance. An in-depth presentation of each code group and the top six codes within each set are as prescribed.

Influence Code Group

Within society, influence stems from the human condition. Mayers and Grunlan (2016) expressed, "Humans are more than biological creatures. They are also social, culture-bearing creatures." (p. 145). The influence from childhood continues to contribute to decisions and to an array of set behavioral patterns found within the framework of both personal and ministerial environments. Therefore, the following codes showcase the vast element of social influences within the Christian pastors ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth. Figure (1) shows the occurrences of the six most frequent codes in the influence code group. A description of each developed code and an example from the participants' lived experiences follows.

 Figure 1

Top Six Influence Codes
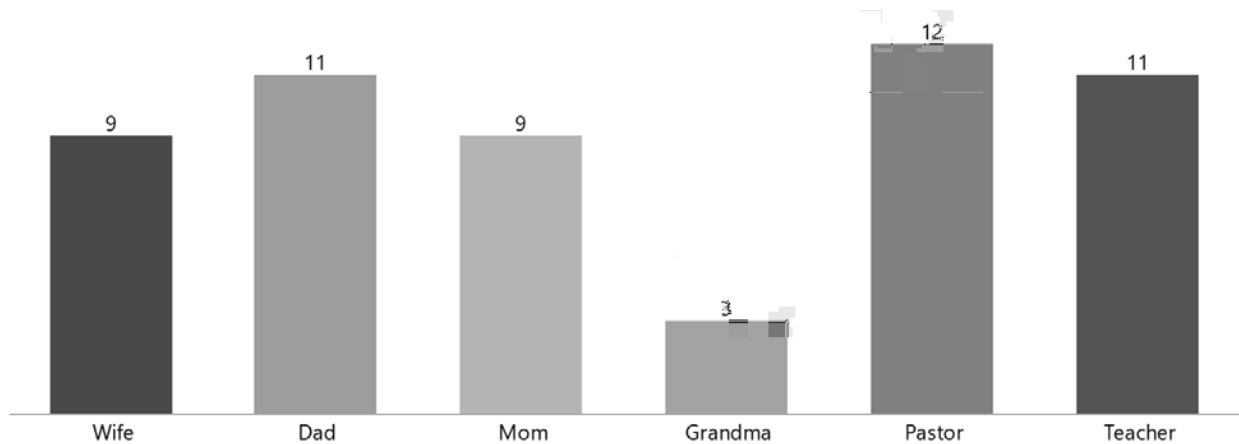
Wife. (9 occurrences). The wife code addressed the importance of a support system and the accountability developed among the pastor and family unit. The relationship between the pastor and wife and their influences on the ministry, social development, and living location have been compelling.

Within ministry, the wife's role has profoundly influenced the pastor's lived experiences when ministering to the 6th- 12th grade youth. Pastor Jack expressed that his wife is a source of support and influence when stating, "Then I will shoot large stuff to my wife, and then she will give feedback to me too because I got to have a sounding board, and she has my sounding board." Moreover, "We are A-Team. I could not do everything I do without her." Having his wife there engaged in conversation and ministry has been a critical element to his ability to minister. Pastor Archer expressed the vital role his wife's influences had in his decision of their current church and surrendering to the role of youth pastor, "2020 when my wife and I decided and agreed to a church to fellowship in." he would begin the path to engage the youth environment in order to make an impact his community for Christ.

However, what was interesting was the amount of influence the wives had on those pastors in deciding on the state they lived in and which church they served. When assessing the reason behind their current ministry location, the participants would agree with their wife's choice of the location. Pastor Allan shared, "I met my wife here, so I had to stay." The role of the wives of the participants in this study was critical to both social influence and behavioral patterns.

Grandma. (3 occurrences). This code spoke about the role family elders' influence had on the pastor's social, faith, and influence development across the generational lines. Within the lived experience and elder influence from childhood, participants expressed how their grandmother's role was critical in their adult choices to remain in the faith and was an example of Christlike behavior. Pastor Jack shared, "My grandma was my greatest and biggest influence in my life." Again, his grandmother's influence contributed to pastor Jack's faith in God, and he continued to express, "It is just the way God works with me and seeing my grandmother."

Interviewees continued to highlight the importance their elders had within their social structure upbringing and how their childhood influence continued to affect their lived experiences both in ministry leadership and personal development. Pastor Allan expressed, "She (grandmother) was a very large Christian influence in my life." The expression of social influences and the elder's role were vital to forming social and behavioral development among the participants so that they could minister effectively to the 6th - 12th grade youth. The implication of the influence was noteworthy for the choice to engage the youth environment for Christ stemmed from the lived experiences from childhood as their grandmother served them and modeled Christlike behavior. Confirming Mayers and Grunlan (2016) assertion, "In Scripture, God uses the family relationships to illustrate our relationship to Him. If the family is the basic structure of society, then an understanding of kinship is basic to the understanding of society." (p. 176).

Dad. (11 occurrences). This code spoke to the extent of the father's influence on participants from their childhood lived experience. Within the ideal family unit, the father figure would significantly influence Christian values and a standard of behaviors for children to emulate. In so, the father's role among the interviewees was how their experiences were influenced to become Christian leaders. Pastor Cade stated,

> "My dad is a pastor and has been for as long as I can remember. And so I grew up in churches where he was the pastor most of the time; there was maybe a season or two. He pastored at that church for about a year or two or three. I have always grown up, at least within the church."

Pastor Cade's father's influence provided council in faith-related matters, leadership, and character formation, which aided in behavioral pattern development. Pastor Jacob spoke about his father's influence as a child: "This was a foundation within the home, but also allowed me to experience different things within my faith." The father's role was a critical element of influence

for participants and set the foundational framing for pastoral ministering both in conduct and deed.

      Mom. (9 occurrences). The parental influences on a child's development, both in leadership and Christian values, stem from the family structure. In joining efforts with the father's influence, the mother's connections to the local church, along with her faith background, were vital to the participants' overall faith journey and development. The mother's influence, viewed by the participant's lived experience, was that those spiritual disciplines, such as daily prayer, impacted their lives, and this observation created an area of curiosity. These lived experiences with his mother had a profound effect on Pastor Copper at an early age. Pastor Copper shared, "In my home, when we were there, there was never a time where we would not read Scripture together or pray as a family together. However, I would see my mom pray, and she would tell us, "We need to follow Jesus, or we are going to hell." So that was probably the extent of the influence in the home." the behavior pattern of influence from the mother equipped pastor Copper's faith journey. Confirming Benedict (2013), "The life-history of the individual is first and foremost and accommodation to the patterns and standards traditionally handed down in his community. From the moment of his birth, the customs into which he was born shape his experiences and behavior" (p. 2- 3). In so, the modeling of behavior from the mother had an impactful example of influences among the participants. In simple terms, Pastor Johnny shared, "It was my mother."

      Pastor. (12 occurrences). This code expressed the foundational influences of those within the pastoral role during the participant's childhood lived experiences. Across the interviewee's responses, each one expressed the primary importance their pastor had on shaping their spiritual development, both practical in spiritual disciplines formation and character. Even more, the

pastor held to the ideals of influence for Pastor Max to seek guidance and confirmation for the

work he felt called to engage in, specifically youth ministry. Pastor Max, "My youth pastor says,

hey, I feel like God wanted me to tell you that the things that he is speaking to you are for are

real and like you should pursue a calling in the ministry." However, many more participants

expressed the same that their Christian pastors influenced their spiritual formation and the

confirmation of their calling. Pastor Gray said, "I also have multiple Christian influences, from

youth pastors to children's ministers and directors in my life." These critical leaders provided

during the participant's childhood lived experiences and behavior patterns to emulate. Even

more, confirming Sanders (2017), "Leadership is influences, the ability of one person to

influence others to follow his or her lead." (P. 29). In so, based on her pastoral leadership

influence to attend a mission trip, Pastor Ava shared, "I was on a mission trip with our youth

group, and while we were there, our youth pastor invited me to come help with a middle school

retreat that summer." After this retreat event, Pastor Ava would begin her journey to become a

local youth pastor.

Teacher. (11 occurrences). This code showed the teacher's vital role in the participants'

development as younger Christians and how their teacher contributed to their future choice to

become a youth pastor within their sphere of influence. Pastor Charles shared,

> "The ministry training in college and seminary was good for the biblical side of it, but
> there was another doctor, and at Seminary, he taught classes in prayer, and I took a
> couple of his classes, and those were very influential in my life and developing that
> aspect of my life. It prepared me for this because, you know, it has been a foundational
> aspect of walking every day with Christ and in my own life prepared me for what I am
> doing now."

Continuing, the participants expressed the need for Christian teachers in the Sunday

school and seminary to better aid in Christian character formation through lived experiences and

influence. From the Sunday school lived experiences and how the teacher impacted Pastor Aubrey, she shared, "I met other mentors from other churches, and I went to a small church, and the youth leader was a friend of mine's mom. She just met with us and taught us the Bible." Confirming Knight's (2006) statement, "Teachers, likewise, are not merely expounders of truth but a person who having an abiding care for the individuals under their tutelage." (p. 211).

Essential Behavioral Elements Code Group

The participants within this study continued to express the essential behavioral elements for virtue character development while engaging the 6th-12th grade youth. Each of the essential elements conveyed was critical to the participant's spiritual and personal character development. Figure 2 highlights the participant's six essential behavioral elements for effective virtue practices while serving the 6th - 12th grade youth best. A detailed description of the six essential behavioral elements for virtue practices and each importance in the pastor's lived experiences follows.

Figure 2

Top Six Essential Behavioral Elements Codes
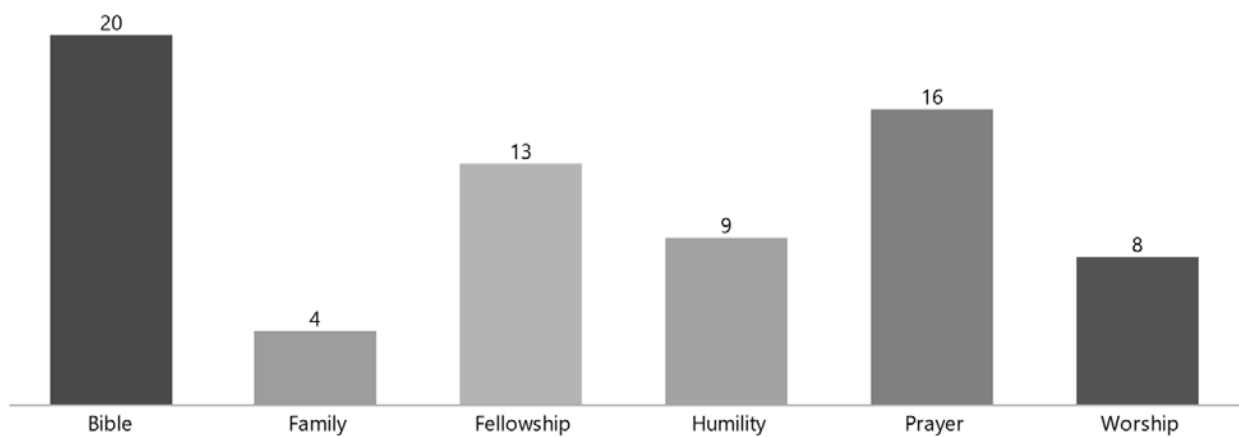
Bible. (20 occurrences). This code is foundational to developing virtues within the youth pastor participants' lived experiences. Pastor Aubrey shared the importance the Bible had her formation of personal virtue development to serve the 6th – 12th grade youth best,

> "So, for me, it is regular study, getting into the scripture, getting into God's word that helps me stay in tune with virtues and values. Whenever I have a healthy prayer life, whenever I am talking to God regularly throughout the day, asking the Holy Spirit to guide and direct being reminded of who Jesus was and who I can be because of him, those things are encouraging to help keep virtues and a healthy, healthy lane."

The participants continued to reveal the need for scripture reading to be a significant element in building virtue in one's life. The participants' lived experiences continue to voice that the Bible is foundational for all who seek to serve in Christian service. However, not every Christian leader is called to serve the 6th-12th grade youth environment. The Bible is still a critical element in character virtue formation. Pastor Ace expressed, "I believe if it is in God's word, then it should be in my life, and it should be in my ministry, practicality if I am willing to search the Bible for the deepest, most amazing revelation." Pastor Ace was also quite vocal about the morning routine of studying that he created and how it aided in his advances in understanding that the youth are the image of God within his ministry. Pastor Ava stated, "Spending time in God's word. I am understanding who Jesus is specifically and trying as I understand more of who he is, allowing him to live through me." Many of the participants held to the premise that the Bible was the guiding principle for leadership, and this element was self-evidence to the job and positions within the ministry as a Christian and leader.

