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LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN EXAMINATION OF HOW TRAINING IMPACTS THE LEADERSHIP
AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY OF PASTORS OF
NEW BEGINNING FAMILY OF CHURCHES

A Dissertation-in-Praxis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership

by

Christine R. Rudolph

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

Research has concluded that clergy need management and leadership skills to effectively lead the 21st-century church and meet its diverse challenges (Porter, 2014). These leadership skills can be taught and developed through training, mentoring, and modeling. New Beginning Worship Center Family of Churches comprised eight non-denominational churches that experienced various challenges, including membership decline and economic problems. The strategic problem was that these clergy members lacked the skills to address the challenges faced by their churches effectively. There was a need to improve the leadership and management skills of the New Beginning Worship Center pastors to allow them to address the current challenges facing their churches and surrounding communities (Cunningham, 2022; Hillman, 2006). This praxis program determined the impact training had on improving the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Christian Center non-denominational pastors in southcentral Florida as determined by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale (CES), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The theoretical framework used for this study was based on Katz's (1974) leadership skills approach theory, which contends that skills can be developed. The program sought a 75% participation rate of all New Beginning Family of Churches pastors.

Keywords: Leadership skills, management skills, training, church, pastor

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Dedication

First, to my Lord and Savior, I dedicate this dissertation to you as your humble servant. I love you, Father, and pray for your continued guidance in shepherding your people. I also dedicate this to my loved ones who are no longer here to celebrate this accomplishment. They have always loved, encouraged, and supported me. I am grateful for my time with them and am confident they would be proud of me. I miss them each moment, but I take comfort in knowing we will be reunited eternally. I love you, Julius and Dorothy Jean Rudolph (dad and mom); Raymond Earl and Gregory Allen Rudolph (brothers); Pamela Jean and Debra Denise Rudolph (sisters); and Henry James Rudolph (uncle).

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List of Abbreviations

Collaborating Coach (CC)

Collaborating Organization (CO)

Collaborating Team (CT)

Dissertation in Praxis (DiP)

Colossians (Col)

Corinthians (Cor)

Exodus (Ex)

Genesis (Gen)

Jonah (Jon)

Kings (Kgs)

Matthew (Matt)

Psalms (Ps)

Proverbs (Prov)

Romans (Rom)

Timothy (Tim)

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM IN PRAXIS

Introduction

Today's challenges confronting the 21st-century Black church are complex (Graham, 2023; Paul, 2020; Nkonge, 2011). Today, clergy require an array of skills, including leadership and management skills, to address these challenges, improve the effectiveness of their ministry, and improve church outcomes (Smith, 2017; Porter, 2014). Pastors of the non-denominational churches under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches experienced organizational and management challenges related to their churches. These included membership decline, church financial stability, church organization, and even pastoral mental health well-being. The problem was that although they possessed the ability or skills to preach and provide spiritual nourishment to their congregation, the pastors lacked the skills to address challenges effectively.

Further, they needed to receive the necessary training to improve their leadership and management skills. The leader and founder of New Beginnings Family of Churches, Bishop Christopher Stokes, sought strategies to increase the leadership and management competencies of the pastors under his supervision and mentorship. This praxis focused on implementing a training program to enhance the leadership and management skills of the New Beginning Worship Center pastors.

This chapter discusses the strategic problem, objectives, outputs, and outcomes. It also introduces the training program and provides information about the Collaborating Organization's mission, vision, and demographics. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

The Strategic Problem

The purpose of this section is to discuss the strategic problem and provide a discussion of the leadership and training program that was developed. Its contents include the strategic problem and the response to it. Though ministry work is often referred to as a spiritual calling, it is still considered a stressful and demanding vocation for those who elect it (Lee & Rosales, 2020). The pastor wears many hats, plays many roles, and is pulled in many directions in churches of all sizes. Perkins (2021) posits that even when clergy are proficient in biblical and theological knowledge and content, this knowledge is rarely enough to address societal issues or the organizational needs of the church.

The problem was that clergy who pastored churches under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches faced several issues, including declining membership and financial concerns. Yet, they lacked the leadership and management skills to respond effectively to the diverse challenges of their churches. There was a need for leadership and management training to help clergy members develop the skills needed to improve church performance (McClymonts, 2016). This need was also recognized by the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors, who agreed that they required these skills to ensure congregation and church growth (Porter, 2014). The following section discusses the training program to address how these skills were enhanced. It also describes the problem and the program created and discusses its outputs and outcomes.

Program and Response: Program, Process, or Product

Societal shifts and church challenges necessitate clergy being prepared to address these demands successfully (Cunningham, 2022). However, clergy lack the leadership and management skills to respond to their churches' challenges. Hamm and Eagle (2021) note that

more clergy are leaving the ministry unprepared for these demands. This praxis project was necessitated by the need to enhance pastors' leadership and management skills to ensure the church could effectively respond to the challenges of the new millennium.

Developing and implementing a leadership and management training program was proposed as the solution to the problem of inadequate leadership and management skills. The program was constructed on theoretical and real-life experience approaches based on feedback obtained from participants in a study conducted by Porter (2014). The training was expected to improve the leadership and management competencies of pastors who led non-denominational congregations by equipping them with the skills to effectively lead their churches and the community and manage church operations (Duvall & Pinson, 2001; McClymonts, 2016). The following section discusses the nature of the program and the proposed praxis rationale.

Defining Reality: The Current Need

Clergy face many demands and ever-changing pressures that require them to assume different leadership roles in the church (Paul, 2020). They must function in multiple capacities, including as spiritual leaders, counselors, community leaders, teachers, financial managers, worship leaders, and more, because the 21st-century church has changed (Manala, 2010). Today, it is a diverse church comprised of individual parishioners with unique needs. It is a global church with a physical presence in one place but worldwide membership. While the church mission remains the same, society has not (Hillman, 2006).

The contentious and changing landscape of society creates challenges to which the church is expected to respond. While the church has responded to societal challenges such as poverty, racism, sexism, drug abuse, and violence in the past, Paul (2020) argues that the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused new and complex challenges. She notes that the virus's social,

spiritual, and economic effects have caused church closures and decreased attendance (Paul, 2020).

Clergy are confronted with issues such as social injustice, police brutality, mental health, and deepening political and cultural divides that are unlike any seen before (Rhodes, 2020; Stetzer & McDonald, 2020). Pastoral leadership has experienced a shift that has changed from managing people (providing pastoral care) to church management, which involves leading and managing the congregation and its ministries, to identity management, which affects how the church participates in the community and responds to its needs (Barentsen, 2015). Duvall and Pinson (2001) observe that pastors must know how to manage the church's operations in addition to societal needs.

The clergy need strong skills if the church is to retain ministers and effectively respond to societal issues (Masenya & Booyse, 2016). However, the church and the community suffer if leaders are not adequately trained in critical areas. Leadership and management must be of primary concern to the church if they want to retain their pastors and lead successful ministries. Yet, clergy report being unprepared to meet these demands because they lack the leadership and management skills needed to succeed (Smith, 2017). First-time pastors, even those with years of experience, struggle with their pastoral leadership and church organizational responsibilities. In his study, Gorter (2014) found that ordained ministers typically have the most confidence in their preaching, leading worship, and functioning as role models but need to gain skills such as leadership development, conflict engagement, organizational leadership, building community connections, and congregational management.

Pastors who are unprepared to address the challenges confronting their churches and congregations often become overwhelmed, leading to a high attrition rate (Stewart, 2009). A

recent study by Hamm & Eagle (2021) found that 85% of clergy leave the ministry within the first five years, and an astonishing 90% will never retire. Those who remain in ministry may develop poor leadership styles or behaviors detrimental to their church, congregants, and community (Gorter, 2014). Beyond these challenges, pastors of small congregations carry a heavier burden because they typically do not possess the skills, resources, or support needed to effectively meet these expectations or even manage a church or congregation.

Small churches are constantly challenged with membership, money, and survival struggles (Dudley, 2010). This was the case with the churches affiliated with the CO, the New Beginning Family of Churches. It comprised small churches with congregations of less than one hundred members, primarily located in rural areas. Rural church ministry is different, and pastors of rural churches face various stressors resulting from cultural difficulties, conflict with congregations, isolating social boundaries, and economic pressure (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2012). Many pastors are considered bi-vocational and must fulfill other employment obligations. Their churches have limited support, and their smaller congregational sizes mean that the pastor typically works alone. Today, the pastors of these churches report they are in survival mode amid challenges of slight and stagnate congregations, growth difficulty, economic crises, and church organizational challenges. They note that unrealistic expectations are placed on them (Woodruff, 2004), and other challenges necessitate using various management and leadership skills they need to improve. Their affiliation with the New Beginning Family of Churches is an attempt to find support and resources to meet the changing demands of their congregation.

While it is assumed that seminary training is a preparation source, research findings suggest that its programs may not be relevant to today's church and community needs (Cunningham, 2022; Yong, 2020; Chatira & Mwenje, 2018). There is growing debate about

whether seminary training adequately prepares clergy to confront the complexities of the 21st-century church (Cunningham, 2022). For example, in the last few years, churches have faced unique challenges, such as the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic, identifying methods to keep members engaged, and declining church attendance (Paul, 2020). Declining congregations have caused financial instability, with some churches even closing. There are also non-seminary trained clergy that lack both formal educational training and leadership and management skills.

Leadership and management competencies are necessary for both profit and non-profit organizations (Woodruff, 2004). Congregations that desire growth must consider how to increase the leadership skills of their pastor through a training mechanism (Nkonge, 2011). As such, leadership and management preparation to address these challenges is paramount and needed by both seminary-trained and non-seminary-trained clergy to ensure the church's health (Manala, 2010; Chatira & Mwenje, 2018). A study conducted on forced terminations in the Southern Baptist Church found that poor leadership and management skills were the top reasons for termination (Woodruff, 2004). Self-evaluation by clergy confirms that they have greater confidence in their preaching, role modeling, and communication abilities than in their organizational, people, and church management skills. They are also more comfortable performing tasks that allow them to use benevolence, understanding, and kindness versus tasks that require managerial or organizational skills (Gorter, 2014).

Strong leadership and management skills for pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches will allow them to meet their church members' spiritual needs. Rhodes (2020) found that congregants are more comfortable with seeking the church's guidance when confronted with personal challenges. Specifically, leadership and management training will

allow these pastors to perform strategic and operational functions that will contribute to the growth and performance of the church.

Defining a Preferred Future: The Visionary Focus

This section discusses the training program's vision. It presents the proposed praxis project purpose and explains why it was implemented, its theoretical basis, and how it addressed the program. Finally, this section discusses the preferred future developed by implementing this program.

Vision Statement

Pastors under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches possess the leadership and management skills to meet the diverse needs of a 21st-century church and congregation.

Purpose Statement

The complex needs of the 21st-century church require the pastor to possess leadership and management skills to shepherd the congregation and successfully manage and organize the church (Porter, 2014; Manala, 2010; Masenya & Booyse, 2016). Pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches either lacked the necessary skills or required enhancement to improve their leadership and management abilities. To effectively lead their churches, these pastors needed training in leadership and management (Stewart, 2009; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Porter, 2014; Graham, 2023). Clergy's lack of adequate leadership and management skills can lead to church stagnation, pastoral burn-out, and eventual ministry abandonment (Ham & Eagle, 2021; Cunningham, 2022). The purpose of this proposed praxis project was to evaluate the impact training had on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning

Family of Churches non-denominational pastors in southcentral Florida as determined by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale.

Objectives

This study proposed using three types of objectives: process, intermediate, and outcomes. The objectives of this study were based on the need to enhance New Beginning Family of Churches pastors' leadership and management skills. Process objectives were used to provide milestones to help implement the training program effectively. Intermediate objectives were used as a mid-point to assess the progress of the training of the pastors. Outcome objectives reflected the impact the training had on the pastors, congregation, and community (Kettner, Moroney & Martin, 2015). The objectives were:

Objective 1. If we create and develop a quality training program to train pastors, then we can increase their leadership and management skills. If their management and leadership skills increase, then they can effectively address the challenges of their churches. If they effectively address church challenges, then they can improve its financial stability.

Objective 2. If we can convene pastors in one location, then we can conduct an in-person training conference. If we can conduct an in-person training conference, then we can minimize the day-to-day distractions pastors experience. If we can minimize distractions, then we can improve participant focus and increase learning.

Objective 3. If we develop and launch a training website, then we can offer online access to training. If we provide online training access, then pastors will have 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources. If pastors have access to training resources, then it will increase their continuous learning.

Objective 4. If we educate pastors on mental health, then they will increase their mental health knowledge. If they increase their mental health knowledge, then they will develop better mental health coping skills. If they adopt better mental health coping methods, then they will reduce the possibility of pastor burnout.

Outputs

The outputs of the program were related to the objectives. There were four outputs for objective one. The first output represented the total hours of training to be delivered to the

pastors enrolled in the program. The second output was the number of workshops conducted during the training program. The third output was the number of pastors who received training on financial literacy. The fourth output was the number of pastors who completed the training. There were two outputs for objective two. The first output was the development and implementation of a training conference. The second output was the participation rate. The output for objective four was the development of a training website. The output for objective four was the assessment results.

Outcomes

Due to the potential long-term impact of this praxis study, this research considered initial, intermediate, and long-term outcomes (Kettner, Moroney & Martin, 2015) relating to each objective. Therefore, it was the immediate aim of this program to strengthen the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches pastors, specifically Senior Pastors, to enable them to respond to the needs of their congregants and church leadership and management skills to lead their churches effectively. The managerial training was expected to help pastors manage financial demands, ensure the church's economic stability, and reduce the possibility of closure due to financial challenges.

The second expected outcome was that the participant's focus and knowledge acquisition would be increased. Helping pastors to focus increases their ability to learn and grasp information better (Wei, Wang, & Klausner 2012). The third expected outcome was increasing pastors' continuous learning. Continuous learning is necessary for pastoral competency and growth (Carpenter, 2022). It was anticipated that pastors who use the available online resources would continue to increase their knowledge and skills. The fourth expected outcome was that

pastors would improve their mental health knowledge. The following section discusses the Collaborating Organization.

The Collaborating Organization, Team, and Coach

Organizational Description, Mission, Vision

This section provides information on the proposed Collaborative Organization, also called the CO. It provides an organizational description that includes its mission and vision. It also discusses where the training program will be implemented. Relevant political and social demographics are discussed to place the problem in a broader context.