Family. (4 occurrences). Multiple participants spoke about the importance of the family as an essential element for virtue practices. The role of the family structure provided the framework that enabled participants to build and practice virtue as a foundational block within their faith, which would influence the way they ministered within the youth ministry

environment. Pastor Jacob expressed within his lived experience the importance family had

contributed as the vital component to virtue practice along with his daily walk with Christ,

> "My personal walk with Christ, and it just naturally bleeds out. And for me, much of it comes out through my family. I have got three young kids, and I have a wife and I tried to incorporate the things that are important to me in my spiritual walk, which comes out in my personal life. However, for students to see that and to model what that looks like, sometimes it is hosting Bible studies or events at our house so they can see this is what this looks like, and we are trying our best to have a Christ-centered marriage."

Participants continued to acknowledge the need to build a ministry structure within the

home and expressed the development of the family virtue to shape their influences. In so doing,

pastors held to the premise of their personal development to be displayed within the family, and

learning to deal with everyday events aided their awareness of ministering to God's image. Pastor

Elliott expressed the importance of personal virtue development: "Just between me and the Lord,

and then I think practicing that in family and the within the church body and as an example to the

youth, I think that is huge just the youth seeing me." When understanding the lived experiences

in the habits of the essential elements of virtue practices, the participants continued to

communicate that the family environment allowed for growth and learning and shaped the

perceptions of one's worldview and culture. Pastor Sean shared, "A godly family should be and

what the characteristics of a godly father and mother and brother and sister should be. It all

comes from the idea that God made you and me with the same idea in mind, making us a family,

like a connected unit. You know, like we are all blood related because of the blood of Jesus is

what we say." The virtue of family was perceived as the collected view of humanity gaining

ground to experience virtue development with those not part of the traditional family structure.

Pastor Kelly shared, "They (all believers, young and old) must be in the main church service

with all of the adults and their families, and I believe having family and corporate worship is a key to everything."

Fellowship. (13 occurrences). This code stemmed from the participants' lived experiences as the necessary component of virtue practices. Participants continued to share their growing need for fellowship both in church and within their daily interactions. Participants viewed fellowship with like-minded individuals in a corporate setting as an area that contributed to an enriching environment in which to practice their virtue. Pastor Sean shared, "Obviously, regularly gathering together with brothers and sisters and trying to grow deeper in fellowship, which is the true body of Christ, really being a part of a real body of Christ, not just going to church, but having relationships with people." was critical to his virtue development.

In so, practical application to engage in fellowship had been a critical element in the participant's expression of their faith and personal relationship building as a virtue practice. Participants expressed the importance of how fellowship aided in their worldview development and how virtue practice cannot be built in isolation from each other. Fellowship as a virtue practice assisted in providing healing, rest, and the needed assistance with the ministry environment. Pastor Aubery asserted, "Spending time with other people who are similar-minded in the sense of wanting what God wants. That helps me stay on track, and I don't get so distracted by silly things that people get distracted with whenever I am also with people who are focused." In so, the concept of fellowship as a virtue provides the growth area to build upon the participant's continued relationship model and view of the image of God from a soul perspective when dealing with conflicts.

Humility. (9 occurrences). Participants held that humility was a vital virtue to develop within their daily interaction in youth ministries. In an expression of humility, participants

viewed the need to develop this virtue as required daily practice within their youth ministry framework as the generation they ministered to lacked developmental interpersonal skills. Pastor Archer expressed, "Besides integrity, it would say humility as well, knowing that pastors do not have all the answers and we are not perfect as Christ's followers." What had been found noteworthy among the participants was that the building blocks of humility as a defined element of virtue was expressed by the biblical example of Christ's and His servant leadership model. Pastor Jasper shared, "He (Jesus) served so well, and he was so humble that the people who were coming to arrest him needed a signal." Participants shared that along with biblical reading, practical engagement with diverse cultural worldviews aided in the development of humility as a virtue. Pastor Johnny stated, "You do not have to have all the answers if you are just a loving, caring adult who loves Jesus, who is faithfully modeling Jesus and letting them see your faults, your failures. Let them see you repent." Participants would collectively agree that humility as an essential element of virtue practice does not constitute a specific time to achieve fully; it is a continuous daily practice in all environments.

Prayer. (16 occurrences). Youth pastors held that prayer was the required practical element of virtue practice to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best. Participants expressed the importance of a prayerful life in building upon their relationship with God more profoundly and as a way to request assistance in the spiritual realm to minister effectively within the youth environment. Pastor Sawyer: "Being in prayer, being in good relationships with good people who are also in the word and prayer." Participants communicated that a daily prayer life had been the necessary guidepost to allow time to step aside, seek God for guidance, and rest from the daily struggles that may arise from ministering to the 6th -12th grade youth. Pastor Ava stated, "Prayer, but asking the Holy Spirit every day to make me more like Jesus and sort of, as John the

Baptist said, more of him and less of me." In agreement, the participants continued to share the critical role of prayer in their relationship with others. The development of a prayer life as an element of virtue practice was compelling both in the spiritual and personal lived experience among participants.

Worship. (8 occurrences). The participants expressed the importance of worship as a means of virtue practice while ministering best in their 6th -12th grade youth environment. Pastor Kelly stated, "Corporate worship is a key to everything." Worship was an element that helped build authentic relationships within the participant's faith and interpersonal relationships. Participants held that worship was needed to maintain a healthy and robust perspective while ministering to the youth. Pastor Ava stated, "Just personal worship. Like I run a lot, and during that time, I listen to worship music or just sit." Similarly, worship was even more important as a personal expression of virtue. Pastor Aiden shared,

> "I would say the last kind of essential practice for me is just in worship. Moreover, there are a lot of differences, I understand. Worship is more than just singing songs; in this case, I would limit it to worshipping the Lord through song. I just find I have a terrible voice, but just listening to worship music reminds me of so much truth, and it really points me back to a spirit of thankfulness. I need things that remind me to be thankful to the Lord, so most of my worship music is focused on what God has done or something about his character."

Worship as an essential element of virtue continued to be a critical concept for the participants. Worship was found to be a virtue that was built personally and then corporately. However, worship comes back to the leader's willingness to practice daily.

Cultural Intelligence for Personal Character Code Group

Participants expressed the critical traits for cultural intelligence with building personal character as youth pastors ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth. Figure 3 displays the top six cultural intelligence personal character trait codes revealed as necessary elements. A detailed

description of the six cultural intelligences for personal character traits and the lived experience

of the participants follows.

Figure 3

Top Six Cultural Intelligence for Personal Character Codes
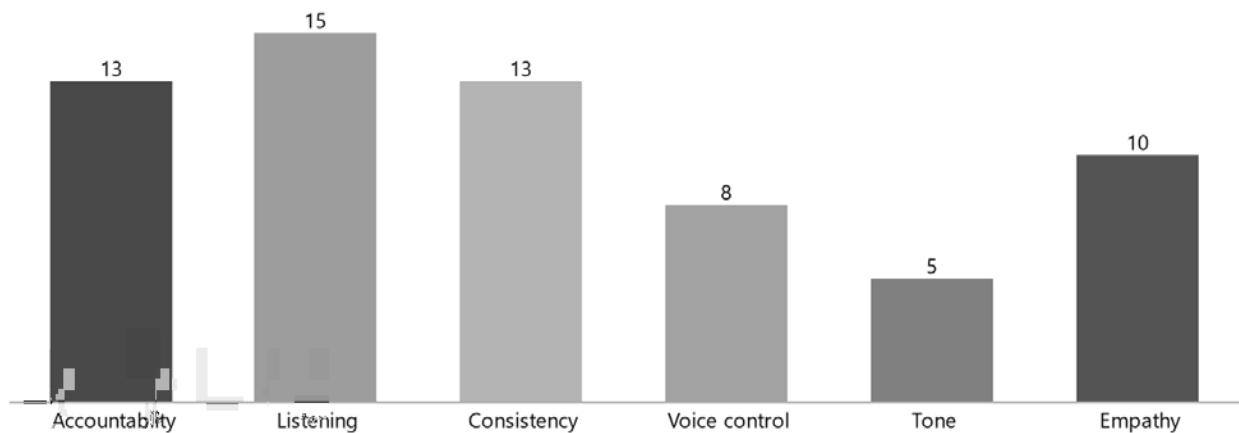
      Accountability. (13 occurrences). All participants reported the need to be held

accountable for cultural intelligence for personal character development. Participants gave credit

to their relationship with God and the accountability of mentors for cultural intelligence. Pastor

Copper shared, "If my ego is running wild, I need people to say check yourself. I am also

constantly studying people and cultures because I think that is important for developing your

character, to understand who you are and your place in this world." Speaking about the need for

accountability in the youth pastors lived experience to build cultural intelligence for personal

character development. Pastor Max expressed, "I surrounded myself with relationships and

networks." The ability to build relationships and network systems was the typical attitude

expressed by the participants to build cultural intelligence. The critical concept of accountability

aided in the diversity of perspectives that were spoken by the participant's lived experiences and

increased character growth. Pastor Rolling: "As Christians, we are Christians all the time, and we

want to take that suit on and take that suit off depending upon where we are, and that is so unhealthy. I think we are better served if we live true to who we are. It keeps us better connected, and it keeps us more accountable." In so doing, accountability contributed to the cultural understanding of other cultural customs and norms without losing the pastor's Christian character development and an agreement among the participants, developing cultural intelligence with accountability to others through relationships assisted in building personal character traits while serving in the youth environment.

Listening. (15 occurrences). Several participants spoke about developing cultural intelligence for personal character traits to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best, which was the practical application of listening. Pastor Archer expressed the need to use cultural intelligence to practice daily listening in an effort to become more efficient in serving the youth. Pastor Archer shared, "I think doing more listening than talking is important. We need to do a better job at learning how to actually listen to people and get an understanding of where they are coming from their perspective." Participants continued to focus on listening for cultural clues and behavior patterns among those from diverse backgrounds and practices. Participants expressed that active listening was a necessary trait that stemmed from the use of developing cultural intelligence as a guidepost for personal character to serve in their prescribed youth environment. An increase in listening to the cultural differences within the participant's environment was found to be the bridge to build rapport with their youth. Pastor Jack shared, "It is almost like they do not have nobody to talk too sometimes, and that is where I have seen a lot of benefits from listening, watching, being there at all times to help them, and just showing them love." Confirming Glaser (2014) assertion, "When we feel people are fair, honor our ownership, show reciprocity, are cooperative, allow us to have a voice, and honor our status in the tribe, we feel we can trust

them" (p. 102). Pastor Charles said, "I think with the youth you must spend time with them instead of assuming you know how to teach and fix them. You need to sit within their culture a little bit, more slowly and intentionally listen to them. Listen to what they love. Listen to what they hate. I listen to what drives them."

Moreover, participants continued the theme of listening within the youth environment to build a solid foundation of trust and respect for the cultural differences experienced by the two generations: the individual pastor and a youth member. Pastor Jacob shared, "To develop cultural intelligence through my character traits is the willingness to be relational and listen. Offering an ear to people helps with cultural intelligence. Listening is not just waiting to respond to somebody when they are talking."

Consistency. (13 occurrences). Participants identified the trait of consistency as the necessary personal character trait with cultural intelligence. Among the participants, consistency was found to be an essential trait of the practice in relation to best serving the youth. Several participants shared that the problem among leadership is the lack of consistency. Even more, cultural youth today do not have a model of consistency to observe and emulate when life becomes difficult. Many of the youth seek out unwanted behaviors to cope with stressors. The idea of the practical character trait of consistency in the youth environment aided in shaping the trust and respect for the cultural differences that may arise. Participants expressed that consistency was critical to personal development and being an effective communicator. Pastor Aubery shared, "Consistency, whether that is communicating with them, the good, bad. Keep a line of communication open and regularly. It helps dissolve any disdain, questions or bitterness from a lack of communication." Even more, within consistency development, the element of being present curbed the problem of the lack of consistency within the youth's lived experiences.

While focusing on the behavior of being present, Pastor Johnny asserted, "Consistent, that means on every Thursday night. I am going to be there. They expect to see me. Unless something really comes up, I am going to be present."

      Voice Control. (8 occurrences). Participants spoke of the necessity of awareness of voice control while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth environment. Several participants have lived experiences where their lack of awareness caused a barrier to effectively communicate with the local youth from diverse cultural backgrounds. Voice control, with the awareness of the speed of their speech, was found to be a necessary concept for developing personal character traits. Even more, the ability to be aware of participants' voice control aided in gaining control over the environment when the youth lacked listening skills. Pastor Jack stated, "They know I would have to say something about respecting the voice. They know when you mean business, when you are kind, and when you are gentle." Like many other participants within the youth ministry environment, the youth may not know the culture that the pastor was communicating to them. Voice control as the means of cultural intelligence for personal character development was found to be a remarkable benefit in practice. Other participants expressed and accepted that their ability to control their voices has sometimes failed. In so, voice control and body language were areas of growth and required daily cultivation among participants. Confirming Newberg and Waldman (2013) statement, "It is easy to think we understand what another person says and means, when in fact we don't" (p. 84).

      Tone. (5 occurrences). This code focused on the significant participant's tone awareness, which was required for cultural intelligence and personal character trait development. Unlike voice control, which was the variable speed of the words in communicating to the youth, tone was equally crucial in cultural intelligence and personal character trait development. Participants

agreed that there had been many occurrences when ministering to the youth; the information and the ability to receive feedback were found to be off-putting based on the volume of tone. When addressing the youth in his ministry, Pastor Cade expressed, "I would like to say something about how it was not exactly what I was looking for, but it was close; however, I do not think the tone or the way I said it was super helpful." Many participants related their lived experiences to tone as the critical element when teaching youth spiritual truths with gentleness. However, the idea of practice in their daily interaction was found to be challenging. Pastor Charles shared, "That one (tone) is probably the hardest one for me because I am a big vocal guy. So sometimes I sound louder and meaner than I really am when I talk." Confirming Petersen (2007) statement, "Poor communication blocks access to the deeper relationships we want, and our friendships remain distant and impersonal. Such frustration and isolation may be the reason enough to sort out better intimacy-producing skills" (p. 16). Participants reported that upon assuming the pastoral role, the leader would need to develop an awareness of their tone when communicating with the youth. In developing through the lens of cultural intelligence for the personal character trait, participants agreed that tone awareness must be developed.

Empathy. (10 occurrences). Participants reported that listening, voice control, and tone contributed to the development of personal character traits along with cultural intelligence as the building blocks for empathy to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best. Each participant spoke of areas in their lived experiences where empathy was required to evaluate the communicating information while developing an intended familiar rapport with each youth member within their sphere of influence. Pastor Archer shared that in this lived experience within the youth environment, "Getting an understanding of where they are coming from their perspective and

how they see the world is important. "Pastor Archer expressed the importance of slowing down and understanding what the youth member maybe communicating during a conversation.

Furthermore, a commonly reported theme among the participants was that to show empathy to the youth, you do not have to agree with their understanding completely. For personal character development, empathy in practice was a critical element for releasing control and valuing what the image of God was sharing with the leader. Pastor Copper asserted, "That does not mean you have to agree, or you understand it all. However, you know you are trying to reach the masses." Participants agreed that empathy as a character trait assisted in effectively ministering to the youth without compromising biblical truth. Even in the management of the youth ministry, Pastor Jacob expressed, "I think for me it is like a lot of refining of being patient with people in the conversations, being patient and listening. Understanding a lot of different things, I think, helps us lead students." Pastor Archer shared, "I could say some comforting words, but if my face or my body language is not aligned with what the students know, trying to think before I speak is incredibly important." Confirming Brislin (1981) statement, "Empathetic people have an advantage since they can judge from the other's point of view and can modify their own behavior accordingly" (p. 59).

Christlike Character Code Group

Within Christian youth ministry, Christlike character traits among those who have chosen to become Christian leaders are held as the prescribed standard for the biblical example of Christ and His earthly ministry. In so, in the shared importance with the framework of Gal. 5:22-23, participants shared the necessary Christlike character traits to minister effectively to the 6th-12th grade youth. Figure 4 depicts the top six code groups describing Christlike character traits. A

detailed description of the six Christlike character trait groups and the participants' lived

experiences in the youth environment follows.

Figure 4

Top Six Christlike Character Codes
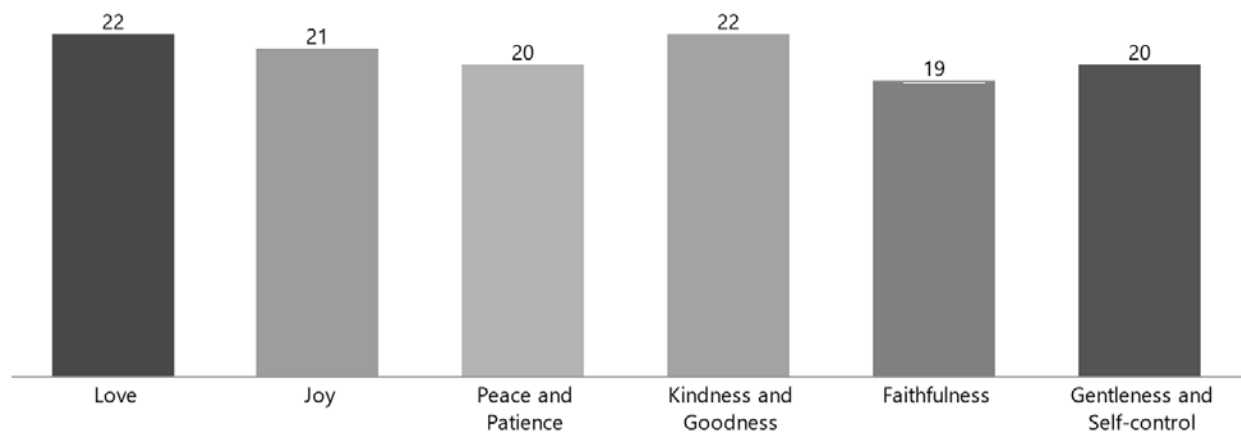
Love. (22 occurrences). This code of love as a Christlike character trait was an essential

expression in both word and deed within the youth ministry framework. Participants agreed that

effectively constructing this trait in their lives with engagement in action-based services and

behavioral patterns that focus on building interpersonal relationships with the youth was needed.

Action-based activities and listening were also found to express Christlike love and communicate

love to the youth. The expression of love among the participants continued from the ongoing

theme of listening as prescribed in the cultural intelligence for personal character trait

development. Pastor Aubrey shared, "I feel that practicing love from me comes from listening. I

listen to them and all their ramblings, silliness, silly jokes, and different things." Participants

agreed that Christlike character traits are developed while engaging the local community in acts

of service to manifest love by being present. Pastor Copper shared, "My best practice, I think, is

just being there, being present. Our office has an open door, and you can always come hang here, and I tell them I love them." Participants expressed that they have had a challenging time navigating the youth environment while developing the Christlike character trait of love. However, several participants reported that their daily actions to love were built through the continuous acknowledgment of the need to practice this trait within their youth ministry environment. Pastor Archer shared,

> "To truly show love, you must intentionally focus and make a concerted interest in the life of every student, even if they have only been there for one night. You have to show that you love them by seeing them and so that they know that you see them beyond just being consistent and being honest. I think students, especially that age, they are looking for truth."

In agreement, many of the participants reported that there must be an intention to act from the youth pastor's will in order to develop the Christlike character trait of love.

Joy. (21 occurrences). Participants spoke about their Christlike character trait of joy as the ability to practically engage the 6th -12th grade youth environment from an emotional and relation perspective through their lived experiences. Several participants agreed that joy was often expressed in the activities they developed to engage in spiritual and interpersonal relationship building. However, Pastor Max shared, "I feel like joy is something in teenage culture that is misread or misinterpreted." Participants chose to reveal that joy in their individual experiences in ministry had impacted how they experienced joy with the youth. Many participants held that their involvement in the group activities alongside the youth provided practical engagement to aid in developing Christlike character. From the cultural perspective, Pastor Cooper shared his experiences of joy with the youth, "I get excited with them about the things they are excited about, whether that be some show they are watching or something that

they are really into. I watched much anime last year because I had one student who, that was the one point you could get her to start talking." Participants spoke of the emotional concept of joy and the effects that this type of ideological framework of happiness was limited, for Christlike joy was an expression in all situations. However, other participants reported that joy was an emotional response to the feeling of happiness of being present in serving the youth. Many participants agreed that actively practicing the Christlike trait of joy was needed to display the reality of a personal relationship with Christ and those within their sphere of influence. Pastor Ace said, "When they are in front of me, they will smile. They are going to experience God's joy in some way."

Peace and Patience. (20 occurrences). Participants spoke about the correlation between the Christlike character traits of peace and patience development through their experiences while ministering to the 6th -12th grade youth. Participants reported that the Christlike character trait of peace is experienced in the mists of stressors where one cannot control the situation; however, they acknowledged that God is in control. Many participants could not express the idea of peace other than a physical manifestation of calmness to their nervous system while ministering to the youth. Several participants agreed that peace within oneself and one's relationship with God aided in practicing patience. Pastor Jacob shared, "The one thing that leads to peace is our relationship with Jesus." Participants expanded on their development of peace and patience as Christlike character traits by engaging in an activity practiced by taking breaks and choosing to pause before speaking. In addition, one critical element that the participants reported was the awareness of their emotions and their desire to develop peace and patience. Participants agreed that practicing an awareness of their emotional state was crucial to developing the Christlike character traits of peace and patience while not engaging in the emotions of the youth by taking a

step back in understanding the cultural and behavioral implications of the group they are serving. Pastor Ace shared, "When you are patient, it shows them respect and that you care and listen." The participants revealed the purpose of listening as the necessary form of patience defined by their lived experiences. Active listening, as reported by the participants, was an evident expression of patience and allowed the time needed to comprehend what was being stated by the young people. Moreover, several participants reported that being aware of the barriers to developing peace and patience, sitting in the presence of God and surrendering to His peace allowed the necessary traits to develop within the participants.

Kindness and Goodness. (22 occurrences). Participants spoke about their experiences building the Christlike character traits of kindness and goodness to serve best in the 6th-12th grade youth environment. A reported correlation between the two character traits was viewed as a balance from kindness, which was the practical application of goodness in their subjective reality while ministering to the 6th -12th grade youth environment. Several participants reported and agreed that continuing to be self-aware with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to watch their words in effect to instill a sense of kindness culture was critical within the participants' daily practice. Many participants expressed the struggle with engaging in articulated situations where conflict was present; attuning one's action and speech focusing on Christ was the necessary premise for kindness and goodness. Listening was viewed as the necessary element to practice kindness and goodness. Pastor Gray shared, "I think the best way to show kindness is to be intentional and find little ways to remember something about them." Other participants who reported that kindness and goodness resulted from action-based behavioral patterns like engaging in activities and reserving their natural responses acknowledged that they were held to a high spiritual

standard. Pastor Sean made a strong assertion, "I think just trying to be morally good, trying to be a good example. What a godly man or a godly woman should be."

Faithfulness. (20 occurrences). This code of faithfulness as a Christlike character trait was found to be an essential expression within the youth ministry framework. Participants spoke about their development of the Christlike Character trait of faithfulness as the required entity for best ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth. Participants reported that consistency within the youth environment was required because the turnover of youth pastors in ministry has increased, and the youth need a source of consistency within their lived experiences. The Christlike trait of faithfulness code shared a correlation between cultural intelligence and personal character codes group. Participants agreed that consistency in understanding culture was a vital element for constructing a personal character trait. Several participants believed it is essential to be present in the youth environment, for the local youth population lacked consistency from adults in their personal lives. Pastor Copper shared, "Showing up, even present weekend and week out." was the necessary expression of building the Christlike character trait. However, several participants spoke of the first aspect of faithfulness, which was the need to make a commitment to the youth and seek God's presence daily. Pastor Aubrey stated, "The best way I practice faithfulness is by submitting and resubmitting my life to Jesus all the time."

Gentleness and Self-Control. (20 occurrences). This code revealed the Christlike character traits and the corresponding roles of gentleness and self-control that each participant reported during their lived experiences while serving the 6th – 12th grade youth best. Participants expressed the common theme of developing self-awareness and controlling their tongues before speaking to the youth during their service. Pastor Sean expressed, "I just try to, like, watch my tone of voice, making sure I am not being too confrontational, be gentle with my approach."

Several participants shared the need to develop self-control with the assistance of the Holy Spirit to interact with the youth effectively. Pastor Rolling shared, "I do not want to do anything that's going to shame Christ. I do not want to do anything that's going to cause the kids to draw back and pull away from Christ or me." The participants reported the willingness to submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and abiding in Christ as the necessary critical element to both personal and corporate sources to build gentleness and self-control. Other participants stated that the youth environment aided in the development of self-control along with gentleness because of the essential aspect the ministry entailed due to the different cultural demographics that were served. Pastor Charles expressed, "I have got a show that I am in control and of not only my own, my own life, my own body, my lusts and passions and desires."

Furthermore, the corresponding development of both the Christlike character traits of gentleness and self-control reported by the participants communicated through their lived experiences and daily practice was needed. Although there was a vast cultural, generational gap between the youth pastor and the members of the youth, participants expressed that the universal need to continue to serve as an action-based ministry aided in the development of both gentleness and self-control pertaining to Christlike character traits.

Personal Sustainability Code Group

Participants expressed the importance of personal sustainability as youth pastors ministering to the 6th – 12th grade youth best. Figure 5 highlights the top six personal sustainability codes revealed as necessary elements to minister in the youth environment effectively. A detailed description of the six personal sustainability codes and the lived experience of the participants follows.