Organizational Description

The CO was the New Beginning Christian Worship Center. The New Beginning Christian Worship Center is a non-profit religious organization with a church and community center. The church is non-denominational, with a congregational membership of approximately 150 members, and is in Micanopy, Florida. Its “congregation is made up of families of all ages who share a unique blend of Christian service” (The New Beginning Christian Worship Center, n.d.). The church is a “very loving caring congregation that strongly believes in reaching out beyond themselves to spread and apply the gospel of Jesus Christ” (The New Beginning Christian Worship Center, n.d.). The church’s Senior Pastor and founder is Bishop Christopher Stokes. The church opened its doors in 2013.

The church also operates the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center. It is a nonprofit organization located across the street from the church in Micanopy, Florida, and is part of the New Beginning Christian Worship Center. It was named in honor of Bishop Christopher Stokes’s mother and seeks to serve the church and the surrounding community of Alachua County. Its mission is to “educate youth and strengthen our communities. We aim to accomplish

this mission by building a bridge between school, community, and parent engagement, and partnerships that aid in the health and well-being of families in Alachua County and the surrounding communities” (Willie Mae Stokes Community Center, n.d.).

Bishop Stokes and his church provide oversight and leadership to a group of non-denominational churches informally called the New Beginning Family of Churches. The New Beginning Family of Churches consisted of seven churches in southern and central Florida with congregations of less than 100 members. These non-denominational churches are not affiliated with a specific denomination, set of doctrines, or beliefs. Instead, these churches identify with the Bible and are led by a Senior Pastor or elder. The training program was provided to the pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches.

While each church has its mission, the New Beginning Family of Churches has not developed a mission statement yet and has adopted the mission and vision of The New Beginning Christian Worship Center. Their affiliation with this group is self-selected, and there is no fee or cost associated with joining the New Beginning Family of Churches. However, there must be a mutual agreement between Bishop Stokes and the interested church to work together.

Non-denominational churches originated from the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement during the 18th Century, which sought to remove labels that separated Christians based on doctrinal differences, opinions, or customs (Deibert, 2018). Since a primary difference of a non-denominational church is its lack of governance and defined oversights, the churches are voluntarily under the guidance of “Bishop Stokes to gain spiritual covering and mentorship” (B. Lawton, personal communication, September 30, 2024). Bishop Stokes and his church provide oversight, support, training, and resources to each church. Bishop Stokes believes that developing the leadership and management skills of the pastors affiliated with the New

Beginnings Family of Churches will enable them to address the problems confronting their specific communities and churches (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 21, 2024).

Organizational Mission Statement

The mission statement of the New Beginning Christian Worship Center is “to advance the kingdom of God by preaching to the lost and restoring the brokenhearted and reviving the body of Christ, thus changing the what we do church” (The New Beginning Christian Worship Center, n.d.).

Organizational Vision Statement

The vision statement of the New Beginning Christian Worship Center is “to be a multicultural ministry proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through powerful praise and worship and anointed preaching and teaching the Word of God and evangelize the city of God. To reach the unsaved in our families, community, and the world with the Word of God, to compel the people that they too can be healed, be delivered, and be set free” (The New Beginning Christian Worship Center, n.d.).

Organizational Setting and Demographics

This section discusses the specific setting where the praxis project was implemented. It includes relevant information related to the church and demographic information that reflects the political, economic, and social environment of the community where the training occurred.

Organizational Setting

The leadership and management training program was proposed to be administered in person and virtually. The in-person component occurred at the Willie Mae Community Center on the church campus at 355 NW Eestalustee, Micanopy, FL 32667. The community center aims to serve both members of the church and the local community, with an emphasis on youth. Bishop

Stokes serves as the community center's Executive Director, but the center is staffed exclusively by volunteers. The center offers educational, youth development, literacy and computer programs, family programs, and youth employment services.

The vision for the community center resulted from Bishop Stokes's previous work at the Gainesville Job Corps Center. Once the Job Corps program shut down, the church took control of the abandoned trailer that had been sitting for four years. "Bishop Stokes originally planned to transform it into a dining hall for the members, but he changed his mind. He's not exactly sure why, but he decided a community center was more in line with the church's goals" (Bauer, n.d.). The community center was appropriate for the training because it had a training space, internet access, and other equipment to facilitate training sessions.

It was initially proposed that the program be implemented virtually using Zoom. Zoom is "a communications platform that allows users to connect with video, audio, phone, and chat. Using Zoom requires an internet connection and a supported device" (What Is Zoom Video Conferencing, n.d.). However, the virtual and online components were not implemented due to low registration.

Organizational Demographics

The Willie Mae Stokes Community Center is in Micanopy, Florida. Micanopy is a rural community about 10 miles south of Gainesville, Florida. The city was named after an Indian chief and settled in 1821. It is a small town with approximately 669 residents. (Town of Micanopy, n.d.). It has been recognized by the Huffington Post as one of the 12 cutest towns (PureWow, 2017). The city's racial makeup is 82% White, 8.24% African American, no Native Americans or Asian, 2.11 % from other races, and 6.70 % from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2.0 % of the population (Census Reporter, n.d.). The

median age of Micanopy residents is 43, and the median income of residents is \$54,219. Over 8% of the residents in the city were below the poverty line (Data USA, n.d.). The leading employment industries in the city are construction, health care, and social services (Data USA, n.d.).

Like many cities in America, the town of Micanopy has a history of racial injustice, discrimination, and lynching (Swirko, 2020). Those issues continued as allegations of police brutality, homophobia, and KKK infiltration into law enforcement plagued the community (Dearen, 2023; Lemnus, 2023). There were also alleged attacks against a gay business owner, which resulted in the closure of his business (Harrell, 2023). Though these were issues outside of the church, they affected members of the New Beginning Christian Worship Center and their community. As such, the church and clergy leadership needed to find ways to deal with those issues. Paul (2020) notes that the church and clergy are called to respond to many external and internal challenges, including social injustice, racism, the COVID-19 Pandemic, violence, mental health, financial instability, pastoral misbehavior, technology changes, social media, and more. Yet, unlike problems in the past, these issues are beyond the boundaries of the normal challenges communities have faced and require clergy to have the proper leadership skills to address them (Rhodes, 2020).

Organizational Leadership and Collaborative Team

This section describes the CO's leadership and discusses its philosophy and structure. It also discusses the Collaborative Team and explains the selection criteria and its role in the program. Finally, it introduces and provides background information on the Collaborative Coach.

Organizational Leadership

The New Beginning Christian Worship Center is a non-denominational religious organization independent of any denomination affiliation. It is a self-governing entity, believing the Bible guides its leadership approach, philosophy, and overall organizational structure (Turley, 2023). As such, its leadership structure is informal. The church relies on the Bible to guide it and is more focused on roles and less focused on a leadership structure. The church believes that anyone who desires to be used in kingdom work can be active in the church and is encouraged to come forward (C. Stokes, personal communication, October 8, 2022). Their desire to be Christ-like is primary and above anointing, skill, or gifting. This includes their perspective on women clergy. A uniqueness of this church is its emphasis on developing and ordaining women clergy and helping to improve their leadership skills (C. Stokes, personal communication, October 8, 2022). Four women clergy are actively involved with the New Beginning Family of Churches.

The Senior Pastor, Christopher Stokes, leads the New Beginning Christian Worship church. Bishop Stokes is a veteran of the United States Army. He attended Liberty University, majored in Biblical Studies, and completed his bachelor's degree in criminology from the University of Maryland College Park. The Senior Pastor's position is the highest in the church and is the only paid full-time position. It is responsible for the church and congregation's overall leadership, direction, management, oversight, and spiritual care. Specifically, this includes vision, team building, financial management, spiritual modeling, preaching, and teaching (Tenny-Brittian, n.d.). The church's Senior Pastor has held this role since its inception in 2013. This is a strength because of the increasingly high numbers of full-time pastors who leave the

ministry due to burnout, stress, or isolation (Barna Group, 2023). Further, his longevity provides a familiarity with the leadership and management challenges of the pastors under his guidance.

The key roles in the church are elder and deacon. There are four elders and three deacons currently serving in the church. Elders are synonymous with pastors. The church's use of elders is based on its emphasis on church community over church hierarchy (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 11, 2023). These elders work closely with the Senior Pastor and are responsible for teaching, preaching, and assisting with ministering to the congregation and community. The Senior Pastor ordains elders at this church, and their qualifications are based on the expectations of an elder found in Titus 1:6-9.

Bishop Stokes also clearly believes that only God can ordain individuals because only God calls them. His ordination efforts are a recognition of this call placed on their life (C. Stokes, personal communication, November 4, 2022). The deacons of the church work closely with the elders. They are responsible for assisting in caring for the members, teaching, and ministering within the community. Like elders, the church relies on the biblical qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 to define its expectations and guide its selection of deacons (C. Stokes, personal communication, November 4, 2022).

Collaborating Team

The Collaborating Team, also called the CT, consisted of two members. They were chosen because they agreed they had time to commit to this endeavor, a critical criterion for any team member. It was observed that the pastors affiliated with this organization were bi-vocational and split their time between a full-time job and pastoring a church. Therefore, their time was limited.

This may explain why the researcher experienced challenges gathering data or information necessary to write the dissertation. One challenge was getting phone calls returned promptly. However, these two clergies were anticipated to help address that problem because they had relationships with the other church pastors. As such, availability and accessibility were two essential criteria that collaboration team members needed.

Another important consideration in the initial identification of these two members was that the researcher had worked with them on a previous project, and they had proven to be dependable and accessible. Further, they maintained a close working relationship with Bishop Stokes and understood the church's problems. They could also provide information that was needed about the organization and other pastors, and both had earned the trust of Bishop Stokes (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 9, 2022).

Finally, their identification as clergy and, specifically, their current work as pastors and elders in the New Beginning Christian Worship Center provided insight into the leadership and management challenges confronting both pastors and congregations, such as the declining congregation and church financial problems. This was considered a benefit and an important selection criterion because of the specific challenges that clergy members face. Understanding those challenges from the perspective of the pastors that are affected was useful in developing a training approach that was realistic and practical for the clergy of New Beginning Christian Worship Center. Additionally, both demonstrated an interest in addressing some of the problems that confronted the pastors of this organization, as well as a willingness to provide information and assist as needed.

A key responsibility of the CT members was to liaise between the researcher and the pastors. This meant they would answer questions, provide program information, and help

coordinate the pastors' attendance and participation in training sessions. An initial task of the CT members was to assist in identifying pastors for involvement in the training since the training was voluntary. They also aided in gathering or providing any needed information about the organization. The team members assisted in designing or developing the training, including selecting training topics and tools. Most importantly, the team members provided support, guidance, and prayer to ensure the successful implementation of the training program. Due to distance, the researcher interfaced with the CT members primarily through Zoom video meetings, conference calls, email, and text.

Collaborating Coach

The Collaborating Coach, also called the CC, was Bishop Christopher Stokes. Bishop Stokes is an ordained and licensed minister and a bishop. Bishop Stokes was chosen as the CC because he is the founder of the New Beginning Christian Worship Center and a lifelong resident of the church community in Micanopy. His leadership role in the church provides insight, access, and authority critical to successfully implementing the training program. He also has a solid grasp of the needs of the church, the pastors who serve under him, and the community (Patterson, 2023). He is strongly invested in developing resources for all three, as he has demonstrated through implementing several programs, including a service center for children and families, creating an athletic association for children, and food aways for the community (Patterson, 2023).

Bishop Stokes' background and personal story were also valuable in his role as the CC. As a cancer survivor and a parent of a child killed in a four-wheeler accident, he is invested in finding solutions for the problems of the community and for the pastors he leads. He has been recognized as an advocate who cares about the people and is a trusted leader of the community

(Patterson, 2023). As Bishop, he “holds important roles in civic society, acting as the point of contact between secular authorities and the church. He often exercises moral authority far beyond his church, acting as a leader and beacon in the local community” (Wilson, 2023). His ability to attain the recognition of Bishop is a testament to his longevity in the ministry and his commitment to guiding and nurturing others. He also identified the need to improve the leadership and management skills of the pastors he mentors and provided better insight into the problem.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One provided an overview of the study and introduced the problem of inadequate leadership and management skills of the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors to address the problems that confronted their churches and congregants effectively. It discussed developing a training program to enhance these skills and outlined the program’s vision, intended objectives, outputs, and objectives. It introduced the CO as the New Beginning Christian Worship Center in Micanopy, Florida, the CC as Bishop Stokes, the CT, and the organizational description, mission, and vision. It provided information on the organization's political, social, and economic background to understand the problem better. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on pastors' leadership and management skills.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The twenty-first-century church as an organization and spiritual entity (Andrews & Roller, 2011) faces many challenges that require pastors to develop and master leadership and management skills related to both elements (Porter, 2014). The strategic problem of this research is the lack of leadership and management skills of the pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches, as suggested by Bishop Stokes, the CC (C Stokes, personal communication, September 21, 2023). To support this contention, he points to the challenges facing these churches, including declining membership, stagnating church growth, member retention, and financial stability (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 21, 2023). This study will aim to develop a training program and explore its impact on increasing pastoral leadership and management skills competency, leading to improved church performance.

This chapter begins the literature review relevant to the research problem by establishing the framework of this study. The first part of the chapter includes a discussion of the biblical and theological framework. This incorporates biblical mandates and their principles to help provide the rationale and justification for the research study. Next, the theoretical framework and various theories are reviewed, then the thematic framework is examined. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

Biblical and Theological Framework

Leadership and management competency are not fleeting secular ideas or notions but constants throughout Scripture with solid biblical and theological anchoring. This study's biblical and theological framework was built on the premise that God is the only source of truth and that the Bible, as His Word, can aid in understanding leadership and management principles and

skills. Scripture also guided the development of the leadership and management training program for pastors, which was built upon a solid biblical foundation that is Christ-centered and theologically informed (Estep, Anthony & Allison, 2008).

This framework was based on biblical themes that provided a comprehensive understanding of Christ-centered leadership, such as the biblical metaphors of the servant, shepherd, and steward. Multiple Scriptures cited throughout this section supported the principles of leadership, skills, competency, and training by understanding these concepts and establishing their mandates for leaders, specifically pastors. For example, 1 Timothy 3:4-5 was cited as a primary mandate of specific management skills for pastors to ensure their competency (*New King James Bible*, 1982/2004). Similarly, the *imago Dei* (image of God) was presented as a primary theme that informed the foundation of the study of leadership.

Biblical Imperatives and Principles

Biblical mandates are authoritative commands or instructions on God's expectations that require believers to follow them (Brogden, 2021). The Bible establishes several imperatives that guided this study, which were discussed in this section to demonstrate support for developing leadership and management skills in pastors. These included the authority of Scripture and the authority to lead. Further, the expectation that leaders possess skills and competency was explored as critical elements of leadership development.

Authority of Scripture

The Bible is an inexhaustible source of information, and Scripture is the truth of God, God-breathed, and has divine authority (Powlinson, 2007; Estep, Anthony & Allison, 2008). It is accurate, credible, and believable and is considered infallible and inerrant (Pro 30:5; Ps 12:6, 119:89; Matt 40:35). The biblical mandate for using Scripture as the foundation of this study is

found in 2 Timothy 3:16, which proclaims that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It is the basis of understanding biblical leadership and identifying leadership skills and convictions needed to ensure the competency of pastors (MacArthur, 2005). Titus 1:9 states that an elder must be "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

Howell (2003) considers the Bible's lessons about leadership as still relevant to guide Christian behavior today. While he acknowledges that the Bible should not be seen as a textbook on leadership, it provides a theology of leadership through its precepts and principles. Further, he maintains that the leader's behavior and style are determined by whether his or her character, motive, and agenda are aligned with biblical truth. Ajayi (2018) asserts that pastoral leadership originates in Scripture and must be dictated by Scripture. As a leader, the pastor must speak, teach, and promote Scripture as the pure voice of God, without distortion, being convinced of its authority (Hanna, 2006). Further, it guided the development and instruction of the proposed leadership and management training program curriculum for pastors.

Biblical Authority to Lead

Though the mandate to lead was given to humans when God gave them the authority to rule over every living creature in Genesis 1:26, 28, it is subordinate since absolute authority belongs to God alone, as Jesus acknowledges in Matthew 28:1. Leaders operate under the invested authority of God, without enforcement power over their followers (Hanna, 2006). This is made clear in Scripture as it distinguishes between spiritual authority and the authority of magistrates. While Paul speaks to the right and power to enforce obedience, considered magistrate authority in Romans 13, Peter speaks to the leader's responsibility to serve God's

people for purposes as God dictates in 1 Peter 5. Nelson (2002) would agree with the magistrate perspective that leadership is based on power, manipulation, and force, while Northouse (2016) would agree with the spiritual perspective, reasoning that transformational and servant-type leadership approaches are atypical of the leader-follower power structures because they do not rely on force.

Pastoral Competency

There was concern regarding the competency of the pastors of this study to manage their churches and meet the needs of their congregations (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 21, 2023). This was not based solely on the administrative issues within their churches. However, it also pertained to their ability to address the external problems that confronted their congregational communities, including police brutality, racism, and discrimination. Carpenter (2022) suggests that without pastoral competency and effective leadership, the church cannot effectively respond to the problems its congregations face.

Pastoral competency is a set of skills pastors need, complemented by Christ-like characteristics (Carpenter, 2022). The type of competencies necessary for effective pastoral leadership vary. Malphurs and Mancini (2004) propose that the Christian leader must develop four key competencies: being, knowing, doing, and feeling. In contrast, Geiger and Peck (2016) identify seven competency areas, including theological and spiritual development, strategy, collaboration, people development, vision development and articulation, stewardship, and ministry-specific competencies. Thoman (2009) sets forth the idea that leaders should focus on cultivating Christlikeness by emphasizing "head, heart, and hands" competencies (pp. 285-286). Laniak (2001) maintains that the Bible provides many examples of competencies leaders should

possess. They are not limited to spiritual leadership but apply to the ability to govern, perform administrative tasks, and be a proficient military leader (Laniak, 2006).

Biblical Support for Leadership Development and Pastoral Competency

The development of leaders in the church is essential. Geiger and Peck (2016) submit that the local church should be the "leadership locus" by developing leaders for both the church and the community. The stories of biblical leaders also establish the importance of leader development (Carpenter, 2022). The Old Testament portrays the training of Joseph in Potiphar's house (Gen 39:1-5), the tutelage of Elisha under Elijah (1 Kgs 19:19-21), and Moses in the house of Pharaoh (Exo 2:19). Additionally, Jesus nurtures and forms the character, faith, and leadership of His disciples in the New Testament. Primarily, Jesus trained the disciples and prepared them for their mission. Moon (2009) characterizes their relationship as apprentice masters in which training and skills development occur on the job. Leadership development is fundamental to pastoral growth because it involves acquiring skills and building competency (Carpenter, 2022).

Generally, the idea of competency for all believers is implied in Colossians 3:23, which impresses upon the believer to do all things well. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man." A similar principle is expressed in 2 Timothy 2:15, which encourages the believer to "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved." Several biblical texts provide examples of leadership development. Carpenter (2022) maintains that Matthew 28:18-20 provides pastoral competency's most vital theological foundation. The verses in this Scripture address the Great Commission that Jesus gave to His disciples and speak to the competencies needed for their ministry. Competencies such as teaching, team building, guiding, service, spiritual vitality, and commitment can be gleaned from this Scripture. Blanchard and Hodges (2003) point out that Mark 1 demonstrates the outcome of leader

competency after preparation and development are complete. Throughout the ministry of Christ, He provided close supervision of the disciples, and their commissioning served as a graduation and affirmation of their skill development (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003).

The Gospel of Matthew also establishes other competencies for pastors, as exhibited by Jesus's behavior and style (Carpenter, 2022). For example, Jesus demonstrated conflict resolution skills, patience, and calm temperament by addressing the Pharisees (Luk 20:20-26) and handling Judas's betrayal (Matt 26: 20-25, 50). He showed leaders could rise above temptation and continually forgive (Matt 6:14). Most importantly, Jesus exemplified service, the cornerstone of servant leadership (Howell, 2003) and guided effective pastoral leadership. The biblical support for leadership development can also be established in 1 Timothy 1:2 based on the guidance, mentoring, and training that Paul provided to Timothy (Lawless, 2012).

Biblical and Theological Themes

The Bible is ripe with biblical and theological themes that are interwoven throughout its text and demonstrate consistency and continuity in its principles and concepts. Biblical themes also help to strengthen the understanding of Scripture by showing an alignment of thought. Themes such as the shepherd, servant, and steward help extract developmental principles for the 21st-century leader and are discussed concerning pastoral leadership. They provide a scriptural basis of character traits, skills, and attitudes necessary for Godly leadership in the church today (Boaheng, 2021). These themes present the common threads of dependence, sacrifice, and service that align to build a solid construct for Christ-centered servant leadership based on the image of God.

The imago Dei (image of God)

The *imago dei* (image of God) is a critical doctrine related to humanity's nature and purpose and is central to biblical theology (Martinez, 2023). As described in Genesis 1:26-27, Scripture reveals that God created humans, who are bearers of His image and likeness (Kilner, 2015). While most leadership theories are secular and divorced from biblical concepts, there are connections between certain leadership principles and this doctrine (Martinez, 2023). Specifically, it is argued that "the fundamental nature of leadership reflects the fundamental nature of the *imago dei*" (Martinez, 2023). For example, leadership theories that focus on leader traits, relationships, and production match closely with the major perspectives of the *imago dei*, including relational, functional, and substantive.

Therefore, as a starting point to grasping leadership, leader competency, and behavior, Christian leaders should understand God's character and how His image is reflected in their style (Martinez, 2023). Christian leaders must recognize that the basis of their leadership is through the example of Christ as a servant leader who is the image of God (Kilner, 2015). The theological underpinning of this research study was that servant leadership is the central characteristic of the Christian leader (Howell, 2003), and Jesus Christ is the image of the ideal leader and central to the leader's identity (Martinez, 2023). This understanding supported the premise that pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches are servant leaders who must possess the competency and skills to shepherd God's flock effectively.

Further, the image of God concept was relevant to this study by understanding the substantive perspective, which spoke to the trait or attributes view that as image bearers, God has instilled certain traits, attributes, and characteristics in humans (Martinez, 2023). Kilner (2015) argues that this is a nonbiblical view and would staunchly oppose it based on its past misuse to

support discrimination, oppression, and deficiency. However, it aligns with various leadership theories which argue that successful leaders share common traits (Northouse, 2016). As individuals created in the image of God, while we must recognize the differences between the Creator and the created, we also embrace Godly traits and characteristics. Attributes of God such as fairness and justice (Acts 10:34; Mic 6:8), intelligence (Rom 11:33; Ps 147:5; Job 32:10-12), efficiency and order (Gen 1; Col 3:2; Tim 4:1-5) are reflected in humans and can help leaders to be competent and effective.

Church Management

The financial instability of their church was one of the primary challenges facing the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors. Church management requires pastors to use various leadership and management skills across many functions and contexts (Mckenna, Yost, & Boyd, 2007). It is defined as adequately appropriating people, material, and spiritual resources to accomplish God's purpose (Boaheng, 2021). Its importance to the effective leadership of pastors cannot be overstated since they are entrusted with the wise management of the church's resources (Manala, 2010) to further God's will and Kingdom plans. The Scripture of Genesis 1:28, Matthew 24:45, and Timothy 3:5 are cited as laying the foundation for creating this definition and establishing its biblical roots (Boaheng, 2021). However, other references demonstrate a solid biblical basis for church management and the theological principles that support it (Manala, 2010).

Biblical and Theological Basis. Boaheng (2021) argues that the first message God gave to man in Genesis 1:28 regarding fruitfulness, multiplication, and dominion was related to management. Further, it is noted that the words *manage* and *household* are used together in Matthew 24:45 and Timothy 3:5, establishing a base for church management. The words and

concepts related to *planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and evaluating* are also found throughout the Bible and imply management (Boaheng, 2021). For example, planning and organization can be traced back to the creation events recorded in Genesis 1-2, which record how God designed and purposefully created life with attention to the smallest detail. Anthony and Estep (2005) note that the division of the tribes of Israel suggests God's desire for organizational structure. Without a doubt, God's statement in Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm, plans to give you hope and a future," confirms that planning is foundational to His divine actions.

Stewardship is a primary principle related to church management (Boaheng, 2021). Asante (1999) argues that they are inseparable from the perspective of resources, management, and accountability. Stewardship is not just the careful management of resources but a recognition that everything belongs to God (Wilson, 2016). The psalmist states, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein" (Ps 24:1). This recognition helps to create accountability in the leader for all that has been entrusted (Wilson, 2016). The principle of stewardship is established in 1 Corinthians 4:2, which declares, "Moreover it is required as stewards, that a man be found faithful." Jesus also emphasized good stewardship and accountability of resources (Wimberly, 2010). This is displayed in the parables of talents found in Matthew 25:14, where the responsibility to use the resources given by God wisely is stressed. The notion of faithfulness as stewards who are servants of God is further emphasized in First Corinthians 4:1-2.

The Apostle Paul uses the steward metaphor to discuss how the church's assets are managed. Its basic meaning consistently conveys the idea of ruling over someone else's possessions or resources (Boaheng, 2021). However, the implication is evident throughout

Scripture that the steward is to manage resources prudently in the successful execution of God's mission (Wright, 2004). Anthony and Estep (2005) conclude that pastors must act as good stewards by efficiently administering the work of the ministry.

Church Management and the Pastor. Anthony and Estep (2005) view church management as a ministry, explaining that it is "primarily for the redemptive ministry of the faith community" (p. 45). Though many pastors believe that preaching is their primary function in the church, it is only effective when balanced with other responsibilities such as administration, discipleship, and management. Developing the skills of the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors in this area was an essential need since studies have shown that most lack management education to lead their church and feel ill-prepared to do so effectively (Porter, 2014). Also, ineffective management of church resources can result in a loss of trust in church leaders and create feelings of contempt among congregational members (Anthony & Estep, 2005).

Biblical Leadership

Leadership, in general, is defined in multiple ways. Kouzes and Posner (1995) describe it as mobilizing others to participate in a struggle for shared aspirations. In their summation, extraordinary leaders have five behaviors in common, including modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Yukl (2010) explains it as influencing others to gain consensus on what needs to be done. Northouse (2016) proposes that it is influencing a group to achieve a common goal. Each of these definitions shares the commonalities of process and influence.

Leadership is a constant theme throughout the Bible, and though it also includes the elements of process and influence, it is different. Howell (2003) finds that when traced throughout Scripture, a pattern of servanthood distinguishes it from other forms of secular

leadership. As such, he defines it as enthusiastically seizing the opportunity to help people develop holiness and promote the Kingdom of God in the world (Howell, 2003). This is the essence of spiritual leadership. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) suggest that it is built on the leader's ability to move people onto God's agenda.

Spiritual leadership is not based on the followers' use of force or coercion. Still, it is done through sacrifice that often carries a significant burden, as demonstrated in Christ's suffering and death (Laniak, 2006). Though Maxwell (2011) would contend that individuals have a right to lead, God has called the pastor through the Holy Spirit to shepherd the people who represent His flock (Jer 3:15) and lead as servants (Greenleaf, 1977; Blanchard & Hodges, 2005). Oludele (2011) characterizes pastoral leadership as "the art of spiritually combining ideas, people, things, time, leadership and faith to achieve predetermined objectives" (p. 85). The New Beginning Family of Churches pastors are considered spiritual leaders who are required to provide guidance and leadership of their church and are entrusted to act as stewards in managing its resources.

The Pastor as Shepherd. The shepherd metaphor is a powerful theme attached to leadership in the Bible and can be found in various locations (Laniak, 2006). It is seen in both the Old and New Testaments, providing language that presents a comprehensive view of Godly leadership and specific descriptions of leader qualities and responsibilities. According to the New Testament in 1 Peter 5:1-2, church leaders must lead as shepherds. Manala (2010) notes that *shepherd* is synonymous with pastor, and Hughes (2015) maintains that pastors use shepherding leadership when leading the church. Paul further emphasizes this point when he encourages the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-31 to act as shepherd leaders of their congregations. Shepherding has been identified as foundational to pastoral leadership and necessary for church

growth (Tara, 2020). Laniak (2001) contends that the shepherd motif provides several competencies that pastors should possess. For example, by the nature of their job, shepherds possessed diverse skills and traits, including bravery, compassion, attentiveness, adaptability, and versatility. The shepherd motif has found the pastor to be both a leader and manager at times (Manala, 2010). Recent exegetical analysis of this motif suggests that it helps pastors evaluate their ministry's effectiveness (Schwenk, 2020). The pervasive use of the shepherding motif throughout the Bible allows it to serve as a foundational theme in developing and comprehending a biblical theology of pastoral leadership and skills expectation for the pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches.

The Pastor as Servant. The biblical motif of a servant is an exalted term used to identify with the mission and suffering of Christ and as the language of choice to express honor and dignity for leaders whom God used to accomplish His Kingdom's purposes in the world (Howell, 2003). It provides a biblical theology of leadership and is fundamental to understanding pastoral leadership (Howell, 2003). Pastoral leaders are to serve as servants and act as slaves in complete submission to the will of God, as Jesus' leadership style demonstrates (Harris, 1999).