Figure 5

Top Six Personal Sustainability Codes
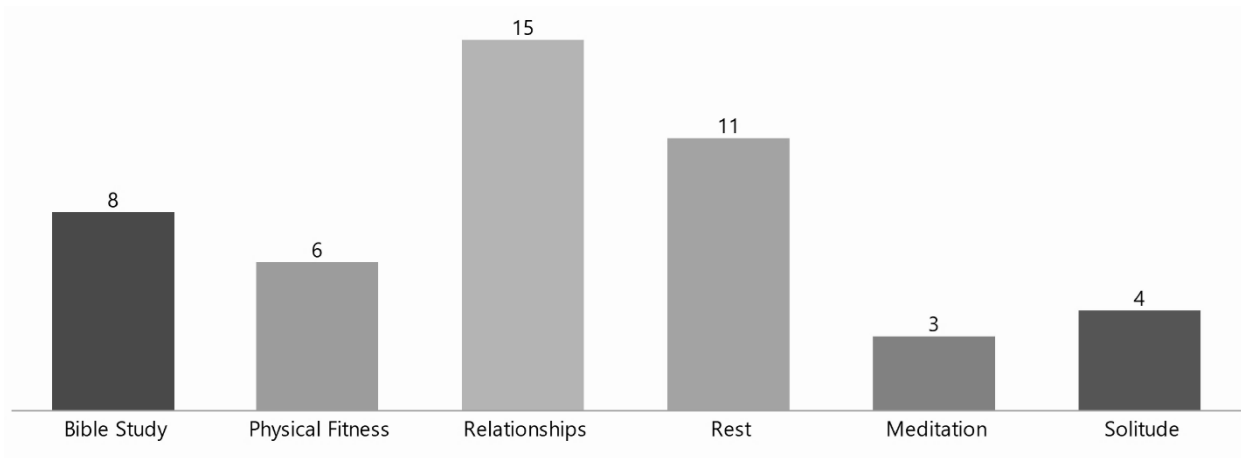
Bible Study. (8 occurrences). Participants expressed the need to develop and practice partaking in personal and group Bible studies for personal sustainability. Pastor Johnny reported that as a participant in a Bible study with others, "I am going to take all this in for my personal growth and my own personal walk with Jesus." Likewise, compared to the developed code group found in the essential elements of virtue practices, participants reported that seeking God through His word aided in their ability to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best. Participants reported that the need for continuous engagement in Bible studies aided in the necessary understanding to further develop their personal sustainability for both personal and professional spiritual growth. These personal Bible studies with others interconnected the participants as reported and were a way they felt connected to the big picture of God's story.

Physical Fitness. (6 occurrences). This code was critical for the reported participants to practice serving the 6th - 12th grade youth. Several participants expressed that holding a physical fitness routine allowed their mind, body, and soul to become balanced when coping with the

ministry role they held within the youth environment. Other participants expressed that physical fitness was an element of sustainability that revealed that they were taking control of their bodies and devoting them back to God. However, other participants did not share the same ideology regarding the need to be proactive in their physical fitness as a personal sustainability. Notably, those participants had mixed reported lived experiences and failed to develop a physical fitness routine.

Relationships. (15 occurrences). This code stemmed from the participants' reporting that developing and managing healthy interpersonal relationships with others was crucial to personal sustainability practice to serve the 6th – 12th grade youth best. Pastor Sawyer shared, "Regularly gathering together with brothers and sisters and trying to grow deeper in fellowship, which is the true body of Christ really being a part of a real body of Christ, not just going to church, but having relationships with people." Several participants reported that engaging in weekly gatherings and monthly check-ins with other individuals helped provide the necessary space from ministry work to seek advice. Other participants reported that their built relations assisted in accountability and allowed room for them to express their misunderstandings within the youth ministry to someone who would listen. Pastor Aubrey reported, " I spend time with others in ministry contexts similar to mine. Maybe not the same, but similar to some that are beyond me and some that are not quite where I am." The concept of relationships among the participants was seen as a fitting expression of their love for others while not living in isolation.

Rest. (11 occurrences). Participants reported that rest was a practical addition to their personal sustainability practices to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best. Several participants reported that a rest day is critical for their sustainability to prevent minister burnout. The necessary pause in their schedule allowed them the freedom to focus on, in some cases, their own

household and relationship maintenance with God. Pastor Ava said, "Taking a day off is super important, like keeping the Sabbath, because sometimes, if you try to do it all. You will fall short when you're tired or trying to solve all the world's problems by yourself, and keeping the Sabbath leaves space for God to solve problems and allows you to see that you are not really in control in the first place." Other participants expressed the need for rest, which was required for their bodies to recover and for their minds to sit in the presence of God. Pastor Aubrey shared, "Resting is intentionally spending time with God and taking a break because what I found is it forces me to trust God with those things like I, at the end of the day, I am not the one making it happen." However, a common theme expressed among the participants' lived experiences was that rest as a concept of personal sustainability was found in obedience to the biblical understanding of taking a sabbatical or a sabbath day.

Meditation. (3 occurrences). This code stemmed from the lived experience of the participant's report of sitting in the presence of God. Several participants expressed that the application of meditation assisted their focus on their thoughts while engaging in mindfulness practices. Guidance for this code was from the Word of God, and participants chose specific times to meditate. Pastor Jack spoke about daily meditation on the Word of God, "Going into the word, listen to what God is got to tell me, and then work from there. And then you know, while He is feeding me spiritually in my mind and in my soul, I am to contemplate on it." Participants shared the psychological benefits of meditating on the Word of God to assist in dealing with the pressures of personal and ministry responsibility. Several participants shared that meditating on the Word of God allowed the Spirit to seek them, and through God's Word, they remembered His promises and their identity. Participants highly regarded meditation as a personal

sustainability practice. However, the meditation code was expressed by participants not to be confused with the Eastern meditation practices that are currently circulating in culture.

Solitude. (4 occurrences). This code stemmed from the participants' revealed role of solitude as an area for personal sustainability practices as the best to effectively serve the 6th -12th grade youth ministry environment. Solitude, as expressed by several participants, was the ability to remove oneself from one's current environment and be by themselves. Pastor Gray reported, "My phone is plugged in and away, and it is not something that is always attached to me. That is a big thing for me. I need to make sure that I am getting disconnected so I can come back with joy and excitement rather than leaving but not actually leaving and just always being tied to it and getting burned out." This foundational expression and practice stemmed from the participant's need to just be present in solitude with their own thoughts disconnecting from their phones. This practice, as communicated, is an act of going into solitude; however, it is not the same as loneliness. Participants reported that it is an act to be able to practice being removed from the stressors of life and focus on being present with God.

Governance Code Group

The study participants continued to express how cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing while engaging the 6th-12th youth. Each revealed that the governance code conveyed was critical to the participants' practical application in the context of youth ministry. Figure 6 showcases the participant's six top efforts to govern the participant's 6th -12th grade youth ministry properly. A detailed description of the six practices of the governance framework and their importance in the pastor's lived experiences follows.

Figure 6

Top Six Governance Codes
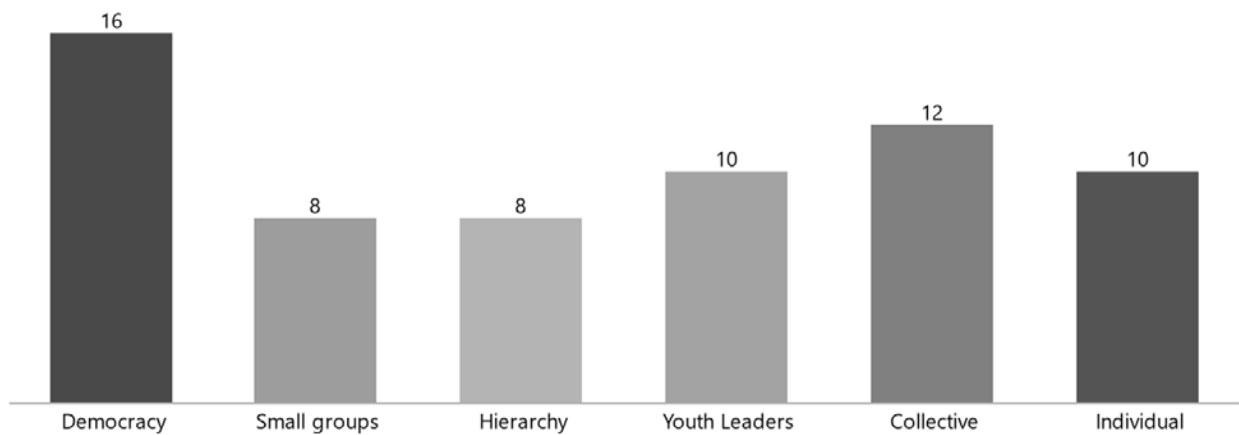
Democracy. (16 occurrences). Participants reported that a democratic way to govern their youth ministry effectively was the expression that stemmed from the ideology developed from their cultural and personal lived experiences. Pastor Aubrey articulated, "I am very team oriented. I think that everybody has a seat at the table." Participants generally recognized that democratic governance held a biblical premise for the management of their 6th- 12th grade youth environment. Pastor Max shared that his governance practice expressed the belief, "Like a biblical democracy, where in my leadership style as related to my personality, is very much like I want to lead from a place of relationships." Pastor Max adopted the democracy model to balance government power, relationship building, and the sustainability of his youth program.

Moreover, several participants reported that the necessity for a collectivist democratic model aided as the necessary framework to govern. Pastor Ace spoke about the reality of the group effort within the democratic model as the means of self-sustaining governance for the

youth environment. He said, "I want to say self-sustaining because the way we have it set up is we have student leaders, college leaders, and me ministry directors. However, we all share in the responsibilities of the ministry."

Small Group. (8 occurrences). This code revealed the participants' lived experiences as the continuation of the democracy code from their ideology held in a practical framework. Several participants reported that small group construction enabled other leaders to apply their gifts in assisting both in ministering and training within the 6th-12th youth environment. Small groups generally expressed by the participants that the framework of just one overseer was viewed to lack the ability for others to be part of the bigger picture. Most of the participants' youth ministries were described as becoming more complex to govern when the youth population increased. Participants generally articulated the need to establish additional leadership training to serve the youth as smaller democratic entities. Pastor Ava communicated her role as the youth pastor and the importance of equipping her appointed leaders into small group overseers. She stated, "So I try to equip the small group leaders. Mainly, we do that through informal conversations one-on-one or, you know with the team." Pastor Gray saw the equipping of the small group leader and his wife's involvement as critical for ensuring that the youth ministry environment was safe and healthy for his youth each week. He said, "Our governing practices are equipping and equipping small group leaders, and so I cannot be the only one overseeing 50 students on a Sunday night. I must have other people. And so we have multiple small group leaders, usually seven or eight small group leaders every Sunday night along with me and my wife."

Hierarchy. (8 occurrences). Participants reported the concept of hierarchical governance as a practical expression in serving the 6th-12th grade youth environment. As a newly supported

church plant in his local area of influence, Pastor Kelly resolved to the governance of the youth

and daily operations within the church to a hierarchical framework for managing assistant youth

leaders. Pastor Kelly shared,

> "I must be very careful of who I have put in positions with my governing right now. I must be the governing authority over all the groups. Even though we have teachers in place right now, I must pick out the literature and even the activities at this stage. I almost got to micromanage. However, it is necessary until I establish better relationships with some of these teachers coming in; since we are so new for a church, I cannot just let them go and risk them teaching doctrines."

Participants reported that the balance between governing the youth ministry and personal

schedules was difficult. The governing of the youth environment would fall into the implication

of a hierarchical system. Pastor Max saw that granting authority to his team was a favorable

decision; however, he would have the final say in the decision-making process to oversee the

youth ministry environment as he deemed adequate. Pastor Max shared, "Whereas at the end of

the day, I have the final say, but I like to spread the power and the authority throughout my

leadership team." Several participants shared a similar governing concept as pastor Max. Pastor

Charles expressed that the underlying authority within his youth ministry must stop at him to

prevent confusion; however, the intended goal was to be youth centric. Pastor Charles shared his

governing practices: "It is not necessarily democratic because I will put my foot down when I

must put my foot down on things. I am not going to do it. However, other than that, it is open to

let us figure out what is best for the kids." Pastor Sean wanted to encourage his leadership with

shared authority while maintaining a hierarchical framework. Pastor Sean shared, "I am like the

Chief Indian, and then all of my adult youth leaders have authority."

Youth Leaders. (10 occurrences). Participants reported using youth leaders as assistants

as a lived experience of their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development

efforts contributing to proper governing of their 6th -12th grade youth ministry environment. Several participants shared the balance of their leadership influence and encouragement of their youth leaders, who provided oversight and behavioral modeling for the younger youth. Pastor Max: "I am trying to delegate and give authority and correct afterward, if necessary, but mostly celebrate afterward because, like, for example, I have a student leadership team like I shared, and we did this game that they came up with." Other participants expressed a willingness to involve the youth as leaders to establish leadership development in their current ministry environment. Participants reported that the teen youth leader would be a great way to encourage growth and ownership of the concept of a team dynamic. Pastor Cade revealed his ideologies of listening to one of his students and applied this idea within the youth environment. Pastor Cade articulated, "So one of the students interested me last night and asked if he could lead games this coming youth group, and I said no because there is a different student leader that's teaching that youth group."