The biblical mandate for servant leadership was established in Matthew 20:26, which proclaims, "Whoever intends to be a leader should be a servant." Howell (2003) notes, "Those who stand in Scripture as leaders are designated, first of all, 'servants of the Lord.' The unfolding record of those individuals that God uses to further His saving purposes in the world demonstrates what we call a servanthood pattern of leadership" (p. 4). This is demonstrated by the actions of Christ throughout the New Testament. The servant leadership approach provides the best model for effective pastoral leadership in the 21st Century (Howell, 2003), as both

management and leadership concepts are connected to servanthood (Anthony & Estep, 2005).

The following section will discuss the theoretical framework.

The theory of servant leadership was first proposed by Greenleaf (1977) in his groundbreaking 1970 essay, which concluded that serving is the leader's highest priority. However, Greenleaf's model was not based on the Bible but on Herman Hesse's work, *The Journey to the East* (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf's model also related that the servant leader places the needs of followers above his own. Since then, scholars have attempted to define the term more specifically. In recent years, Blanchard and Hodges (2005) have expanded on servant leadership, positing that it includes both vision/direction and implementation. They find that a mindset and behavioral skills are needed for leaders and management success.

Theoretical Framework

This section introduces the theoretical framework that laid a solid foundation for understanding the dynamics of pastoral leadership and management skills development and training. Combining ideas from organizational theory and leadership created a road map for comprehending how specific training on management and leadership skills might improve the pastors' ability to navigate the difficulties of their modern churches (Porter, 2014). The servant leadership and skills theories anchored this framework based on the assumption that a combination of skills and character of the pastor contribute to pastoral competence (Mueller, 2018). Further, a comprehensive understanding of organizational leadership and effectiveness was provided by integrating trait theory and transformational leadership to form a situational approach to pastoral leadership. According to this paradigm, pastors must constantly learn new skills and adopt a variety of leadership philosophies to respond to the uniqueness of their environments and situations. Further, a teamwork perspective complemented by theories of

organizational management offered essential insights into how churches should be organized and operated efficiently. Leadership and organizational theories describe leadership style.

Leadership and Organizational Theory

Organizational theory studies structures and operations in their environment, including companies and bureaucratic institutions. It includes the examination of the productivity, efficiency, and performance of organizations and the actions of the employees and groups within them (Miner, 2005). The role of leadership is vital to the operation and knowledge of organizations (Bradberry & Greaves, 2012; Northouse, 2016) and essential in producing organizational effectiveness (Malony, 1984; Kohl, 2009). Yukl (2010) explains organizational leadership as the process of influencing others to arrive at a shared understanding and agreement upon goals that need to be accomplished while having the necessary skills to support and facilitate individual and collective efforts to achieve common objectives.

Considering the New Beginning Family of Churches' myriad challenges, their pastors are responsible for providing spiritual guidance and good organizational leadership. Declining membership, low tithing, and shifting congregational needs dynamics were complications facing their churches and spoke to the need for skills development (Porter, 2014). While churches must confront their spiritual challenges through spiritual responses, they must also respond managerially to organizational challenges (Irwin & Roller, 2000; Masenya & Booyse, 2016). Nevertheless, this is often not the case, as churches underutilize management techniques (Austin-Roberson, 2009).

Applying proven organizational design principles to a ministry context assisted in a better approach and will result in the churches meeting their needs and fulfilling their leadership's vital missions (Austin-Roberson, 2009). Since the success of pastors in faith-based organizations rests on their ability to function as both managers and leaders to meet the spiritual and managerial

components of ministry (Irwin & Roller, 2000; Masenya & Booyse, 2016), this study explored leadership, management, and skills theories and approaches that contributed to pastoral effectiveness, with a significant emphasis on the servant leadership and skills theories. This tactic was based on the perspective that various methods must be used when analyzing organizations, specifically churches, because most theories related to leadership and management are incomplete, biased, and do not offer a comprehensive understanding (Morgan, 2006).

Servant Leadership Theory

While Northouse (2016) examined many theories and models that explain how individuals lead, Blanchard and Hodges (2003) suggest that servant leadership is the primary influence currently observed in many churches and was therefore presented as a principal theory in this study. Greenleaf (1977) is often cited for initiating the ongoing interest and study of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) maintained that an essential principle of servant leadership was that leading and serving are the same. He depicted servant leadership as a distinctive philosophy driven by the longing to serve the needs of others.

Greenleaf (2002) outlined several servant leader characteristics (Russell & Stone, 2002), including honesty, compassion, and humility. However, according to Scripture, Jesus Christ is the original teacher of the servant leadership principle, and Greenleaf (2002) reconceptualized it for a secular audience (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). This is supported by Mark 10:42-45 which points out that Jesus instructed His disciples that genuine leadership was centered on service to others (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Pastors transcend traditional hierarchical systems in the church setting when they exercise servant leadership. Instead of acting dominantly and wielding authority, they adopt a humble and service-oriented approach. This leadership style emphasizes the pastoral

obligation to actively care for and guide the congregation with genuine concern for their spiritual well-being. It is firmly anchored in the biblical archetype of the shepherd.

Organizational Impact. Spears (2002) confirms the intentional follower emphasis of servant leadership and suggests that the priority placed on follower needs renders the paradigm an appropriate fit for organizational settings. Leaders' intentionality in service not only aids followers but also encourages group decision-making, continuous innovation, and organizational loyalty. These outcomes of applied servant leadership enhance the organization across its structure. According to Russell (2001), the intentional follower emphasis of servant leadership contributes to developing organizational values such as trust, appreciation for others, and empowerment. Servant leaders demonstrate a genuine ability to encourage followers to use their sense of service, which helps to increase organizational performance (Sial, Zulfiqar, Kousar, & Habid, 2014). A servant leader's primary concern is the dignity, growth, and care of individuals in their organization are the immediate concerns of a servant leader (Grandy, 2013).

Transcendence. Self-transcendence theory conceptualizes an individual's profound sense of purpose rooted in the altruistic acts of helping others (Davis, 2013). There is a relationship between self-transcendence and servant leadership, as stated by Maslow (1954). To begin, servant leaders place the needs of others above their own and transcend self-interest. Maslow (1969) suggested that self-transcendence is crucial to human development. It is the highest level of human cognition, behavior, and relationships, as Maslow (1954) described. Venter (2012) argues that Maslow's self-actualization can have a significant role in leadership and management development because managers accomplish the organization's goals by being responsive to customers' and employees' needs and challenges (Roberts, 2015).

Management. Servant leadership and management are related concepts. The premise of servant leader is derived from the Greek word *aikonomia*, meaning house of manager (Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014). Greenleaf (1977) proposed servant leadership as a management technique. Day (2014) expands on this notion, providing evidence that management and servant-leader behaviors benefit organizations by improving organizational effectiveness. Autry (1991) describes leadership/management as a “sacred trust” based on the obligation to care for others. He bases this summation on Jesus’s servant leadership and suggests that authentic leadership is “management without emotional hiding places” (p.116). The New Beginning pastors embraced servant leadership as the preferred paradigm for their ministries to ensure church effectiveness and meet their congregants' needs.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory was first developed by Downton (Northouse, 2016), who coined the term transformational leadership, and it was later expanded by Burns (1978). According to Bass and Riggio (2010), transformational leadership emphasizes inspiring and encouraging followers to surpass their expectations and realize their full potential. While it is an established theory, Burns (1978) also argued that transformational leadership is the same as servant leadership. For instance, responding to the needs of others, having a vision, and respecting followers are examples of parallels and comparisons between servant leadership and transformational leadership (Kaya, Aydin, & Ongun, 2016). Transformational leaders concentrate on organizational needs and attaining a shared vision, and servant leaders emphasize the importance of meeting the needs of followers (Northouse, 2016). Yung (2004) speculated that the church's seriousness about holistic, effective ministry rests on its ability to develop a new generation of leaders with transformational leadership skills. Otherwise, the church’s ability to

contribute significantly to the moral and social consciousness of the world in the 21st century will be compromised.

Situational Leadership Theory

Kouzes and Posner (2023) indicate that leadership is dynamic and constantly changing. Therefore, not all theories and techniques apply to followers' behaviors today. This suggests that leadership must be agile, flexible, and responsive to the uniqueness of the situation. While the pastors of this study share commonalities in their challenges, such as membership stagnation and tithing concerns, they also have different dynamics based on their congregations and community issues. As such, one leadership approach is not necessarily suitable for every pastor, and a one-size-fits-all approach is not recommended to address their diversity of challenges. The situational approach style may be helpful to New Beginning pastors because, according to Northouse (2016), it consists of situations when the leader needs to be direct and supportive. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) developed situational leadership theory, which asserts that no leadership theory fits best. Instead, they advise influential leaders to adjust their leadership styles to the given situation, specific task, and followers.

Skills Theory

Skills theory anchored the research problem because it assumes that leadership skills can be developed and that skills contribute to leader effectiveness (Northouse, 2016). Further, it suggests that pastors must continue to develop competencies, particularly at different stages of their careers (Stewart, 2009). This notion supported the central research focus on the lack of leadership and management skills among the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors, which raised concerns regarding their ability to respond effectively to individual church and community needs (Porter, 2014). This was primarily in the face of internal challenges their churches faced

and other issues, such as racism and police brutality, that confronted their communities. While pastors generally acknowledge their lack of skills (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993), focusing on skills emphasizes what competencies are necessary for pastors and improves church performance (Stewart, 2009).

Stewart (2009) argues that ministers are in crisis because while the needs of the church organization continue to evolve, ministers lack the skills for the increasing responsibilities of performing various functions such as planning, organizing, and leading (Irwin & Roller, 2000) in ministry. The foundation of skills theory is that developed and polished competencies play a vital role in leadership rather than being the exclusive outcome of innate qualities (Katz, 1955). This theory focuses on the three-skill approach, which includes technical, human, and conceptual skills, and establishes (Katz, 1955). Technical skills involve knowledge related to specialized competencies; human skills are relationally based, and conceptual skills are cognitively related (Katz, 1955). Pastoral leaders must develop skills that allow flexibility to adjust to the shifting conditions of a church and be adaptable to deal with changes in the social, spiritual, and cultural domains. They must have good decision-making skills to effectively navigate situations regarding the congregation's organizational stability and well-being (Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Trait Theory

The trait theory was discussed as a complement to the skills theory because of their similarities (Northouse, 2016). Germain (2012) proposes that skills and traits are the same, noting common skills such as judgment, problem-solving, and deduction as seen in both theories. The trait theory was first attributed to Carlyle's (1888) great man theory, which contended that history was shaped by extraordinary individuals who were born great leaders. Carlyle's (1888) central argument was that leadership could not be developed because great leaders were born with specific

traits. More recent iterations of the theory, set forth by Kouzes and Posner (2023), stress leader credibility and highlight some limited applications. For example, the theory can help identify traits that lead to church and pastoral effectiveness and can be used in developing the proposed training program (Northouse, 2016). While the trait theory may help identify specific traits that impact leadership (Northouse, 2016), there are concerns with applying it directly to pastoral leadership based on its premise that only certain people have innate characteristics that make them suitable for leadership positions (Galton, 1869). However, the theory was examined from the vantage point that all humans are image bearers of God and are endowed with the traits, abilities, and skills (Kilner, 2015) necessary for leadership.

Management Theory

Robbins, Coulter, and DeCenzo (2019) explain organizational management theory as the fundamental concepts and procedures for efficient administrative operations. They address how organizations and businesses are managed. For this research, specific ideas that can be applied to the church are taken from Fayol's (1916) administrative management principles, which focus on planning, coordinating, organizing, controlling, and coordinating. For example, Fayol's (1916) focus on efficiency and effectiveness aligns with the management concepts critical to the church's performance. Crowe (2005) argues that the state of the church can evaluate a pastor's effectiveness. Rachels (2003) argues for a similar point, stating that the success or failure of a pastor is typically determined by how well they manage the church's operations. He also argues that pastors' administrative duties are essential to their profession and that excellent management, leadership, and ministry skills are strongly correlated.

Management skills are essential to the church. The lack of success, particularly in small to medium-sized congregations, is due to church management challenges (Irwin & Roller, 2000;

Masenyra, 2014). Masenyra and Booyse (2016) attribute this to most pastors not being competent in ministerial management, leadership, and administrative responsibilities. This suggests a training need that may be met by developing a training program to increase the management skills of pastors in this study based on the management challenges they face. However, applying management principles to the church has been criticized because it is considered sacred (Anthony & Estep, 2005). This point acknowledges that because a congregation is spiritual and communal, it is necessary to balance maintaining the distinctive features of the church community and maximizing organizational efficiency (Stewart, 2009). Although management theory offers a systematic framework, implementing it inside a religious institution requires a nuanced approach. Still, pastors can maximize resource allocation and enhance the seamless operation of the various church services by applying certain management principles (Anthony & Estep, 2005).

Teaching, Learning, and Group Theory

Team-Oriented Leadership

Business and leadership have long placed a strong emphasis on the idea of teams. Because it shows one's ability to collaborate and accomplish a common goal, teamwork is promoted as the ideal work trait for employees (Lencioni, 2002). Over the past few decades, the idea of teams in ministry has gained popularity in the church. A mission-focused team concept has replaced the lone pioneer missionary or church planter in the spotlight. Today, church pastors lead teams (Iverson & Grant, 1984). Teams are God's preferred way of teaching people based on the existence of teams in the Old and New Testaments (Iverson & Grant, 1984). From the dispatching of the disciples by Jesus in pairs to minister and serve throughout Judea (Acts 11:29) to the evidentiary foundation for Paul's three missionary journeys (Acts 13:14; Acts 15:36,

18:22; Acts 18:23, 21:14), the Scripture suggests teamwork as the most effective leadership style (Iverson & Grant, 1984). Effective team leaders have the skills to build, maintain, and work within a team (Lencioni, 2002).

A leadership team is a modest group of individuals who collectively share the obligation to attain a common goal for their organization (Lencioni, 2002). Teams are essential to the success of a leader, specifically a pastor. Effective teams can play a vital role in helping churches to fulfill their missions. MacMillan (2001) points out that teams that share a clear and compelling task are the most successful. Commitment is enhanced with a clear sense of purpose, and leaders can unite their teams around a shared mission, goals, and vision (MacMillan, 2001). The congregational teams of the New Beginning Family of Churches can be instrumental in helping to address the challenges the ministries face. For example, each church faces the challenge of growing its congregations (C. Stokes, personal communication, November 5, 2022). Building a vision around congregational growth can allow current members to get involved and take ownership of the vision (MacMillan, 2001).

Similarly, as pastors seek solutions to other church and community issues, congregants can be engaged in idea-sharing and decision-making (MacMillan, 2001). This involvement will contribute to member commitment and retention (MacMillan, 2001). It will also foster a culture in the churches where members feel comfortable expressing their ideas or opinions. However, leaders must immediately address any dysfunction hindering productivity and cohesion (Lencioni, 2002). This is especially relevant for the churches of this study as they will work to develop teams that will assist in helping to carry forth their visions. Of particular importance will be the team leader's need to avoid inattention to results by keeping the team focused on the outcomes and by setting measurable goals (Lencioni, 2002).

Learner-Centered Training Curriculum

The primary aim of this research study was to develop a training program to increase pastors' leadership and management skills. However, creating a pastoral training program was complex beyond simply imparting theological information. It entailed carefully planning curricula covering the breadth of theology, fundamentals of leadership and management, and valuable skills necessary for productive service. The curricula were designed based on a learning-centered approach, which considered the learning styles and needs of the pastors (Diamond, 2008). These were important considerations given the pastors' maturity, prior experience, and knowledge. Input into the curriculum design and training topics was gained from the pastors on the collaborating team, recognizing their knowledge and expertise (Diamond, 2008). This approach ensured the topics were relevant to their needs and helpful to their current situations. The program's intended outcomes were shared and discussed to provide realistic program expectations (Diamond, 2008).

The training consisted of components that deepened the pastor's comprehension of the Bible, theology, and doctrinal principles that guide their faith. This was done by examining theological principles, biblical interpretation, and biblical characters. The Bible was the foundation and guide for developing the curriculum (Diamond, 2008; Yount, 2010). Using the Diamond Model (2008), the goal was to design an interactive and participant-informed program. The following section discusses the thematic framework.

Thematic Framework

The thematic framework analyzes and discusses different themes relevant to answering the research question and supporting the overall argument of the dissertation (Clark & Braun, 2017). The literature review for this section organizes and discusses the themes relevant to the

research problem. It also presents existing praxis models used as a framework for the practitioner's training program development.

Current Literature Themes

This section provided a comprehensive review of the existing literature as it informed the problem of inadequate leadership and management skills among the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors. The themes that emerged from this topic were leadership development and training, organizational/church effectiveness, and skills and competency. It discussed several strategies and approaches to improve pastors' leadership and management skills, including training, continuing education, and lifelong learning strategies (Tyler, Dymock, & Henderson, 2016; McGraw, 2012). Of particular importance is how the dissertation praxis models highlighted in this section were used as guides to offer insight into developing an effective training program with a solid curriculum. Creating a quality course or curriculum was time-intensive and demanding. One had to consider the specific objectives of the participants and how the trainer could effectively facilitate the learning process (Diamond, 2008).

Leadership Skills and Competency

The problem facing the pastors of New Beginning Family of Churches was that the needs of their churches had significantly evolved and required new skill sets that they lacked. A literature review confirmed that the church landscape is changing rapidly, and the need for pastors to possess leadership and management skills and competencies to navigate ministry complexities remains constant (McKenna & Eckard, 2009; Rachels, 2003; Porter, 2014). Northouse (2016) contends that leadership is critical to any organization. However, pastoring is challenging (Porter, 2014), especially as it involves the church's operations and leading congregants in a diverse and technologically advanced environment (Drucker, 1986; Powell,

2009; Thoman, 2009). Pastoring a church necessitates the leader, staff, and volunteers to deal with numerous complex and time-consuming challenges. Andrews and Roller (2011) argue that times are economically and culturally difficult for nonprofit ministries and churches.

These changing needs of the church include the business operations and management structure (Drucker, 1986; Powell, 2009; Thoman, 2009), increased responsibilities related to social and political demands (Cohall & Cooper, 2010), and strategic engagement of millennials (Brown, 2012; Nauss, 1996; Thoman, 2009). According to Babbes & Zigarelli (2006), tighter financial resources, increased dependence on volunteers, and loose operational practices make it more challenging to operate a church than a non-profit. The problem of declining church attendance confronting the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors was also a nationwide problem (Frank & Innaccone, 2014; Ingren & Moor, 2015).

Mueller (2018) points out that core character, execution, management and leadership, and organizational skills are needed for optimal leadership performance. These skills broadly encompass leadership and management-related aspects (Andrews & Roller, 2011). Carter (2009) contends that in addition to skills related to preaching, Bible knowledge, and religious acumen, pastoring requires management and administration skills. McKenna and Eckard (2009) agree, positing that while a commitment to the ministry is a motivating factor for pastors, the complexity of the church requires them to have management skill sets and accountability. Pastors in Morgan's (1994) study prioritized relational skills, management abilities, communication skills, and spirituality over theological knowledge skills.

However, pastoral skills lag behind church and societal changes. Studies show that pastors lack the skill sets needed to deal with the administrative requirements that come with the job (Andrews & Roller, 2011; Cohall & Cooper, 2010; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Powell, 2009;

Witmer, 2007; Fraser & Brock, 2006). Frederick (2016) states that clergy in small to midsized faith-based churches lack the administrative, business management, financial management, and leadership skills to manage and lead nonprofit, faith-based organizations.

There are consequences for the pastor, church, and the community when pastors lack skills. Bell and Dudley (2002) conclude that leadership skills are so essential for pastor competency that the church struggles because most pastors lack leadership skills. Kohl (2009) finds that lacking leadership skills leads to declining church membership. He also finds that clergy attrition increases as they are less satisfied with their jobs (Kohl, 2009; Ott, 2008). Wilke (1986) concludes that leadership development impacts church growth so intensely that it can help a declining church grow. In recent years, Cannon (2015) maintains that improved pastoral leadership may increase church growth.

Pastor's Perceptions of Preparation

Churches approach ministry preparation and training differently. Yung (2004) finds that the most common method of clergy preparation is still through the seminaries. Some believe it is the most effective method of preparation. Kohl (2009) declares that "the drastic change necessary to revitalize the church will begin in the seminary training programs" (p. 74). Others are concerned about the seminaries' ability to adequately prepare clergy for the ministry (Hillman, 2006, 2008; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Kohl, 2009; Morrison, 2013). As such, the recommendation to partner with a local church for training is still a favored approach (Cohall & Cooper, 2010; Witmer, 2007). Hillman (2008) found that another method may be through on-the-job training.

However, what consistently arises in the literature is the perception of pastors that they are not adequately prepared or trained for the demands of ministry (Hicks, 2012; Macaskill,

2000; Morrison, 2013; Morgan, 1994; Porter, 2014; Rachels, 2003). While most agree that they possess the necessary skills for the spiritual aspects of the church, such as preaching and teaching, they lack management skills (Andrews & Roller, 2011; Cohall & Cooper, 2010; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Powell, 2009; Witmer, 2007). Pastors believe their ministries are more effective with management skills and continually recognize their importance (Irwin & Roller, 2000).

A study conducted by Macaskill (2000) found that the clergy of the Church of Scotland did not feel they were prepared or equipped for ministry expectations. Among the pastors surveyed, 83% contended that their training was inadequate, while 75% mentioned that a lack of practical theology (praxis) was the area that required the most improvement (Macaskill, 2000). The pastors believed their churches and institutions had failed to adequately prepare them for their work's practical aspects. Some even suggested forgetting their previous religious learnings to engage more effectively in their contemporary cultural practices.

Further, it was discovered that pastors identified leadership and church administration as top classes they would include in a curriculum (Morrison, 2013). Hicks (2012) and Porter (2014) found in their respective studies on the Presbyterian Church of America and the Assemblies of God pastors, respectively, that pastors expressed a desire for additional training in church management. They believed combining classroom instruction and a supervised practicum would be the most effective approach. Irwin and Roller (2000) contend that pastors feel they are adequately prepared to carry out the spiritual responsibilities of their ministry but ill-equipped to deal with the many business and administrative aspects of running the church. As training in business and administration is typically not a requirement to be a pastor and is instead taught on the job, coping with these tasks is the greatest challenge for pastors (Andrews & Roller, 2011; Babbes & Zigarelli, 2006; McKenna et al., 2007).

Training Approaches

The proposed solution was to develop and implement a training program to address the need for improved pastoral leadership and management skills. The literature review supported this approach as training was a theme that emerged as one solution to develop and improve skills. Several researchers note that pastors need specific management training that allows them to perform their administrative duties effectively (Hicks, 2012). Scholars suggest several recommendations to enhance the quality of management training and preparations for clergy managers. For example, Olson (2009) emphasizes the need for the academic requirements for credentialing to become a religious leader. Additionally, Duvall and Pinson (2001) highlight the significance of theological seminaries in equipping students with the necessary skills for effective church management. While seminary training is one skills development method, multiple research studies confirm that seminaries need to prepare ministers to lead adequately (Hillman, 2006, 2008; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Kohl, 2009; Morrison, 2013).

Continuing education is also recommended for professional growth and training, allowing organizations to respond to internal and external growth (Tyler, Dymock, & Henderson, 2016). Masenya (2014) proposed training religious leaders of the new millennium to ensure their growth keeps pace with society's needs (Irwin & Roller, 2000; Masenya, 2014; McGraw, 2012). McGraw (2012) concluded that continuing education for clergy is so essential that the clergy's inability to value it is a misfortune.

Leader Effectiveness

Since the ministry or church can be considered an organization (Lotich, 2014; Oosthuizen, 2015), the term organizational effectiveness also refers to the church. However, the definition of leader effectiveness varies based on the writer (Antonakis & Day, 2017). For

example, Yukl (2010) maintains that successful leaders foster team growth and ensure effective performance. Northouse (2016) notes that “To be an effective leader, one needs to respond with the action that is required of the situation” (pg. 296). Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) suggested that successful leadership results from multiple complex factors and cannot be attributed to just one factor. Nevertheless, a standard effectiveness indicator is team enhancement or whether a goal is attained, according to Antonakis and Day (2017).

Northouse (2016) suggests leadership is critical for any organization. This may also be said of the church (Keith, 2009; Malony, 1984; McKenna, Yost, & Boyd, 2007; Nauss, 1995; Graham, 2023). However, what constitutes pastoral leadership effectiveness has been difficult to assess and differs (Malony, 1984). Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) warned that leader effectiveness at one church can not necessarily be transferred to another. Still, Anthony and Estep (2005) conclude that the absence of fundamental management principles and abilities harms the church's ability to pursue its vision efficiently and effectively.

Relevant Models

The doctorate in practice or professional degree has evolved since 1920, when it was first introduced at Harvard (Dill & Morrison, 1985). While there still needs to be more consensus on a definition, professional doctorates concentrate on professional practitioner preparation (Kot & Hendel, 2011). Perry (2016) emphasized that DiPs differ from traditional five-chapter dissertations because they address real workplace problems. DiP research advances professional knowledge and employs rigorous, ethical methodologies to address intricate practice problems (CPED, 2021). Further, it embraces innovative and interdisciplinary approaches and reflects a design different from traditional research (CPED, 2021). This section provided an overview of

several comparable solution-based praxis models used in the field that helped to establish a framework for developing the leadership training program implemented in this study.

Leadership Training for Pastors Model

Covel (2012) conducted a four-year leadership enrichment program for pastors in the Georgia–Cumberland Conference of Seven-Day Adventists in conjunction with the Christian Leadership Center of Andrews University for his dissertation in a practice project. The purpose of the study was to provide education to pastors on leadership theory and practice to prepare them for their leadership responsibilities. The program used multiple techniques to deliver training, including assessments, seminars, spiritual self-evaluations, workgroups, and coaching and mentoring. The research found that pastors' knowledge of leadership theory and practice increased, improving their leadership competency.

This model had a similar research problem, focusing on pastor leadership skills improvement. Therefore, its framework was considered an example of a training design in this practitioner's approach. It was noted in Covel's (2012) model that the training organization paid for all costs associated with attendance, including travel and lodging. This appeared to increase participation. To increase pastor participation in this researcher's proposed program and eliminate accommodation and travel costs as barriers, a suggestion was made to the CO to assume travel costs. However, training was limited to one day and did not necessitate an overnight stay.

Veteran-Involved Pastor Training Program Model

Mingee (2020) developed a veteran practice-based pastor training program to equip young pastors with selected leadership competencies. The participants were selected based on their service in the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. The practitioner and other

leadership of the conference identified and selected the competencies they would address by the training. The pastors had to develop competencies and engage in self-evaluation and encouragement techniques using a three-fold approach strategy. The effectiveness of the training strategy was determined by the feedback received from leaders who worked with the participants. This researcher used a few of the strategic plans implemented in Mingee's (2020) dissertation as examples of developing this project's curriculum. The objective was to ensure that the curriculum competencies met the needs of the learners. This helped provide a learner-centered, easy-to-use, and efficient approach (Diamond, 2008).

A Conflict Skills Training Program Model

Slotta (2020) designed and implemented a conflict resolution program administered to twenty-two Hope Church pastors and congregational leaders. The program consisted of six hours of training conducted in one day. Using pre and post-test instruments, the study found that participants' knowledge of conflict techniques increased. Slotta (2020) mentioned five critical decisions made in developing the project that contributed significantly to its effectiveness and were considered in developing this practitioner's program. They included building on a biblical foundation. Yount (2010) stressed the necessity for the curriculum developer to integrate the foundation of Biblical truth within the curriculum.

Slotta (2020) also mentioned focusing on those who influenced others, fostering a relaxed, team-oriented atmosphere during training, and preempting destructive conflict with a commitment to peacemaking as other lessons learned. Special attention was given to the environment because "optimum learning requires a rich social, cultural, and physical environment" (Diamond, 2008, p. 38). These were replicated in the development of this practitioner's training program. The suggestion to supply a handbook for future reference was also

considered in the curriculum design of the leadership training program but was not accomplished.

The Urban Academy Dissertation in Practice Model

Barnes (2021), a principal and researcher, conducted a dissertation-in-practice study of middle school black boys at The Urban Academy in New Jersey. This study aimed to dive deeper into the factors that enhance Black boys' literacy achievement and performance in middle school. This was accomplished by using teachers and incorporating their experiences into the experiment. The data collection method for the study included pre- and post-survey observation tools and reading diagnostic measurements conducted in September and administered again after the intervention was completed. The qualitative data consisted of conducting empathy interviews with students and staff members and pre- and post-interviews with a small sample of teachers to gain insight and understand their experiences.