    Collective. (12 occurrences). This code was developed from the participants' lived experiences, who reported collective governance as a practical representation while serving the 6th -12th grade youth environment. Several participants shared that their efforts to develop a governing framework that serves the youth environment had a collective undertone. Each participant created the collective ideals from a biblical worldview using their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character. Pastor Jacob revealed that his ministry governance stemmed from this ideology. Pastor Jacob said, "If it is communal or the collective group, the characteristic does not change because it is rooted in something deeper than personality. I think that is where it can be healthy. Where it is rooted in scripture, it is rooted in the character of Christ." Other participants reported that the collective style of community government must

maintain a healthy standard of biblical principles while not conforming to the standards of what the world has defined as a collective concept of living to justify current culturally approved behavioral patterns. Pastor Aiden strongly asserted to the current culture, "I am very much for a collaborative leadership, but there is still a standard of truth." Several participants reported that the standard to maintain a biblical worldview of practice when governing within the youth ministry environment is the necessary concept to push back against the culture of individualism that continues to increase among the youth. Likewise, Pastor Copper shared,

> "Christians living Community. Christians thrive in a community. There is no such thing as a Christian by themselves. I am pushing back against individualism, the air we breathe everywhere else in our lives. To say that when you are here, you are in the community. Together, we are sisters and brothers in Christ, and you can help the person next to you."

The theme of the collective perspectives among the participants reported was the continuous position for the biblical expression of their lived experiences deriving from their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development.

Individual. (10 occurrences). This code revealed the lived experiences of the participants as they developed their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character and reported governance as a practical representation while serving the 6th -12th grade youth environment. Participants spoke about the ongoing encounters within the youth environment and how their example curbs the cultural implication of an individual worldview. Pastor Gray reported a story to help illustrate his idea of working and developing a youth culture that focuses less on the self and more on others. Pastor Gray shared,

> "I can think of once, and I will not name any names, but one student in particular when they arrive on Sunday nights, their worldview is totally about themselves, and they have. There is nothing about their worldview outside of themselves and what is best for them and what will most impact them. And so, when they show up on Sunday nights, they do not want to listen to their small group leaders or small group leaders or me or my wife. And so, they only care about what is going to be best for them."

Although the ideology revealed an individualistic worldview that many participants face within their daily operations as youth pastors, there was an agreement that the answer to fixing that current cultural understanding is unknown. Again, Pastor Gray said, "I do not know how to fix that yet, and that is still something I am working on. However, I think our students' lives are impacted by that individualistic worldview." Other participants reported that the individualistic worldview, when balanced with the collective, gives way to a proper biblical worldview. The argument stemmed from the idea that the individual first must focus on their relationship with Christ, and from the relationship through Christ, the collective, others' approach would transpire. However, pastor Sean reported that an individualist focus was necessary to govern the 6th -12th grade youth best. Pastor Sean expressed,

> "I think a lot of my government principles are based on the individualistic approach that I am going to need to treat different situations differently based on who it is. So I need to make sure myself that I am aware of the situation so I can wisely and discern to enter that situation and handle it appropriately."

Pastor Elliott held different experiences and voiced, "If I could show them that it is not about me and my ministry or my way, but it is about Jesus and his way. I think that is showing them a selfless model."

Summary of the Research Questions

This section will discuss the participant's reported lived experiences that were developed, along with a summary of each research question within this study.

Summary of Research Question 1

The research question 1 inquired, "What do pastors perceive to be the essential behavioral elements for their effective character development in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade of age youth ministry?"

In this study, participants spoke about their lived experience and the essential behavioral elements of their effective character development that aided in serving the 6th- 12th grade youth ministry. Participants were invested in their revealed elements to continue building upon them through daily practical-based habit formation. All youth pastors agreed that their relationship with Christ and prayer was required to serve the youth best. Their lived experience carried with it the reminder of the importance of choosing to deepen one's spiritual relationship, and this relationship would be the foundational aspect of the other elements for character development. Even more, their relationships with family, fellowship, and worship aided in fostering expressed behavioral patterns as revealed in the formation of the modeling from scripture Christ's humility as described by the participants for their youth to emulate. Moreover, participants continued to reveal that character development with the intended use of their reported elements does not come without challenges and acknowledged that these shortcomings do not affect the best practice in service to the 6th -12th grade youth environment best. The shortcomings provided a reputation for being an authentic Christian leader.

Summary of Research Question 2

Research question 2 inquired, "What are the perspectives, if any, among pastors about using their cultural intelligence for personal character development in order to best serve the 6th- 12th grade youth ministry?"

Participants conveyed the importance of cultural intelligence for personal character development as they serve within the 6th-12th grade youth ministry. The effect of understanding cultural intelligence was the necessary premise for the development of listening. Participants continued to reveal that listening to youth was critical to using cultural intelligence for personal character development. Participants described the importance of cultural intelligence for personal

character development as the measurement of awareness while serving in the youth environment and consistency as a trait that required practice. The lived experience of consistency was critical as the participants communicated that the youth environment lacked consistency. Consistency as a personal character trait among the participants was revealed through the awareness of the cultural trends in their ministries. Participants' perspectives on increased knowledge of their cultural intelligence led to engaging the youth through an empathy lens as a personal character trait to serve the youth best. As a result, most participants expressed the necessity for accountability, voice control, and tone stemming from cultural intelligence as the necessary concepts of personal character. Collectively, each participant expressed perspectives that were consistent with the biblical example of Christ's ministry.

Summary of Research Question 3

Research question 3 inquired, "How do the pastors perceive the significance of developing their Gal. 5:22-23 personal Christlike character traits in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?"

Participants within this study expressed the role in developing personal Christlike character traits as described in Gal. 5:22-23 were the necessary building blocks to engage the youth ministry to serve them best effectively. Several participants observed their daily development of these traits as a framework to aid personal and spiritual growth. Likewise, several participants expressed that the trait of love within the Gal. 5:22-23 list was an action-based activity that manifested love to engage the environment. Action-based traits not only display to the youth the participants prescribed ideals of Christ's love, but many of the participants also desire to emulate this trait for the youth to follow. Participants described the ability to develop each trait from an area where the intended goal must be practiced. One

significant development for the participants was the traits of kindness and goodness and their significant role in serving the 6th-12th grade youth. Within these two traits, the concept of listening, as depicted as a critical element of cultural intelligence for personal character traits, was expressed as the practical aspects of the participant's lived experience that displayed within the youth environment the description of the kindness and goodness of Christlike traits. Before participants saw the significance of the traits of gentleness and self-control, many revealed that peace and patience were necessary when dealing with conflict within the youth environment for proper management. Participants settled that committing to the daily practice of becoming aware of their emotional state was the corrective action needed to develop Christlike character traits to grasp the best understanding of their youth and the cultural implications that may arise within the ministry environment. Participants perceive the importance of the Christlike trait of joy as contributing to faithfulness. As expressed in the youth fun activity, both traits were the necessary guide for engagement. Participants expressed that their efforts to be present and engage in age-appropriate activities with the youth provided the source to develop the trait of joy and an area to establish faithfulness through the lens of consistency in practice. Participants agreed that the Christlike traits of love and self-control were the pillars of all the other traits developed in their lived experiences to serve the 6th – 12th grade youth best.

Summary of Research Question 4

Research question 4 inquired, "How do the pastors perceive the impact of their Christlike character development practices for personal sustainability in a 6th-12th grade youth ministry?"

Participants perceived that the impact of their Christlike character development practices assisted in their personal sustainability within the 6th -12th grade youth ministry. Participants expressed that their willingness to engage in Bible studies individually and corporately

contributed to their ability to build upon their Christlike character traits as a form of personal sustainability. Along with the Christlike character trait development of relationship building, many participants expressed the routine of physical fitness implementation as a trait to become aware of taking care of their bodies to aid in stress management while serving the youth. Several participants routinely engaged in set times to rest once a week and participated in yearly retreats. Other participants conveyed that the importance of meditation and solitude practices represented Christlike traits for personal sustainability. Participants expressed their need for clarity while being willing to practice meditating upon the Word of God while seeking solitude to understand their perspectives from a personal growth and spiritual mindset perception. Participants observed that practicing each character habits was necessary for personal sustainability care and to serve the youth environment best.

Summary of Research Question 5

Research question 5 inquired, "How do pastors perceive that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th-12th grade youth ministry?"

Participants perceived that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th-12th grade youth ministry. Participants expressed that the governing practice from a democratic perspective provided the framework to effectively establish the use of small group entities within the youth environment. Other participants revealed that their democratic approach and encouraging youth teen leaders to participate as role models for the younger youth within their ministry was a sufficient management method. Other participants were limited in their ability to govern from a democratic perspective. Several participants reported that based on their current lived experience, the

governance form of a hierarchical system was necessary to minister within their youth environment effectively. Other participants found that balancing their cultural intelligence growth with their personal Christlike character development provided insight into the governing balance of individualist and collective worldviews. The balance expressed in the example of the participant's relationship with Christ was an individual governance perspective. However, while working with others, a collectivist governance perspective was viewed as the whole working together in unity as the body of Christ for the common good. Participants said that the individualist and collectivist worldviews on governance are found together within a biblical worldview. Participants expressed that each representative governing practice stemmed from their understanding of cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character traits development.

Additional Findings

Within this study, the researcher found that the participants' willingness was exceptionally motivating as they expressed their love for God and served the 6th -12th grade youth. While listening to the participants, the researcher discovered they needed to be heard about their experiences. Several of the participants expressed their gratitude for someone seeking their opinion and having a place where they could express concerns about how they navigate within their youth ministry context. Many participants expressed the insecurities in ministry while they serve the youth population. Many of the insecurities stemmed from the lack of knowledge of whether they were making a difference within their influence. However, some participants acknowledged that the planted seeds would come to fruition later in their youth population's experiences. The researcher discovered, as the participant shared, that there is a growing number of youth pastors within the region under investigation who are seeking out each other to bridge the cultural gap and to provide ministry resources and prayer collectively. The

participants reported that their understanding of working together was based on the scriptures: each member is part of the body of Christ.

Further, many participants revealed their desire to grow personally and professionally. Several participants spoke about their development of personal libraries that provided an understanding of cultural customs, behavioral patterns, and customs. Other participants expressed their ability to stay informed of the new cultural trends arising among the youth population by researching current events that may affect their local youth population. Moreover, examining the local cultural environments within the youth pastor's area of influence was expressed as the necessary premise for effective ministry and leadership development. The participants in the study expressed the importance of their roles in ministry and revealed the necessity of character development to balance order and chaos. Although slight, this theme was reported in the participants' experience and highlighted the foundation premise of the nature of character trait development to navigate in ministry within unknown environments. Likewise, the participants spoke of their cultural intelligence and personal character development to bring order to the chaos within the youth ministry environment.

Moreover, several participants expressed words that the researcher found quite interesting. The expressed terms follow a similar pattern form of communication used in the military. Such as phrases like "all this jazz" and "navigate." These typical military phrases spoken by some of the participants gave way to an inquiry into their influence backgrounds. Unfortunately, no new data was exposed during this study. However, it did create curiosity to seek out a more profound understanding of the type of influences that the participants may have had contact with throughout their lived experiences.

Evaluation of the Research Design

This study examined the lived experiences of youth pastors in a qualitative phenomenological research methodology to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. The in-depth, face-to-face interviews using the Microsoft Teams computer software application were viewed as a noteworthy instrument for the prescribed collection method within this research study to gather the participants' subjective experiences data on the phenomenon under investigation. Each participant provided critical insight with each response to the developed questions.

As the study moved forward, most participants expressed their need to communicate their subjective experiences at length. Several of the interviews that were conducted lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. A few participant outliers spoke for over an hour and did not answer the questions thoroughly, although their responses provided usable data. Each participant articulated their journey into their current ministry role and the enjoyment they received from being able to serve their local youth in their ministry context. The researcher found that they wanted to ask follow-up questions after each interview. However, the information provided was sufficient for this study. The study was limited to the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, and the researcher wanted to conduct research outside the reported region to seek other youth pastors lived experiences with the phenomenon.

When evaluating the number of participants required for this phenomenological research study, the researcher desired to have 25 participants; however, they would have 22 willing participants. The population of participants was well-rounded and provided the necessary inquiry that the researcher was seeking. The study did reflect the diversity of ethnicity and racial

backgrounds of the participants, even though these factors did not determine eligibility for selection to engage in the interview process. Upon reevaluation, the researcher, in completing the selection process, desired other ethnicities to participate; however, that did not come to fruition based on the willingness of those who would participate in this study. The researcher believes that expanding their search for participants to the whole eastern coast of the United States may not yield a different outcome to the responses and themes developed within this study. However, having a demographic from the region may develop new subthemes, which were measured in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This section concludes this qualitative phenomenological study in understanding the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among youth pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. This chapter will provide the research purpose statement, research questions, research conclusions, implications, and applications. In addition, further discussion about this research study's limitations and proposed future research opportunities will be articulated.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among youth pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the cultural Christlike character development will be generally defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study are the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th -12th grade youth ministry.

Research Questions

The following Research questions will guide this study:

RQ1. What do pastors perceive to be the essential behavioral elements for their effective character development in order to best serve the 6th -12th grade of age youth ministry?