The study was conducted over 20 weeks and used an experimental mixed methods approach. The intervention was organized into two parts, primarily emphasizing professional development for high-quality literacy practices. Also, there was a secondary emphasis on culturally relevant pedagogy as the second driver. The intervention and teacher participation were documented using qualitative evidence. The impact of the intervention was showcased by utilizing quantitative evidence, such as literacy diagnostic assessments, combined with qualitative evidence that included student engagement, teacher perceptions, and teacher feedback. The study found that teachers' knowledge and students' engagement, success, and performance all increased due to teachers' use of culturally relevant pedagogy and high-level literacy practices. While this praxis study is unrelated to this researcher's research problem, a

few strategies can be replicated. For example, this research used leadership skills surveys and a few interview-based assessments.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Two reviewed the scholarly literature on leadership, management, skills development, and training to build a framework for the study. It discussed biblical and theological mandates of leadership and management. Biblical metaphors such as servant, shepherd, and steward established an understanding of Christ-centered leadership and competencies for pastors. The theoretical framework guiding this study was primarily servant leadership, management, and skills theory. It was complemented by a situational approach to address the diversity of challenges confronting New Beginning Family of Churches pastors and their churches. Servant leadership was presented as the preferred style because it is consistent with the pastoral ministry (Agee, 2001), and its values and principles lead to pastoral effectiveness. Finally, a discussion of themes from the literature, such as leader effectiveness, training, and preparation, helped inform the approach to the research problem. Existing praxis models were highlighted as examples to help build the foundation for the proposed leadership training program. The following section discusses the strategic plan.

CHAPTER THREE: THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction

Chapter Three introduces the strategic plan created to provide a roadmap for the dissertation-in-praxis development. The plan was implemented with the New Beginning Family of Churches, which served as the CO. It created a vision of a desired future for the organization by addressing the problem and its expected outcome. The foundation of the strategic plan was based on the servant leadership and skills theory, which asserted that a combination of the pastor's skills and character contributed to pastoral competence (Mueller, 2018). This was complemented by integrating trait theory and transformational leadership to form a situational approach to pastoral leadership.

This chapter also discusses the operational plan and the assessment plan. The operational plan describes how the program was implemented, and the assessment plan discusses how data was collected and assessed to determine program effectiveness. Finally, a chapter summary reviews the project's importance and potential impact.

Praxis Problem Summary

Clergy must possess strong leadership and management skills to lead their churches effectively, address challenges that arise, and respond to issues unique to their communities (Graham, 2023; Porter, 2014; Masenya & Booyse, 2016). Nevertheless, clergy report being unprepared to meet these demands because they lack the skills to succeed (Smith, 2017). The pastors who lead churches affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches needed help addressing problems that confronted their churches, including declining membership, growth stagnation, and financial instability. As the organization's leader, Bishop Stokes maintained that pastors needed the training to develop or improve their management and leadership skills to

respond effectively to the diverse challenges of their churches (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 21, 2023). Developing and implementing a training program helped improve the pastors' leadership and management skills. These skills are expected to allow them to perform strategic and operational functions that will contribute to the growth and performance of the church.

Vision Statement

Pastors under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches possess the leadership and management skills to meet the diverse needs of a 21st-century church and congregation.

Purpose Statement

The complex needs of the 21st-century church require the pastor to possess leadership and management skills to shepherd the congregation and successfully manage and organize the church (Porter, 2014; Manala, 2010; Masenya & Booyse, 2016). Pastors affiliated with New Beginning Christian Worship Center either lack the necessary skills or require enhancement to improve their leadership and management abilities. To effectively lead their churches, these pastors need training in leadership and management (Stewart, 2009; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Porter, 2014; Graham, 2023). Clergy's lack of adequate leadership and management skills can lead to church stagnation, pastoral burn-out, and eventual ministry abandonment (Ham & Eagle, 2021; Cunningham, 2022). This praxis program evaluated the impact training had on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches non-denominational pastors in southcentral Florida as determined by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale.

Objectives

The objectives were the specific goals that outlined what the training sought to achieve. They were a critical strategic component in establishing its focus (Kettner, Moroney & Martin, 2015). The objectives were used as purpose statements to help create a program vision.

Objective One. If we create and develop a quality training program to train pastors, then we can increase their leadership and management skills. If their management and leadership skills increase, then they can effectively address the challenges of their churches. If they effectively address church challenges, then they can improve its financial stability.

The first objective was to create and develop a quality leadership training program to train pastors. The goal was to improve the financial stability of the churches affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches. This goal aimed to help pastors effectively address the challenges of the churches they led. While each church faced unique challenges, common challenges included declining attendance, stagnating growth, and financial instability. Therefore, it was vital to consider the impact of challenges such as church attendance and membership on the church's economic health, as declining church attendance and declining giving appeared to be related (Burgess, 2013).

Objective Two. If we can convene pastors in one location, then we can conduct an in-person training conference. If we can conduct an in-person training conference, then we can minimize the day-to-day distractions pastors experience. If we can minimize distractions, then we can improve participant focus and increase learning.

The second objective was to convene pastors to conduct an in-person training conference. The purpose of the training was to increase participant focus by minimizing the distractions pastors often face. The responsibilities of a pastor are significant as they wear many hats, including preaching, teaching, counseling, visiting the sick, conducting burial services, and more (Chimoga, 2019). Research findings indicate that 84% of pastors are on call 24 hours daily

(Green, 2016). Helping pastors focus on the training was expected to result in a better grasp of the knowledge and increase their learning outcomes (Wei, Wang, & Klausner 2012).

Objective Three. If we develop and launch a training website, then we can offer online access to training. If we provide online access to training, then pastors will have 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources. If pastors have access to training resources, then it will increase their continuous learning.

The third objective was to develop a website and offer online access to training. The New Beginning Family of Churches' pastors' efficiency and credibility were based on more than education or theological knowledge. They needed to enhance their skills by becoming continuous learners (Kotter, 1996) to help improve church performance (Porter, 2014). This could be accomplished by continual leadership and managerial skills training that is accessible, affordable, and creatively delivered (Porter, 2014).

Developing a website was a strategy that allowed pastors to receive training and access information and resources at no cost and on demand. The ability to worship, learn, and train is not limited to in person. It can be effectively done through digital means since “the spiritual ecology created by Christ through the Spirit is unbounded by time and space, enabling Christians to enjoy the benefits of reality at any time and in any place, whether in person or online” (Lowe & Lowe, 2018, p. 219). Further, an online platform as a tool for training removed the difficulty of scheduling, which is often a barrier in training.

Objective Four. If we educate pastors on mental health, then they will increase their mental health knowledge. If they increase their mental health knowledge, then they will develop better mental health coping skills. If they adopt better mental health coping methods, then they will reduce the possibility of pastor burnout.

The fourth objective was to educate pastors on mental health to reduce the possibility of pastoral burnout. This goal aimed to help pastors develop and increase mental health coping skills. The mental health of pastors was a growing concern for Bishop Stokes (C. Stokes,

personal communication, October 8, 2022). Most pastors reported that the role of pastoring is both stressful and challenging (Green, 2016). Lee and Fredrickson (2012) find that ministerial demands significantly contribute to family strain and pastoral burnout. Other pastors note that the unrealistic expectations and demands of pastoring place undue burdens on them (Pooler, 2011). Further, it is observed that pastors with competency struggles are more at risk of burnout (Miner, 2007). Pastors who develop coping skills are expected to reduce their possibility of burnout.

Outputs

Outputs are the tangible amount of service or product produced to ensure the program was executed as planned and remained on track (Kettner et al., 2015). This training program used the units of service and service completion as outputs. The units of service outputs are “measures of the amount of service or product provided” (Kettner et al., 2015, p. 115). The service completion outputs are “measures of the number of participants and clients who complete all services” (Kettner et al., 2015, p. 115). The outputs of this training were used to measure program effectiveness. They were provided as evidence of progress and opportunity for adjustments.

Objective One Outputs

There were four initial outputs for objective one. The first output represented the total hours of training to be delivered to the pastors enrolled in the program. The second output was the number of workshops conducted during the training program. This output was to be produced by conducting at least four in-person and three online workshops for seven. The third measurement was the number of pastors who received the training on financial literacy. The fourth output was the number of pastors who completed the training. This was determined by the number of pastors who completed the training versus those who enrolled. These inputs helped to

assess the impact the training had on increasing the leadership and management skills of the pastors participating, specifically in their financial management.

Objective Two Outputs

There were two initial outputs for objective two. The first output was the development and implementation of a training conference. The conference was proposed as face-to-face training in Gainesville or Tampa, Florida. The conference training included at least five hours of leadership and management-related workshops. This output helped provide in-person training to remove the pastors from their church locations to help minimize distractions. Learning is increased when sustained attention is maintained (Wei, Wang, & Klausner 2012). The second output was the participation rate. This was produced by measuring the total number of pastors attending the training conference versus the number of pastors who were members of the New Beginning Family of Churches.

Objective Three Output

The initial output for objective four was the development of a training website. The website was created as an additional tool to facilitate learning and provide access to online resources. It was designed based on the CO's mission, vision, and priorities. The training start date determined its launch date. The website benefited the pastors by providing on-demand access to training and materials.

Objective Four Outputs

The initial output for objective five was assessment results. The inventory results were obtained by administering one inventory with three scales that measured clergy effectiveness, pastor burnout/perceived stress, and leadership. These assessments were the Perceived Stress Scale

(PSS), the Clergy Effectiveness Scale (CES), and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).

Outcomes

The outcomes demonstrated the training results and established the expected ends of the training program (Coley & Scheinberg, & Strekalova, 2021). They also reflected on the impact the training had on the pastors, congregation, and community (Kettner et al., 2015). The outcomes determined whether a change had occurred with the participants. The training resulted in immediate outcomes, such as increased learning or knowledge, and long-term impacts, such as decreased attrition rates and changes in pastors' behavior, practice, and decisions.

Outcome One

The expected outcome for objective one was that pastors' leadership and management skills would be improved. The shifting cultural landscape in America has contributed to the church losing its significance and influence (Miner, Dowson, & Sterland, 2010). This has resulted in churches and their leaders facing challenges, such as declining membership, financial instability, and high clergy attrition rates (Parker & Martin, 2011; Porter, 2014; Miner et al., 2010). It has been found that the clergy's lack of management and leadership skills may compound these problems (Porter, 2014; Baker, 2016). This conclusion is supported by assessments of clergy abilities, which find a gap in their skills and abilities and the demands of ministry (Jeynes, 2012; Miner et al., 2010).

Further, in most small to medium-sized faith-based organizations, clergy leaders do not have the administrative, business, financial, or organizational skills needed to manage and lead their church (Porter, 2014). Hwang and Powell (2009) argue that clergy are commonly expected to have managerial and leadership skills. This is supported in 1 Timothy 3:1-17 which lists

qualifications for elders, such as the ability to teach and manage. Boaheng (2021) further contends that the first message God gave humans about being fruitful and multiplying, as found in 1:28 Genesis, was related to management.

Outcome Two

The expected outcome for objective two was that the participant's focus and knowledge acquisition would increase. Helping pastors to focus increases their ability to learn and grasp information better (Wei, Wang, & Klausner 2012). This benefits their efforts to improve their leadership and management skills. This outcome was achieved by hosting the in-person conference and removing pastors from their daily routines to limit distractions. Nehemiah exemplifies how common distractions can keep God's leaders from His work. However, Nehemiah's repeated responses in Nehemiah 6:3-13 confirm that remaining focused can defeat distractions. This allowed him to complete the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days.

Outcome Three

The expected outcome for objective three was that the continuous learning of pastors was increased. This outcome was achieved by providing online, on-demand access to learning resources through website development. It was expected that pastors who used the available resources would continue to increase their knowledge and skills. Continuous learning is necessary for pastoral competency and growth (Carpenter, 2022). Clergy effectiveness and leadership are connected to continuous learning, and regular participation in learning activities demonstrates an investment in growth and development (Transition Into Ministry, n.d.). King Solomon stresses in Proverbs 9:9 that true wisdom recognizes that learning is ongoing and that there is always room for more. This proverb also instructs that the wise man who is taught increases learning.

Outcome Four

The expected outcome for objective four was that pastors would increase their mental health knowledge. This outcome was achieved by conducting a workshop on mental health with a specific focus on pastoral burnout. As measured by a pretest and post-test, it was expected that at least 75% of all pastors participating in the training would increase their self-awareness regarding their mental health and how it affects clergy retention. This understanding was expected to reduce pastors' potential for burnout by increasing their coping skills. Positive coping skills have been shown to protect against burnout (Doolittle, 2007).

Mental health, stress, and burnout are serious challenges facing clergy leaders as they often become victims of their frailty (Lewis, Turton, & Francis, 2007). While work is part of human existence and calling (Gen 1:28; Col 3:23), God demonstrated the importance of rest on the seventh day of creation (Gen 2:2-3) when He performed no work. The Sabbath command further demonstrated this, prohibiting labor on the seventh day (Ex 20:8-11). Ensuring pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches became educated on burnout and mental health was a primary focus (C. Stokes, personal communication, November 5, 2022).

Essential Terms

The following terms were used in this study to ensure the reader understood the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the overall design. The definitions provided were operational and applicable to this study. It should be noted that these may have been the only interpretation of the word.

1. *Burnout*: "A constellation of work-related symptoms, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment" often observed in those who work in intense caring environments (Maslach & Leiter, 1996).

2. *Clergy/Minister*: A professionally credentialed or ordained leader of religious organizations responsible for conducting rituals, ministerial functions, and religious instructions (Porter, 2014).
3. *Challenges*: Refers broadly to an array of difficulties, troubles, or problems faced by the church in the 21st century, including membership and attendance decline, high clergy attrition rates, growth stagnation, financial instability, technology, pastoral mental health concerns, clergy skills and societal ills (Cunningham, 2022; Porter, 2014; Hamm & Eagle, 2021; Hillman, 2006).
4. *Leadership*: The ability to create a vision and influence people to accomplish goals (Northouse, 2016).
5. *Leadership Development*: A leader's skill acquisition, enhancement, or refinement that leads to better performance (Carpenter, 2022).
6. *Leadership Skills/ Competency*: Used interchangeably to describe polished skills necessary for leadership effectiveness (Northouse, 2016).
7. *Management*: "A set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. The most important aspects of management include planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem-solving" (Kotter, 1996, p. 25).
8. *Ministry*: A profession or vocation dedicated to carrying out the Great Commission of Christ to develop and lead believers in discipleship (Byrce, 2017).
9. *Non-denominational*: Organizations or individuals with no denominational preference or affiliation with an organized denomination, set of doctrines, or customs (Deibert, 2018).
10. *Organizational/leader effectiveness*: The ability of an organization (church or ministry) or leader to attain a goal or enhance team performance (Antonakis & Day, 2017).
11. *Pastor*: An individual (also referred to as an elder, overseer, or leader) with proven Godly character recognized as an under-shepherd of the church who teaches sound doctrine and provides leadership and protection of God's people (Tit 1: 5-9; Tim 3:1-7).
12. *Skills/Competencies*: Used interchangeably as a term to describe both secular and biblical capabilities or proficiencies that leaders or pastors need to develop for effective leadership (Carpenter, 2022; Malphurs & Mancini, 2004; Geiger & Peck, 2016).
13. *Training Program*: Refers to the proposed program to be developed to increase the New Beginning Family of Churches pastor's leadership and management skills.

The following section will discuss the operational plan.

Operational Plan

This section introduced the operational plan. The operational plan was a detailed strategic document describing the program's aim and why. It outlined goals, key objectives, and how to achieve them (Schmidt, 2021). It discussed the project deliverables and the key action steps that were taken. The plan used the If-Then logic model to make an important distinction among the levels of objectives, including the goal, purpose, outcomes, and inputs (Schmidt, 2021). A significant focus objective for this plan was the *purpose* as it described the desired changes or conditions. The operational plan also guided and helped define responsibilities, tasks, and activities to ensure full implementation of the proposed program. Table 1 outlines the vision and purpose of the proposed program.

Table 1

Program Vision and Purpose Statements

VISION	Pastors are competent and possess the skills to meet the demands of a 21st-century church.
PURPOSE	Pastors under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches possess the leadership and management skills to meet the diverse needs of a 21st-century church and congregation.

Goal One

Goal one was New Beginning Family of Churches pastors participating in the training would develop the financial competency skills necessary to create at least three new financial strategies to increase their church's financial strength as measured by a pretest and post-test of the Financial Skill Scale. Financial instability was a significant challenge facing the New Beginning Family of Churches, as many today face low tithing and membership decline (Porter, 2014).

The pastor's wise management of church resources is essential to effective leadership (Manala, 2010). Ensuring pastors have the skills to protect, manage, and adequately oversee church finances will help "avoid any criticism of the way they administer this gift" (Cor 8:20). This will also ensure that the members of the congregation have confidence in the way their money is managed (Cor 8:21). Specifically, pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches needed the training to help increase their church performance, specifically related to financial matters (C. Stokes, personal communication, September 21, 2023). Table 2 outlines the action plan for goal one.

Table 2

Action Plan for Goal One

Objective: 1		
If we create and develop a quality training program to train pastors, then we can increase their leadership and management skills. If their management and leadership skills increase, then they can effectively address the challenges of their churches. If they effectively address church challenges, then they can improve the church's financial stability.		
Goal 1: The financial stability of the churches affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches is improved.		
Purpose: Pastors can effectively address the challenges of their churches, including stagnating growth, declining membership, and financial instability.		
Assumptions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The pastors of New Beginning Family of Churches desire to increase their leadership and management skills. 2. Most New Beginnings Family of Churches pastors are experiencing financial difficulty in their churches, which is a significant concern or problem. 3. The churches maintain accurate financial records. 		
Outcomes	Success Measures	
Pastor's leadership and management skills are increased.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75% of all pastors participating in the training will show an increase in their leadership and management skills. 	

Goal Two

Goal two was to conduct a training conference. The conference's purpose was professional development for the pastors' skill acquisition. (Porter, 2014). Training fulfills a biblical mandate found in Ephesians 4:11-12 where Paul directs the church to “equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the Body of Christ.” The training of leaders is also encouraged in 2 Timothy 2:15, 3-16-17, and 1 Timothy 4:7-8. Carpenter (2022) emphasizes how biblical leaders were trained and developed for their role, as demonstrated in Genesis 39:1-5 when Joseph is trained in Potiphar’s house, and Moses is taught in the house of Pharaoh (Gen 2:19).

The training conference was proposed as a face-to-face meeting to remove pastors from the demands of their ministry to allow focus and attention. The training conference also served as a kick-off to the training program and was held before the online training sessions were planned to begin. As an effective means of communication, it provided an opportunity to convene stakeholders, disseminate information about the program, and allow participants to ask questions. Additionally, removing pastors from their churches' daily work and demands limited distractions and allowed them to focus on training. This was expected to increase their focus and learning outcomes. Table 3 outlines the action plan for goal two.

Table 3

Action Plan for Goal Two

Objective: 2
If we can convene pastors in one location, then we can conduct an in-person training conference. If we can conduct an in-person training conference, then we can minimize the day-to-day distractions pastors experience. If we can minimize distractions, then we can improve participant focus and increase knowledge acquisition.
Goal 2: To conduct one in-person training conference.
Purpose:

CT and CC to discuss training conference ideas.																	
2. Identify conference location.	CT, Researcher																
3. Create training agenda and training content.	Researcher																
4. Send out conference notifications.	CC, CT																
5. Coordinate conference logistics.	CT, CO																
6. Identify donations and other resources.	CT, CO, Researcher																

Goal Three

The third objective was to develop a website and offer online access to training. The purpose of this goal was to provide 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources. It was expected that free and readily available training resources would lead pastors to seek to increase their learning continuously. Continuing education is critically important to ensure that the skills development of pastors keeps pace with society's needs (Irwin & Roller, 2000). While Ecclesiastes 1:9 assures the believer that "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun," pastors must be mindful that "there will be terrible times in the last days" (2 Tim 3:1). Yung (2004) concludes that pastors who lack the

skills to address societal ills will be unable to contribute to the build-up of the moral and social consciousness of the world. Table four outlines the action plan for goal three.

Table 4

Action Plan for Goal Three

Objective: 3															
If we develop and launch a training website, then we can offer online access to training. If we provide online access to training, then pastors will have 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources. If pastors have access to training resources, then it will increase their continuous learning.															
Goal: 3															
To offer online access to training.															
Purpose:															
Provide pastors with 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources.															
Assumptions:															
1. Pastors are comfortable with using technology.															
2. Pastors have access to computers and a reliable internet source.															
3. Pastors will access the resources available on the website.															
Outcomes			Success Measures												
The continuous learning of pastors is increased.			Pastors use the website to access resources.												
			Pastors use the resources available on the website to develop their skills and increase their learning.												
Inputs:			Outputs:					Resources:							
1. Time and financial costs of designing, developing, and launching the website.			1. Develop and launch a training website.					1. Computer							
2. Training preparation								2. Website domain							
3. Technology															
Implementation Schedule															
Action Steps		Responsible	\$350	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

1. Design the website layout.	Researcher & Website Designer																		
2. Create the website.	Web site Designer																		
3. Launch the website.	Website Designer																		

Goal Four

The fourth goal was to educate pastors on mental health to reduce the possibility of pastoral burnout. The purpose of this goal was to help pastors develop and increase mental health coping skills. The mental health of pastors was a growing concern for Bishop Stokes (C. Stokes, personal communication, October 8, 2022). Most pastors report that the role of pastoring is both stressful and challenging (Green, 2016). Further, it has been observed that pastors with competency struggles are more at risk of burnout (Miner, 2007).

Lee and Fredrickson (2012) find that ministerial demands significantly contribute to family strain and pastoral burnout. Other pastors note that the unrealistic expectations and demands of pastoring place undue burdens on them (Pooler, 2011). The stories of both Elijah and Jonah serve as examples of how ministry difficulties can affect mental health and lead to burnout. Elijah was depressed because he conflicted with Queen Jezebel, and he wished to die. (1 Kgs 19:4). Similarly, Jonah was distressed, fled, and wanted to die after God spared Nineveh (Jon 4:3). Pastors who develop coping skills are expected to reduce their possibility of burnout through self-care. Jesus demonstrates the importance of self-care as He often took breaks (Luke 5:16) and encouraged His disciples to do the same (Mark 6:31). Table five outlines the action plan for goal four.

Table 5

Action Plan for Goal Four

[illegible]

2. Design the mental health session components.	Researcher														
3. Purchase surveys	Researcher & CC														

Assessment Plan

This section introduces the assessment plan for the training program. It identifies the assessment criteria for evaluating the program's outcomes and determining its effectiveness. The program used quantitative and qualitative methodology to thoroughly understand how the training program affected pastors' leadership and management skills development and how skill increases impacted their churches and surrounding communities.

Quantitative Assessments

Quantitative measurements were used to identify and evaluate the training program's outcomes. The data was collected through questionnaires and inventory scales, which allowed the researcher to ask specific questions, conduct statistical analysis, and report results (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Quantitative measurements assessed the participants' skills, knowledge, and performance based on standards by comparing the outcomes with goals. These assessments were the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the Clergy Effectiveness Scale (CES), and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).

Qualitative Assessments

Qualitative measurements were used to aid in determining the program's effectiveness and were also useful in collecting non-numeric data. Informal and unstructured interviews and questions during training collected qualitative data to measure the pastors' opinions, views, and knowledge, allowing them to express their thoughts (Hyatt & Roberts, 2023).

Table 6*Assessment Plan for Objective One*

Objective: 1		
If we create and develop a quality training program to train pastors, then we can increase their leadership and management skills. If their management and leadership skills increase, then they can effectively address the challenges of their churches, including stagnation, declining memberships, and financial instability. If they effectively address church challenges, then they can improve the church's financial stability.		
Goal 1: The financial stability of the churches affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches is improved.		
Purpose: Pastors can effectively address the challenges of their churches, including stagnating growth, declining membership, and financial instability.		
Outcome	Success Measures	Verification
Pastor's leadership and management skills are increased.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75% of all pastors participating in the training will show an increase in their leadership and management skills. 2. At least 50% of pastors participating in the training will complete the training. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare pre and post-test results from the Clergy Effectiveness Scale. <p>Assessment Tool: Clergy Effectiveness Scale</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Review the total number of pastors enrolled versus the number who completed the full training.

Table 7*Assessment Plan for Objective Two*

Objective: 2
If we can convene pastors in one location, then we can conduct an in-person training conference. If we can conduct an in-person training conference, then we can minimize the day-to-day distractions pastors experience. If we can minimize distractions, then we can improve participant focus and knowledge acquisition.
Goal 2: To conduct one in-person training conference.

Purpose: To minimize the day-to-day distractions pastors experience.		
Outcomes	Success Measures	Verification
Participants' focus and knowledge acquisition is increased.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75% of New Beginning Family of Churches pastors attend the training. 2. 75% of participants will demonstrate knowledge of the material by scoring at least 80% on a quiz. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review participant attendance sheets to determine the number of participants who attended versus the total number of pastors who are members of the New Beginning Family of Churches. 2. Results from a knowledge quiz. 3. Post-event survey

Table 8*Assessment Plan for Objective Three*

Objective: 3 If we develop and launch a training website, then we can offer online access to training. If we provide online access to training, then pastors will have 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources. If pastors have access to training resources, then it will increase their continuous learning.		
Goal: 3 To offer online access to training.		
Purpose: Provide pastors with 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources.		
Outcomes	Success Measures	Verification
Increase the continuous learning of pastors.	<p>Pastors use the website to access resources.</p> <p>Pastors use the resources to develop their skills.</p>	Informal interview of pastors about the potential to use the website and its resources for continuous learning and development.
Inputs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time and financial costs of designing, 	Outputs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training website 2. Training resources 	Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaire 2. Computer

developing, and launching the website.		3. Internet
2. Training preparation		

Table 9*Assessment Plan for Objective Four*

Objective: 4		
If we educate pastors on mental health, then they will increase their mental health knowledge. If they increase their mental health knowledge, then they will develop better mental health coping skills. If they adopt better mental health coping methods, then they will reduce the possibility of pastor burnout.		
Goal 4: To reduce the possibility of pastoral burnout.		
Purpose: Pastors will develop better mental health coping skills.		
Outcomes	Success Measures	Verification
Pastors will increase their mental health knowledge relating to burnout	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 75% of pastors participating in the training will recognize signs of burnout. 2. At least 75% of pastors participating in the study will increase their awareness of how competency and ministry demands contribute to burnout. 	Results of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

Summary and Significance

This chapter introduced the strategic plan and discussed how the proposed praxis program addressed the CO's strategic problem. It specifically discussed the two primary components of the strategic plan, including the operational and assessment plans. The chapter also described the program objectives, purpose, and outcomes. It also explained how outcomes were measured to determine effectiveness and the data collection method.

This study was significant because it developed and implemented a training program that increased the leadership and management skills of pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches to allow them to meet the demands of their ministry. These pastors, like many, faced multiple challenges that affected their church membership and financial stability. Predominantly, the clergy face unique challenges today that have caused changes in the ministry and require additional competencies to deal with them (Irwin & Roller, 2000; Masenya, 2016).

Further, pastors must also have the skills to lead and manage all aspects of church operations (Duvall & Pinson, 2001). Training is essential in helping pastors keep pace with societal changes and church needs. Jeynes (2012) ponders the effectiveness of the ministry if clergy leaders are not receiving training. This training helped the pastors build their competencies. More importantly, this praxis contributed to the pastors' continuous learning and growth, reducing mental health concerns and high clergy attrition rates (Miner, 2007).

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This chapter assessed the training program's implementation as outlined in Chapter Three's operational plan. It reviewed the program's vision, purpose statements, and objectives. Next, it compared the intended and actual outcomes and outputs by discussing the participants, resources, and program context. It reviewed the program's actual results using the Stake Model and cited summative and formative data as evidence. Lastly, it assessed the program's outcomes and impact on the problem to determine its effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

Praxis Project Plan

The praxis project was designed as a ten-hour training program with an in-person and online component to provide training to pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches on leadership and management. The discussion on the competency needs and leadership skills of the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors began two years back in conversations with Bishop Christopher Stokes and other pastors. It was recognized that the clergy of this organization needed to increase their skills and competency to continually address the challenges that confronted their congregations and community. The training was identified as a solution to strengthen clergy skills based on ongoing dialogue with Bishop Christopher Stokes (C. Stokes, personal communication, October 8, 2022).

Vision Statement

Pastors under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches possess the leadership and management skills to meet the diverse needs of a 21st-century church and congregation.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this proposed praxis project was to evaluate the impact training has on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches non-denominational pastors in southcentral Florida as determined by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale.

Objectives

Objective 1. If we create and develop a quality training program to train pastors, then we can increase their leadership and management skills. If their management and leadership skills increase, then they can effectively address the challenges of their churches. If they effectively address church challenges, then they can improve its financial stability.

Objective 2. If we can convene pastors in one location, then we can conduct an in-person training conference. If we can conduct an in-person training conference, then we can minimize the day-to-day distractions pastors experience. If we can minimize distractions, then we can improve participant focus and increase learning.