RQ2. What are the perspectives, if any, among pastors about using their cultural intelligence for personal character development in order to best serve the 6th -12th grade

youth ministry?

RQ3. How do the pastors perceive the significance of developing their Gal. 5:22-23 personal Christlike character traits in order to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

RQ4. How do the pastors perceive the impact of their Christlike character development practices for personal sustainably in a 6th -12th grade youth ministry?

RQ5. How do pastors perceive that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th -12th grade youth ministry?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

The qualitative phenomenological study provided critical elements and insight into several research conclusions, implications, and applications.

Research Conclusions

Noteworthy conclusions were drawn within this qualitative phenomenological study to comprehend the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among youth pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. Each conclusion from each research question was presented below.

Research conclusion of Research Question 1.

"What do pastors perceive to be the essential behavioral elements for their effective character development in order to best serve the 6th -12th grade of age youth ministry?"

The essential behavioral elements expressed by the participants for effective character development in order to serve the 6th -12th grade youth ministry best seems to be the critical qualities and traits that each pastor, with unwavering dedication, needed to apply in a practical fashion with daily use. The youth pastor's perception was that each element brought a sense of purpose to their lived experience and provided an area for personal growth. As previously

discussed, participants agreed that their relationship with Christ was the foundational aspect for the other expressed character elements to develop. Participants held to the beliefs that over time, as they chose to develop each of the elements that were revealed, the youth within their sphere of influence would prescribe an example to follow in their personal lives even if the time was not at the present moment. The participants expressed their shortcomings, such as the pains of developing their character within the youth environment. In so, as discussed within the biblical text, the participant's responses were relevant to the scriptural teaching of James's statement, as the research literature by MacArthur (2005) stated, "A better translation is "proven character." The Greek word simply means proof. Used of testing metals to determine the purity, the proof is Christian character (cf. Jm. 1:12)" (p. 1519).

Upon further investigation of the current researched literature, the lived experience findings expressed by the participants did not conclusively reveal added information on essential behavioral elements. However, such revealed information did yield to the pleasure and pain incentives, confirming the assertion made by Di Basilio (2021), "The intended transition to acting as the virtuous person would act is achieved presumably by first using pleasure and pain as incentives to encourage certain behavioral patterns in the habitual" (p. 535). Furthermore, upon evaluation of the current literature, the six coded essential behavioral elements were not expressed and, therefore, did not agree with the previously researched information that was revealed. Each element was created from the participant's lived experiences, which were relatively new information from the previously described historical virtue lists by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, adding to the virtues research literature.

Moreover, participants expressed that their essential behavioral elements were their relationships with family, fellowship, worship, the Bible, and prayer, which contributed to character formation along with the development of Christlike humility to serve best the 6th -12th grade youth ministry. What was found to be noteworthy within the lived experiences of the participants was that the findings of the expressed essential behavioral elements for their effective character development agreed with Brooks's (2015) assertion, "The essential drama of life is the drama to construct character, which is an engraved set of disciplined habits, a settled disposition to do good" (p. 53). Each element, relationships with family, fellowship, worship, the Bible, and prayer, are part of the lived experience, which constituted as being part of the drama of life within the participants in this research study. Further, each participant's willingness to engage in the disciplined habits of their prescribed essential behavioral elements set the course in the ability to build upon their character development in the loneliness environment that was under investigation.

Research conclusion of Research Question 2.

"What are the perspectives, if any, among pastors about using their cultural intelligence for personal character development in order to best serve the 6th -12th grade youth ministry?"

Overall, the participants conveyed not just a deep understanding but a profound empathy for the value of cultural intelligence for personal character development as they serve within the 6th -12th grade youth ministry. The validity of understanding cultural intelligence was the necessary premise for the development of listening, which was a critical aspect of the study. The revealed lived experiences from the participants reiterated Chopra and Rosenberg (2015) assertion to develop active listening "Empathize with silence by listening for the feelings and needs behind it" (p. 124). Even more, each participant persisted that listening to youth stemmed

from the use of cultural intelligence for personal character development. As such, when working within their prescribed loneliness environment, the participants articulated their lived experiences with the development of cultural intelligence and confirmed the previously researched literature along with the statement made by Livermore (2016), "Cultural intelligence allows individuals to adapt their motivations, work ethic, and communication styles while learning from the different value perspectives to create better solutions" (p. 12). In so, the possibility in the case of the premise in the loneliness environment, cultural intelligence for personal character development while obtaining self-awareness of both worldviews of individualists and collectivists, the research expressed that acknowledging the different worldviews in practice may dictate the development of virtuous behaviors. However, as previously discussed, the current literature has not reached a substantial conclusion within a religious environment examining its cultural worldview to determine if a specific worldview dictates the development of virtuous behaviors and further study would be needed.

Moreover, participants described the importance of cultural intelligence for personal character development as the capacity to be self-aware while serving in the youth environment. In so, while becoming self-aware of the individual's worldview from a cultural intelligence perspective for character development, each participant reported lived experiences confirmed the statement in the researched literature made by Hiebert (2008), "Christians must take the worldviews of other people seriously, not because they agree with them, but because they want to understand the people, they serve in order to effectively share with them the good news of the gospel" (p. 69). One significant expression from the participant's reported lived experience was the trait of consistency as a required practice. Although the current research does not express the idea of consistency as part of cultural intelligence for personal character development,

participants did communicate the importance consistency has on their personal character development and in the youth ministry environment. Consistency must be a trait to consider building within the youth pastor to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best. While maintaining consistency, each participant articulated that their ability to increase their cultural intelligence aptitude aided in their development of empathy with the youth environment. As a result, most participants expressed the necessity for accountability, voice control, and tone stemming from cultural intelligence as the necessary concepts of personal character. Confirming Newberg and Waldman (2013) statement, "We can also improve our communication skills by taking advantage of another neuroscientific fact: the slower we speak, the more the listener comprehension will increase. The result is less stress and greater understanding with the least expenditure of words" (p. 60) while best serving in the youth loneliness environment.

Research conclusion of Research Question 3.

"How do the pastors perceive the significance of developing their Gal. 5:22-23 personal Christlike character traits in order to best serve the 6th -12th grade youth ministry?"

Several participants concluded that their ability to develop personal Christlike character traits that are prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 were the standard best to serve the 6th -12th grade youth ministry. Participants expressed the specific aspect of developing each trait in an action-based framework that deemed as the necessary nine traits for practical ministry efforts. As a result, the participants' lived experiences within this study were the conclusion to the assertion made by Thomas Aquinas's virtue theory, which was to be exhibited in a practical way. Austin (2017) expressed, "Aquinas's theological, developmental virtue theory recommends an attentiveness and desire that grows from being act-focused to being also agent-focused, and finally to being

other-focused. What Aquinas proposes, in the end, is an ecstatic virtue theory" (p. 4). The manifestation of action-based, agent-focused, and other focus is showcased within the participant's lived experiences, contributing to the necessary premise to engage culture and develop Christlike character. However, in developing Christlike character as prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23, based on the participant's experiences, the researcher concludes the character is developed by becoming agent-focused (Christ's example), action-based (Gal. 5:22-23 traits), and other focus (youth pupils). In so, daily action-based traits engaged in the building process through activities both personally and professionally, such as the current youth ministry environment context emulated the ideals of Christ's love so that the youth would desire to develop their Christlike character traits. The lived experience of the participants coincided with the statement within the researched literature as discussed; Dörnyei (2022) stated, "Virtue lists were meant to perform such as modeling function" (p. 24). In so, the Gal. 5:22-23 list of character traits as articulated would the lived experience of the participants within this study would be a model for both the pastor and youth to develop in efforts to effectively engage in building rapport between each other while consistently choosing to love.

It is fair to conclude that both the literature and the participant's expressed lived experiences, the aim to develop the character traits of kindness and goodness, listening is the necessary concept for practical application best to serve the 6th -12th grade youth environment as the participants conveyed the appreciation to build upon each trait through habit forming behaviors such as gentleness, self-control, peace, and patience had contributed to the management of conflict within the youth environment. In so, confirming Newberg and Waldman's (2013) statement, "When you learn how to master deep awareness of yourself and others, you are less likely to get caught up in destructive emotional states that can sabotage your

ability to communicate effectively and compassionately with others" (p. 66). Suppose a pastor implements the routine habit-forming behavioral practices in a daily routine it may lead to more significant improvements both personally and professionally while serving the 6th -12th grade youth best. Likewise, confirming the assertion made by Clinton (2018) in the development of a practical skillset, "Ministry skills development offers a twofold: (1) to see the leading of God in each skill learned and to recognize that each is a part of a long-term process of training by God, and (2) to maintain the attitudes of a seeker in order to benefit from learning" (p. 77) while best serving in the youth loneliness environment.

Research conclusion of Research Question 4.

"How do the pastors perceive the impact of their Christlike character development practices for personal sustainability in a 6th -12th grade youth ministry?"

The participants perceived that the impact of their Christlike character development practices was necessary for personal sustainability in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry environment. Many of the participants spoke about the need to maintain their willingness to choose to continue involvement in weekly Bible studies individually and corporately, which fostered building the foundational attributes of Christlike character traits for personal sustainability. As social beings, the context allows for Christlike character development dialogue of ideas, customs, and cultural engagement in and out of the 6th -12th grade youth ministry environment. Although the literature does not reveal the practice of Bible studies for the use of personal sustainability, participants within this study expressed that its use is a vital concept for growth. However, based on this study's population group, it is reasonable to conclude the importance of the study of the Word of God. Although George (2010) expressed, "Crucibles are

the real test of your character and can be transformative experiences that empower you to

reframe your life's meaning" (p. 62), the participants within their lived experiences in the

development of Christlike character practices for personal sustainability, physical fitness was an

added pillar to navigate authenticity within the crucible of youth ministry loneliness

environment. Henceforth, the participants were self-aware of the notion of including physical

fitness as a means for personal sustainability, which supported their personal health practices in

stress management and building Christlike character. Again, this personal sustainability practice

was revealed in the literature, and a fair assumption for the use of a physical fitness routine is

conducive to the youth pastor's mind, body, and soul to minister best, adding to the ongoing

research literature. In so confirming Oswald (2007) statement, "The Christian leaders' mind,

emotions, will, and physical strength all become available for the Spirit to guide and use. Under

the Spirit's control, natural gifts of leadership are lifted to their highest power, sanctified for holy

purpose" (p. 95). Whatever way personal sustainability has been expressed in the research

literature, participants agreed that meditation, relationships, and solitude practices are critical for

the development of the youth pastor's Christlike character. It is fair to conclude that if youth

pastors and ministry leaders alike would fully engage in the development of the Christlike

character traits revealed practices from the participants within this study for personal

sustainability, perhaps efforts may sustain or prevent the necessary decline in attendance along

with ministry burnout within the in 6th -12th grade youth loneliness environment.

Research conclusion of Research Question 5.

"How do pastors perceive that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike

character development efforts have contributed to properly governing their 6th -12th grade youth

ministry?"

Most participants perceived that their cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development efforts had influenced their governing of the 6th -12th grade youth ministry properly. From their cultural perception, several of the participants continue to guide their youth ministry within a democratic model for governance. What was found to be noteworthy was that many of the participants integrated their staff leaders and older youth members to manage the youth environment. However, other participants communicated that during the revealed season of ministry, they are within limits when governing while using a democratic approach. In so, they are governed by a hierarchical method and the notion of the Christian Prince, as revealed in the literature. Even more, it is interesting to note that the limits of the ministry governance in the expressed lived experience confirmed Nowakowski (2021) assertion, "He fulfills rather the role of educator, who, thanks to the power of his moral authority, can elevate people towards himself in the dialogue with them" (p. 107).

Moreover, although the participants shared their experiences of governing collective views based on cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character development, they expressed the possibility of individualist and collective worldviews. Even though ANG and Livermore (2015) shared, "Individualism versus collectivism is, at its core, a difference in identity" (p. 101), participants said that the individualist and collectivist worldviews on governance together are within a biblical worldview. The standard entity to both views was the identity within, which is founded in Christ. Furthermore, within the literature, Plato's ideology that a people group should practice virtue, Mara (2001) stated, "These are not simply the virtues reflective of a homogenous moral community, but rather those that emerge from a critical engagement with cultural norms" (p. 823) confirming the lived experience from the participants within this study. It is interesting to note that the revealed lived experience from the participants

did not convey the structure of a community; as Dreher (2017) asserted, "Communities that are wrapped too tight for fear of impurity will suffocate their members and strangle the joy out of life together" (p. 139). Revealing that the current environment, as expressed by the participants, maintained their outward gospel focus while developing cultural intelligence and personal Christlike character in efforts to properly govern their 6th -12th grade youth ministry while not compromising their biblical worldview. It is important to note that the participants lived experiences could not conclude the governance on the assertion made by Camp (2010), "Allowing every person in a 50-member congregation an opportunity to speak publicly regarding an issue is one thing; allowing every person in a 500-member or 5,000-member church the same privilege is another" (para. 5). In so, further research will be needed and may show the probability of a democratic process for a 6th -12th grade youth loneliness environment if the number of youth attendees surpasses 50.

Implications

Pastors who are willing to personally and professionally grow in their Christlike character traits continue to engage the youth ministry in the loneliness environment. Senior pastors, networks and denominational organizations could provide input to the youth pastor's character development and spiritual growth for those currently working in the loneliness environment. Participants spoke about their lived experiences with the difficulty of navigating the environment while developing Christlike character traits. A significant underpinning was the ability to be held accountable and senior leadership recognition of personal growth while providing the necessary allotted time for sabbaticals to prevent burnout among the youth pastor participants. Participants spoke about the importance of each essential behavioral elements to effectively develop their personal character to serve the 6th -12th grade youth best. Each of the elements was critical to the

foundation contribution of the action-based character traits with cultural intelligence, Christlikeness, personal sustainability, and governing practices.

If youth pastors sought out to develop their cultural Christlike character traits as prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment, a great awareness of the cultural implication and grasp of the behavioral patterns of their youth may provide the necessary grounds for both personal and professional leadership pillars while serving in that environment. Recognizing while intentionally applying cultural intelligence and the traits found in Gal. 5:22-23 could curb the decline of future youth attendance. If efforts to engage the youth to model the youth pastor's character development and equipping them in leadership positions and oversight may be the change required to make an impact, breaking through the youth loneliness environment through the aspect of ownership, teamwork, and interpersonal development.

Applications

The researcher believes that although this study consists of those pastors who are currently serving in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment, the expressed lived experience revealed could be applied across all denominational organizations, church entities and nonprofit organizations. The aspect of cultural intelligence has been viewed within the literature to be a tool for self-awareness into understanding the diverse application of cultural behavioral patterns, symbols, and practices, not a custom to the individual who is in a leadership position based on their personal growth and background lived experiences. For the Christian leader who desires to be engaged in the process of character formation, the results from the reported lived experiences of those participants within this study could provide the necessary groundwork and understanding to implement an action-based routine to apply in the individual lived experiences.

The researcher believes that if the study were conducted to encompass the whole of the eastern United States, the results would not be different; only subthemes may be developed within the major themes revealed. Therefore, the results of this study can be applied to those youth pastors ministering within the 6th-12th grade youth environment. However, the researcher does not believe that the result outcomes should be applied outside the prescribed geographical region that was framed within this study, for the scope was held to this premise. The researcher does not intend to make generalized assumptions about the Christlike character traits that are prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 to all youth pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. Although this study population was participants actively engage in the ministry to the 6th-12th grade youth, they cannot conclusively hold to the idea that the results could be applied to lay persons and other Christian leaders outside the current examined environment context. However, the researcher believes that a framework from the results can be applied. In so, the aspect of the mind, body, and soul approach may provide an apparent consideration in grasping a three-pillar approach in an outline that integrates both cultural intelligence and personal character development for current or new youth pastors to apply to their youth ministry environments, as highlighted in the figure as follows. The figure below was created to provide a visual aid from the reported lived experiences of those within this study and may be utilized for personal character development in the possibility to curb the decline in the youth ministry attendances within the loneliness environment.

Figure 7

Cultural Intelligence and Personal Character Development.

Research Limitations

During this study, several limitations developed as the research moved forward within the investigation process. This study was limited to the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and only consisted of seven total states on the eastern coast. The researcher contacted the local clergy association; however, efforts did not yield any new participants. Other statewide denominational organizations did not provide the necessary information and assistance requested while seeking out participants for this study. Therefore, the researcher only contacted churches with youth ministries that were located for public use. The study consists of a larger body of willing participants from the middle states within the mid-Atlantic region, and the researcher holds to the premise that more participants from the states of New York and New Jersey would have provided a broader perspective within the participants' sample group. However, the researcher does not believe the yielding of new themes would have developed based on this assumption.

Even more, the limitation of this research study was that it was held within the mid-Atlantic region, and the possibility to expand the participant's sample group to all the states located on the eastern coast of the United States may yield a different finding within that geographical region. However, with the difficulty of gaining a diverse sample population of willing participants, it is hard to conclude if the efforts to open it up to that region would bear other themes. Given the population size of the west coast of the United States, other themes may have arisen from that geographical location due to the different cultural implications that may be underpinning that region.

This study was limited to only eighteen Caucasians, two African Americans, and one Korean American. In so during the recruiting phase within the study, the researcher could have found youth pastors within the region area that has a high concentration of youth ministries within the mountain region and metro district in the state of Maryland. The intended goal would have stemmed from the researchers' attempt to develop a more diverse participant sampling based on ministry environments and more significantly different ethnicities. Although the youth pastors within this study provided an array of perspectives on their lived experience, a significant majority were male. The study did have two female participants; however, in efforts to provide different perspectives, more female pastors would have benefited.

Secondly, this research study was delimited to church pastors, and the character development within the sample group that was studied. Although participants were willing to express their lived experiences during the interview process, some chose to explain at lengthen other experiences that were not relevant to the questions or research topic under investigation. There are other areas in the youth ministry environment that youth pastors can develop through

personal and professional growth. However, character formation was the major thrust in the investigation of participants' Christlike traits during this study.

This research study was delimited to examine the loneliness environment phenomenon. Post-COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of mental health-related issues among the youth environment was not examined during this study. Although the participants did not share their lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and ministry efforts, they did express the need to connect with their respected youth demographic from a cultural perspective within the loneliness environment and how they developed character traits.

Lastly, this research study was delimited to examine the youth ministry attendance's sustainability. Although youth pastors can work in organizations outside the church setting environment, the participants in this research study resided within the ecclesiastical entity. Participants were limited to the requirements within the researcher's questionnaire in order to participate as deemed appropriate for the pastoral task and had been evaluated based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and allowed work within a youth ministry framework under the guidelines and policy set forth by respected governed authority and the state-mandated guidelines for the establishment of a 501c3 ecclesiastical non-profit organization. Therefore, a limitation may have risen due to other Christian youth pastors not meeting the questionnaire standard to be a participant in the study. Some willing participants viewed the time required to participate in the interview process as a limiting factor and chose to become non-participants.

Further Research

This qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment and requires further research into the understanding

into the cultural Christlike character development as defined for intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The study managed only to find willing youth pastor participants who are currently ministering in the geographical location of the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Many of the participants, although not as a requirement, were white and married. Perhaps more diversity among the participants' sampling process may reveal different perceptions of their lived experiences while serving the youth population. Even more, the possibility of conducting this research in a different area of the United States may collectively develop a comprehensive indication of the current youth ministry environment and a general perspective of the church at large. Therefore, combining this research study's findings may benefit Christian leaders from other regions on a global scale in understanding the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment.

Within the research study, it has been noted that based on the participant's willingness to express their lived experience in character development, most of them were male and held the position of youth pastor within their ministry framework. Although the study did have only two females willing to provide their lived experiences, the possibility to engage the character formation within the youth pastor framework focusing on youth leaders would provide a different result for a future study if more women provided their lived experiences of character formation within the in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. As the study revealed, the role of women has provided a specific influence on the lived experience of the participants and roles in the church both in home life, leadership, teacher, and other ministry contexts within the environment. In so, by serving alongside their families, husbands as Christian

leaders, teachers, the woman's personal character development may provide a different result of a co-leader perspective within the 6th-12th grade youth ministry. Character development is an ongoing process, and as the times and leadership with the youth ministry continue to change, further study into cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment is warranted.

Summary

Within leadership, character development is found to be the way in which other leaders and followers seek out guidance on how to engage in their lived environments actively. In Christian leadership, this is the same premise for those both in and out of the church ministry context. Even more, the Christian leaders who are called into ministry must emulate Paul's instruction, the example of Christ, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). In the same fashion, Christian character development is a lifelong journey and begins when one is willing to engage in being transformed by the Holy Spirit in an action base habit-forming process. The Apostle Paul expressed the importance of Christian leaders and followers alike to submit to the Holy Spirit and surrender to the progress of character development, " Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:3-5). Therefore, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2).

This study provided an investigation using a qualitative phenomenological research methodology to comprehend the Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. In so, "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love" (2 Pet. 1:5-7). The youth pastor must be willing to stay the course, building their Christlike character development traits as prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 to serve the 6th -12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment best.

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Appendix A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 13, 2023

Linwood Sealey
William Higley

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-90 PASTOR'S CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONAL CHARACTER INFLUENCE WITHIN YOUTH MINISTRIES

Dear Linwood Sealey, William Higley,

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

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

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

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

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

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

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Email

Dear [Recipient]:

As a research student at the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Christian Leadership. The research's intended goal and purpose is a qualitative phenomenological study to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the cultural Christlike character development will be generally defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study are the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry. I am writing to invite you to join my study. Each participant must be 18 or older, a Christian pastor currently ministering to 6th-12th grade youth and have been evaluated based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and allowed work within a youth ministry framework under the guidelines and policy set forth by respected governed authority and the state-mandated guidelines for the establishment of a 501c3 ecclesiastical non-profit organization. Each participant will be asked to complete a questionnaire that should take 10 minutes or less complete and engage in an in-depth audio- and video-recorded interview that will last approximately one and a half hours. To accurately collect the needed data within the study, I will provide the recorded transcript for review for feedback and errors, which will last approximately 90 minutes. Participants will also be asked to review the developing themes from the data collected during the interview and provide critical feedback on the results of the inquiry, which will take approximately 60 minutes. Please note that this study aims to analyze the collected data for themes and descriptions that may arise within the answers provided during each interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential. If willing, please complete the attached questions and sign the attached informed consent document. Upon completion, please send the information and the signed consent back to me via email, and I will contact you to verify that you meet the eligibility requirements, that the information has been completed accurately, and begin the necessary scheduling for the interviews. I am grateful for your time and consideration to engage in this research study. If you know any other pastor who may be willing to participate further to understand their personal character development and youth ministries environment, please forward this email to the respected individual or provide their contact information to me.

Sincerely,
Linwood J. Sealey III, B.S., M.A.C.M.
Doctoral (Ph.D.) Candidate
Cell: ████████████
E-Mail: ████████████

Appendix C

Consent

Title of the Project: Pastor's Cultural Intelligence and Personal Character Influence Within Youth Ministries
Principal Investigator: Linwood J. Sealey III, Doctoral (Ph.D.) Candidate, Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a Christian pastor currently ministering to 6th-12th grade youth. Upon deemed appropriate for the pastoral task, each of you must have been evaluated based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and allowed work within a youth ministry framework under the guidelines and policy set forth by respected governed authority and the state-mandated guidelines for the establishment of a 501c3 ecclesiastical non-profit organization. Participants must be over 18 years of age.

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 my qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the cultural Christlike character development traits prescribed in Gal. 5:22-23 among pastors who serve in the 6th-12th grade youth ministry loneliness environment. At this research stage, the cultural Christlike character development will be generally defined as intentional communication and actions set forth within the framework of the nine traits described in Gal. 5:22-23. The theories guiding this study are the cultural intelligence theory proposed by Livermore and ANG (2015) and the authentic leadership theory by Bennis (2009). They effectively identify the critical importance of cultural implications in pastoral leadership actions and the sustainability of the 6th-12th grade youth ministry.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
1. Complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire should take 10 minutes or less complete.
2. Participate in an audio- and video-recorded interview that will last approximately 90 minutes. Each interview will use Microsoft Teams videoconferencing software. The Microsoft Teams videoconferencing software is free and can be used on a computer with a webcam, laptops, mobile devices, and tablets. Microsoft Teams application allows the researcher to record and transcript the interview and see each other's nonverbal behavior expressions.

3. It will be required for you to review the transcripts of the interview to verify its accuracy for data collection within this study. I have approximated that the necessary timeframe required for this task to be complete is 90 minutes of your time.
4. It will be required for you to review the developing themes developed from the data collected during the interview and provide critical feedback on the results of the inquiry. I have approximated that the required timeframe for this task to be completed in one hour of your time.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

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

Benefits to society include the possibility to contribute a new research artifact to Christian leadership with a primary focus on cultural intelligence and personal character development for future youth ministers.

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. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty sponsor will have access to the documents.

• Participant information and answers will be held confidential with the use of pseudonyms for this study. Interviews will be held in a safe location of the participants choosing and or the use of the Microsoft Teams computer software application where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

• The recordings of all interviews as digital files with the transcription and recording function on the electronic drive will be used. All digital files will be password protected, stored separately on an external hard drive, and placed physically in a secured location. The hard copy and digital data will be kept for the period of three years after the study has been completed. After three years, hard copy and digital data will be deleted and shredded.

• Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years after participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and then deleted. The researcher and members of his doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

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 decide 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 Linwood J. Sealey III, B.S, M.A.C.M. Doctoral (Ph.D.) Candidate at Liberty University's John W. Rawlings School of Divinity. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at ███████████████████████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. William Higley, 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 of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

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

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix D

Participants Questionnaire

1. Are you over 18 years of age?

2. Are you a Christian pastor?

3. Have you been evaluated based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and allowed work within a youth ministry framework under the guidelines and policy set forth by respected governed authority and the state-mandated guidelines for the establishment of a 501c3 ecclesiastical non-profit organization?

4. Do you currently serve in a church in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States?

5. Do you hold a ministerial position within your church or a leadership position?

6. What was your age when beginning your ministry position?

7. Are you currently a full-time vocation or bi-vocation minister?

8. How long have you served in your current leadership position?

9. What is your background in ministry?

10. What is your highest education level?

11. What is your ethnicity and marital status?

12. Have you previously held employment outside of ministry?

13. Are you currently ministering to the 6th-12th grade youth?

14. What is your average attendance at your youth ministry?

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. Would you please describe your Christian influences from childhood?

2. When did you surrender to this pastoral calling in your life?

3. Why did you choose to become a pastor?

4. Why do you live in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States?

5. What is your definition of cultural intelligence?

6. What is your definition of authentic leadership?

7. How can cultural intelligence and authentic leadership effectively build Christlike character traits?

8. What are your essential elements for effective virtue practices while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

9. How did your ministry training develop your cultural Christlike character traits?

10. What is your perception of cultural intelligence?

11. What are your beliefs on cultural Christlike character traits?

12. How do you develop cultural intelligence with personal character traits to best serve the 6th-12th grade youth ministry?

13. How do you currently develop Christlike character traits?

14. What cultural Christlike character traits in Gal. 5:22-23 do you currently practice while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

15. How do you practice the trait of love while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

16. How do you practice the trait of joy while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

17. How do you practice peace while serving 6th-12th grade youth?

18. How do you practice the trait of patience while serving 6th-12th grade youth?

19. How do you practice kindness while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

20. How do you practice the trait of goodness while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

21. How do you practice the trait of faithfulness while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

22. How do you practice the trait of gentleness while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

23. How do you practice self-control while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

24. How do you continue to maintain your youth ministry from declining?

25. What are your personal sustainability practices while serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

26. What is your governing philosophy while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

27. What are your governing practices while serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

28. How will building cultural Christlike character traits prevent the 6th-12th grade youth ministry from declining?

29. How does an individualist's worldview affect governing practices while best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

30. How does a collectivist's worldview affect governing practices best serving the 6th-12th grade youth?

Appendix F

Participant Summaries

Participant 1. Pastor Kelly led a church plant and youth ministry in the rural eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. During this study, he had been ministering to the youth population for 1.6 years. Pastor Kelly is married. His educational foundation encompasses the on-the-job training context and a certificate in ministry. Upon engaging in ministry, pastor Kelly was in a full-time position and oversaw the operations of the new church plant in his area. On average, during this study, the church's youth program had a notable population of youth members ranging from 20 to 25 active weekly participants. Pastor Kelly reported an increased desire to reach the youth population in his area for Christ and build unity among other local church entities.

Participant 2. Pastor Allen led a multicampus youth ministry within the rural eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. A range of twenty miles separated the multicampus youth ministries. During this study, Pastor Allen served as the youth pastor for 13 years. His ministry training background consisted of only a ministerial certificate. Upon his completed training, pastor Allen was placed in the full-time position to oversee the local church's youth program. The weekly attending of the youth ministry program was 60 to 65 pupils engaged in Bible studies and activities. Pastor Allen was married. Pastor Allen reported the importance of building a youth program focusing on character and spiritual development among the local youth population.

Participant 3. Pastor Sean oversaw the youth ministry at his respected church in a city environment in Maryland. His ministry training consisted of on-the-job training and mentorship, and he holds a bachelor's degree from a secular educational institute. Before taking on the pastor

youth ministry position, Pastor Sean was a teacher in the local school system. He was married and has served in his current ministerial position for one year. During this study, the average number of youths in attendance that pastor Sean served was greater than 50 a week. Pastor Sean expressed the importance of culturally understanding the local environment and serving with intent within the youth ministry framework.

      Participant 4. Pastor Elliott was a church planter and youth minister in the suburban local environment in Maryland. Pastor Elliott's ministry training consisted of a master's degree, and he attended two seminary educational institutes. He was married and held different ministerial positions before becoming a church planter and youth minister. During this study, Pastor Elliott has served in the youth ministerial framework for six years. He wanted to serve the local community, adults, and youth, which led him to seek full-time pastoral leadership and church planter positions. Under Pastor Elliott's leadership, the youth population had eight active members. He was married and repeated a growing desire to serve the youth and build cultural intelligence and personal awareness to increase understanding of the differences within subcultural groups.

      Participant 5. Pastor Charles was a youth pastor and currently served in the rural environment in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. He was married and has functioned in the ministerial youth framework position for 1.5 years. Before taking on this position, he was a church pastor consultant and completed his master's degree at a seminary educational institute. During this study, he was in a local bi-vocational ministry position and held a secular job. The weekly attendance size of the youth ministry was 45 pupils. Pastor Charles communicated the need for other pastors to engage their community for Christ and not allow the development of social and economic barriers to exist when reaching the youth today.

Participant 6. Pastor Gray was an active youth pastor who worked in the suburban environment in North Carolina. He was married and performed in various pastoral leadership roles; however, he is the youth pastor in his local church. Pastor Gray continued to serve the local youth for two years. His educational background was a graduate-level master's degree, and he was in a full-time position. The weekly attendance size of the youth ministry was greater than 50 pupils. Pastor Gray's desire among the local youth pastors was to bridge youth programs with the ideology of unity to work together for Christ.

Participant 7. Pastor Will was a bi-vocational youth pastor in the rural area of Pennsylvania. During this study, he ministered to the local population for three years. Before taking on this ministerial position, he worked in various minister positions and as staff at national ministry organizations and camp meetings. Pastor Will was married, and his educational background consisted of on-the-job training and a bachelor's degree. During this study, the youth program that Pastor Will oversaw had a noteworthy youth population of more than 25 pupils in attendance a week. Pastor Will expressed the importance of researching today's youth with the correct information and cultural intelligence to understand their need for Christ.

Participant 8. Pastor Johnny was a bi-vocational youth pastor within the city metro environment in Maryland. During this study, Pastor Johnny led and additionally held a place of employment while ministering to the local youth populations. Pastor Johnny was married and had an educational background in on-the-job training and mentorship and a master's degree. The youth ministry framework's average youth size was 38 from the city environment. Pastor Johnny has served in the youth pastor position for two years. During this study, Pastor Johnny communicated the need for local pastors to come together and understand the environment from an ideological diversity to increased influence while reaching the youth today for Christ.

Participant 9. Pastor Rolling functioned in the bi-vocational youth pastor position within the rural environment in North Carolina. His educational background included a bachelor's degree from a higher education institute focusing on religious studies and on-the-job training. He was married and expressed that his secular job environment was vital to his development as a leader. However, the balance between ministry and work was a challenge. As a pastor, the youth ministry's weekly attendance was 12 pupils. During this study, Pastor Rolling conveyed the desire for future ministry youth leaders to aim to develop Christlike character.

Participant 10. Pastor Aiden served as a youth pastor for 14 years. During this study, he worked in the suburban environment within Virginia, reaching the local community for Christ. He was married and held an advanced master's degree from a secular educational institute of higher education within his residing state. Within the ministerial environment, the weekly youth program attendance that he oversaw was more significant than 250 active youth. Pastor Aiden's ideology of cultural intelligence and character formation development increased over the years as the local population's needs surged.

Participant 11. As a resident of North Carolina, Pastor Samuel served the local youth population within a church youth ministry framework for 6.5 years. As a full-time staff member of his local church, the weekly attendance of youth was 12. He was married and held a bachelor's degree, on-the-job training, and staff development within the church. During this study, Pastor Samuel expressed the need for future cultural intelligence development within the local church through lived experiences and research. In addition, a renewal of unity was fostered among local youth pastors to share Christ within his localized area.

Participant 12. During this study, pastor Sawyer was a full-time youth pastor who oversaw the daily operations of the local church environment. Along with on-the-job training

with his local church, he earned a bachelor's degree and desired lifelong learning. He was married and served the youth population in the state of Virginia. On average, during this study, the youth program that pastor Sawyer oversaw had a noteworthy youth population of 60 pupils in weekly attendance. Pastor Sawyer continued to lead with a desire to reach the youth community for Christ while personally developing his leadership skills.

Participant 13. Pastor Jack had been working with his local youth population for five years. He held a high school diploma and received on-the-job training as a youth pastor. As a youth pastor, the local youth demographic was within the rural environment of West Virginia. During this study, the average youth active population per week was 10. He was married and was a bi-vocational pastor working in the secular workforce. Pastor Jack actively developed his youth ministry and articulated the desire to build unity among other church youth programs to reach a substantial number of youths within his local area.

Participant 14. Pastor Jasper was an inspiring youth pastor who served in the rural environment in West Virginia. He was married and has been actively in his full-time ministerial position for five years. Pastor Jasper held a high school diploma and expressed that his life experiences aided in ministering to today's youth. The weekly attendance within the local church youth ministry that he oversaw was, on average, 25 youth members. Pastor Jasper acknowledged the greater need to develop cultural awareness and Christlike character to show the love of Christ to today's youth.

Participant 15. During this study, Pastor Ava worked in the youth ministry environment for 17 years. She was an active member of other organizations within the community and served in a rural context in the state of North Carolina. She was married and held a master's degree from a religious higher education institute. The youth ministry that she oversaw consisted of an

average of 15 pupils weekly in attendance. Pastor Ava expressed that the content and size of the youth ministry were small, and the efforts made to reach the local youth population with the Gospel did not change. The greater need was to share the love of Christ and build authentic relationships with today's youth.

Participant 16. Pastor Jacob served his local youth population for three years. On average, the number of youths in attendance per week was 30 youth members during this study. Located in the state of Virginia, his youth ministry consisted of a suburban environment. He was married and held a bachelor's degree. His ministerial position as a youth pastor was full-time, and he continued to develop ministering skills with on-the-job training. Pastor Jacob advocated for lifelong learning and developing the need for awareness of Christlike character traits fostered within the youth ministry framework through practical application and serving within the local community.

Participant 17. During this study, Pastor Ace had been an active full-time member and youth pastor within his local church. He was single, held a high school diploma, and participated in the church's ongoing on-the-job training within his ministerial position. As a youth pastor, he continued to serve in the same leadership position for 9.5 years within the suburban environment in North Carolina. Pastor Ace asserted that he had a heart for the broken and those in need of God. He continued to step into leadership roles to fulfill ministerial needs with the local church. The average youth in attendance within the ministry that he oversaw was 45 pupils.

Participant 18. Pastor Max was a full-time youth pastor serving in the rural environment of Pennsylvania. Pastor Max's ministry training consisted of a master's degree from a religious educational institute. He was married and held different ministerial positions before becoming a youth pastor. During this study, Pastor Max served in the youth ministerial framework for 1.3

years. He wanted to serve the local community youth population, which led him to pursue a full-time pastoral leadership position. Under Pastor Max's guidance, the youth population served was, on average, 19 per week. He was married and echoed a growing desire to serve the youth and foster cultural intelligence.

Participant 19. Pastor Archer was functioning in the bi-vocational youth pastor position within Pennsylvania's rural and suburban environment. His educational background consisted of a bachelor's degree from a higher education institute focusing on religious studies and on-the-job training. He was married and expressed that his secular job environment was vital in developing cultural awareness. As pastor of the youth ministry, the weekly attendance was 30 pupils. During this study, Pastor Archer conveyed the desire to train youth leaders in ministry to develop Christlike character and leadership support.

Participant 20. Pastor Aubery was a full-time youth pastor working within both suburban and city environments in West Virginia. As youth pastor, she served in the ministerial leadership position for seven years. Her educational background included a bachelor's degree from a higher education institute and on-the-job training. She was married and expressed that balancing ministry and personal life experiences was sometimes challenging. As youth ministry pastor, average attendance was 35 pupils per week. During this study, Pastor Aubery expressed the importance of serving God and the youth while increasing Christlike character development and building authentic relationships with the youth today.

Participant 21. During this study, Pastor Copper was a full-time youth pastor who worked in the local youth community in the suburban and city environments in the State of New York. His educational background included a master's degree from a higher education institute focusing on religious studies. He was married and stated that he served in the full-time pastoral

position for 1.4 years. Pastor Copper expressed the importance of cultural awareness and literacy in serving the local youth effectively. Literacy was a driving element for cultural and Christlike character development. As youth ministry pastor, the average weekly attendance was 100 pupils. During this study, Pastor Copper reiterated the need to reach today's youth for Christ while developing Christlikeness through practical application.

Participant 22. Pastor Cade was an active member of his local church in New Jersey. As a youth pastor, he served in the city and suburban environmental context for 1.7 years. He was single, held a bachelor's degree from a higher educational institute, and wanted to continue his ministry education and training. The average youth in attendance within his ministry was 20 active youth members a week. Pastor Cade actively trained today's youth for increased involvement in ministry and the local community. Cultural awareness was held in high esteem by Pastor Cade to understand those to whom he ministered. In addition, building genuine relationships with the youth was a critical element for his ministry's success.