Objective 3. If we develop and launch a training website, then we can offer online access to training. If we provide online training access, then pastors will have 24-hour and on-demand access to training resources. If pastors have access to training resources, then it will increase their continuous learning.

Objective 4. If we educate pastors on mental health, then they will increase their mental health knowledge. If they increase their mental health knowledge, then they will develop better mental health coping skills. If they adopt better mental health coping methods, then they will reduce the possibility of pastor burnout.

Intended Outputs

Outputs are the measurable and observable results of the program (Kettner et al., 2015).

They are immediate and give evidence of the program implementation. The intended outputs of this study were based on the proposed objectives. There were four outputs for objective one. The first intended output was the total hours of training to be delivered to the pastors enrolled in the program. The second intended output was the number of workshops conducted during the training program. The third intended output was the number of pastors who received training on financial literacy. The fourth intended output was the number of pastors who completed the

training. There were two intended outputs for objective two. The first output was the development and implementation of a training conference. The second output was the participation rate. The output for objective three was the development of a training website. The output for objective four was the assessment results.

Intended Outcomes

Outcomes determine the program's effectiveness and help assess if the intervention worked (Kettner et al., 2015). According to the four objectives, this program was expected to produce immediate, intermediate, and long-term intended outcomes. The immediate and intermediate outcomes of the program focused on the intended changes in the pastor's skills, knowledge, awareness, and behavior. The intended long-term outcomes focused on the impact the training would have on the pastor's mental health, retention, and the church's financial health and the community. The intended outcome of this program was to increase the leadership and management skills of the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors, specifically Senior Pastors, to enable them to respond to the needs of their congregants and develop church leadership and management skills to lead their churches effectively. The intended long-term outcome was that the managerial training was expected to help pastors manage financial demands, ensure the church's economic stability, and reduce the possibility of closure due to financial challenges.

Another intended and immediate outcome was increasing the participant's focus and knowledge acquisition. This was based on the notion that hosting in-person training would eliminate distractions and help pastors focus and improve their ability to learn and grasp information better (Wei, Wang, & Klausner, 2012). The third intended immediate outcome was to increase pastors' continuous learning. Continuous learning is necessary for pastoral

competency and growth (Carpenter, 2022). The expected long-term outcome was that pastors who use the available resources would continue to increase their knowledge and skills. The fourth intended immediate outcome was for pastors to improve their mental health knowledge. The long-term intended impact was to reduce pastoral burnout and the pastoral attrition rate.

Praxis Project Assessment (Intended vs. Actual)

The analysis for this study was based on the Stake Model, which matched what was planned or intended with what actually occurred. The Stake Model was developed by Robert Stake (1967) and focuses on program activities, not intent. It is considered a responsive model because it is based on the thinking that the concerns of the stakeholders are the most essential considerations in determining evaluation issues. It emphasizes the similarity between what was anticipated and what was observed. Stake (1967) proposed the congruence-contingency model to evaluate the congruence or matching between the intended and the observed data in three major areas: antecedents, transactions, and outcomes. Stake's approach was also used to describe the intended results through transaction data, which speaks to long-term impact. Though immediate output information was collected, such as units of service, participation data, and changes in the participant's leadership skills, long-term outcomes data, such as how the changes in clergy leadership and management skills affect church outcomes and impact the community, was also explored.

Assessment of Project Antecedents

Antecedents are environmental conditions before the program's implementation (Stake, 1967). Understanding the antecedents helped determine what factors contributed to the program's effectiveness. The intended antecedents of the program were what was expected before the project began, and the actual antecedents were what was encountered when the project launched

was reviewed. Antecedents included the pastor's skill sets before the training started, church resources, and the political and social issues occurring in Micanopy and Gainesville. For example, Alachua County was experiencing police brutality, racism, and incidences of homophobia. A primary reason for this training was to help pastors build the skills to address issues confronting their community.

The Need

As noted throughout this study, the role of clergy is demanding and often requires functioning in different capacities, including the spiritual leader, community leader, counselor, church manager, teacher, and others (Paul, 2020). Equally, the changing landscape of society has necessitated that the church responds to diverse political, economic, cultural, and social challenges, unlike others in the past (Manala, 2010). Today, clergy leaders must know how to manage the congregation's needs and the church's operations while balancing the community's demands (Barentsen, 2015).

Multiple research findings conclude that clergy need strong leadership and management skills to effectively lead the 21st-century congregation and respond to various issues affecting their communities, such as poverty, racism, social injustice, drug abuse, human trafficking, and police brutality (Graham, 2023; Porter, 2014; Masenya & Booyse, 2016). Moreover, the COVID-19 Pandemic's impact and effects have contributed to decreased church attendance, health crises, and technology needs unlike any before. However, clergy report unpreparedness because they lack the necessary skills to confront these challenges, and many are leaving the ministry or experiencing burnout (Smith, 2017). Training has long been identified as a source of preparation for new and experienced clergy and a tool to increase their leadership and management skills (Cunningham, 2022; Yong, 2020; Porter, 2014; Nkonge, 2011). The pastors

affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches faced challenges relating to church growth, mental health, and conflict management.

The results of the training program found that there was a need for clergy to be trained. Formative data gathered from classroom polls, interview-based assessments, and feedback received from the pastors found that they believed that training was needed. Also, research supports that clergy are in crisis because they lack the skills to address the church's needs and are ill-prepared to address societal issues (Stewart, 2009). The survey results showed that the training increased clergy skills related to leadership and effectiveness. This program helped address the gap between the need for clergy training and leadership and management skills development (Jeynes, 2012).

The Participants

Participants were required to be non-denominational clergy members of the New Beginning Family of Churches. They had to be at least 18 or older and willing to participate voluntarily by agreeing to sign a consent form. Further, they had to agree to complete two surveys to be taken before the beginning of the training and after the training. The researcher provided each participant with a paper consent form before the training started and reviewed it for understanding (Appendix A). Participants were identified by Bishop Stokes, who contacted each church's Senior Pastor and tasked them with sharing the training information. However, a mix-up occurred with the communicated date, and several churches had scheduling conflicts that prevented their participation.

The Context

The training program was initially planned as a ten-hour program, which included seven hours of being administered in person and three hours of being conducted online. The conference

workshops were intended to provide training on leadership, management, pastoral burnout, and continuous learning. The online seminars were planned to address financial management. The training was scheduled to be held at the New Beginning Worship Center Church and the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center in Micanopy, Florida. These locations were chosen because they could be used at no cost and offered ample training space. Also, all the pastors were familiar with the location, which offered a centralized travel point to facilitate a roundtrip drive and avoid an overnight stay. These locations also provided the trainers and participants access to computers, printing, and a host of volunteers to assist with set-up, clean-up, food preparation, and other conference needs. The request to approve the New Beginning Family of Churches as the collaborating organization was made on March 7, 2024 (Appendix F) and granted by Bishop Stokes on March 8, 2024 (Appendix G). The IRB approved program execution on March 15, 2024 (Appendix B), and the training was initially scheduled to commence in April 2024.

The training was held at the New Beginning Worship Center and Willie Mae Stokes Community Center on June 8, 2024. The April date was changed because the researcher knew many pastors had scheduling conflicts and did not receive notice of the training in time to make changes. Scheduling was a major challenge encountered throughout the praxis's planning and implementation phases. This was primarily due to the inability to identify a convenient time and location for the seven churches.

Trainers. Four individuals, including the researcher, served as volunteers to provide training in the program. The trainers were chosen because they are experts in the specific workshop topic (Appendix D). The conflict resolution workshop was facilitated by Captain Dorian Keith, a twenty-three-year Alachua County Sheriff's Department veteran expert in crisis management and conflict resolution. Zenia Harris, an expert in mental health and pastoral

burnout, facilitated the mental health workshop. Zenia is also a licensed clinician with a master's degree in social work. Reverend Dr. Neal led the servant leadership workshop. This was beneficial because he is the Associate Pastor at New Beginning Christian Worship Center and had relationships with all participants. This allowed him to personalize his training and helped make it more relevant and engaging. Further, he is a published author with extensive leadership experience. The researcher facilitated the workshop on female leaders in the church.

Trainer and Participant Interaction. The church and community center created intimate environments where the participants openly shared and exchanged information. Also, since all participants were members of the same organization, they engaged well in discussion. There was also familiarity with the trainers because two are current members of the New Beginning Christian Worship Center Church, and one had previously worked with the church. This helped create a trusting environment where sensitive and personal information was freely revealed.

The Workshops. Initially, the workshops were planned to address leadership, mental health/pastoral burnout, financial management, and continuous learning. However, the actual workshop topics differed slightly from what was intended because they reflected feedback received from both Bishop Stokes and the collaborating team about the pastor's current needs. The workshops covered mental health/pastoral burnout, servant leadership, biblical women leaders, and conflict resolution management. The mental health/pastoral burnout and servant leadership workshops consisted of two hours of training for four hours and conflict resolution. The female leadership in the church workshop consisted of one and a half hours each.

The conflict management workshop was a last-minute addition and special request of Bishop Stokes because of a mental health crisis that occurred with one of the church's

parishioners. Bishop Stokes maintained that the incident threatened the safety of the pastor and the church. He contended that crisis management and conflict resolution training would allow better preparation if something similar arose again.

Resources

The proposed budget was one thousand dollars. Though this amount was anticipated not to cover all the expenses associated with the program's implementation, the church expected to receive financial, food, and time donations to offset the cost. The most considerable costs were expected to be associated with developing and hosting the website. This included the domain purchase, set-up, and maintenance fees. The labor to build was donated. The other expenses included conference supplies such as paper, pens, food, and conference tokens. The actual budget exceeded the allotted amount by three hundred dollars. The most significant expense was not the website, as expected, but rather the food. The food costs exceeded the planned budget of \$250 by \$200 because of a continental breakfast and catered lunch. The participants were also provided snacks and beverages. Additionally, four gift cards were donated, totaling \$175, and given to the trainers as tokens of appreciation. There were no venue costs because the community center and church were used for free.

Assessment of Project Processes (Transactions)

Stake (1967) describes transactions as the interactions between the teacher, learner, trainer, materials, and the environment that are a part of the learning environment. As stated, the initial training program consisted of an in-person and online component. However, the online component was removed from the training plan, and the in-person training conference was effectively implemented. The training was held from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and featured a packed agenda, including time allotted for pre- and post-assessments (Appendix E). Though it

began early and included a working lunch and only a few breaks, the researcher observed that all the pastors remained engaged in the discussions and interacted with the trainers throughout the day. Using formative assessments also helped the trainers to stimulate participant engagement and encourage group discussion.\

Formative and Summative Assessments

This study used formative and summative assessments to engage participants and gather evidence of learning and comprehension during and after the training. Formative assessments refer to teachers' methods to evaluate student knowledge, learning needs, and progress during a lesson process (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Formative assessments monitored how the participants learned material throughout the day, assessing understanding and teaching effectiveness (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). The summative evaluation was conducted after the training was completed and was more evaluative than diagnostic (Bhat & Bhat, 2019). This assessment aimed to capture data that helped determine participant outcomes by assessing knowledge acquisition or skill enhancement. For example, participants were asked to complete a 48-question survey after the training to determine learning growth and knowledge attainment. The findings suggested that the pastor's leadership and management skills improved, and they developed new stress-coping mechanisms.

The formative assessments provided an opportunity to collect real-time feedback on learning and comprehension. They served as quick checks during training to help ascertain the clergy's grasp of the concepts. Formative assessment methods used by the trainers were classroom polls, strategic questioning, group discussions, and idea comparisons. For example, in the mental health workshop, pastors were broken into groups and asked to identify and present a biblical character who they believed faced mental health challenges and identify depression-

related behaviors. This exercise offered an opportunity to evaluate how well the ministers understood depression and burnout concepts.

Another technique used was the misconceptions approach. After introducing concepts related to mental health, servant leadership, and women's leadership, the trainers discussed popular misconceptions about them. The ministers were asked to explain why these misconceptions were false and identify their origins. This activity prompted pastors to think critically about their new knowledge and demonstrate how to debunk misinformation. The researcher used the interview-based assessment to gain first-hand insight into the pastor's views. These quick and casual conversations asked participants to provide their greatest takeaway from the training.

Effective and Ineffective Approaches

The in-person training was an effective program approach because it allowed the pastors to convene in person, have fellowship, and interact. Based on feedback from pastors during closing discussions and interviews, in-person training minimized the distractions faced by the daily demands of their roles. For example, one pastor stated during the one-on-one interview, "This training allowed me to get away from my other demands and really focus on what we were doing here."

The inability to conduct the financial workshop was an aspect of the program that could have been implemented more effectively. The financial management workshop was planned to be delivered online. However, it was removed from the training plan due to the low interest of the pastors. Primarily, none of the pastors registered for the online component. This resulted in a reduction in the program's total training hours from ten to seven. This was disappointing as it was believed that the pastors and their churches could benefit from financial literacy training.

Another area that could have been implemented better was the time allotment for each workshop. While each workshop consisted of at least two hours of training, the mental health workshop should have received more training hours. This conclusion was drawn because mental health emerged as a primary interest among the pastors based on their discussions, and more time would have allowed for increased learning.

Assessment of Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs and outcomes are essential in program evaluation and serve as quantitative and qualitative measurements that help determine the program's effectiveness. Outputs are the measurable results of the training program or activity that are achieved within a specific timeframe, and outcomes are the broader long-term impacts of the program (Kettner et al., 2015). Outcomes point to results. This program had immediate outputs and long-term outcomes concerned with pastoral skill increases and changes in leadership style that are expected to lead to positive improvements in the church and the community.

Actual Outputs

The outputs measured in this study were quantifiable indicators that included units of training delivered, training completion, and participant and participation data. The outputs were the activities that were done to help accomplish the outcomes. There were eight intended outputs and six actual outputs. One of the outputs was the total hours of training. Seven total hours of training were delivered. However, as stated, the program was intended to provide ten hours of training. The other three hours of financial management training were removed due to scheduling conflicts and a need for registrants.

Workshops. The second output was the number of workshops conducted. Seven workshops were planned, including four in-person and three online workshops. However, four

actual seminars were conducted. The three online workshops were not undertaken because of a lack of interest, as no pastors enrolled.

Participants. The third output was the number of pastors who completed the training. A total of fourteen pastors enrolled and completed the seven-hour training. The training program was initially developed to train 15-25 pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches. The operational plan aimed to have enrolled 75% of the pastors who were members of the New Beginning Family of Churches. This would have been 24 pastors. Since the New Beginning Family of Churches consisted of seven individual churches, it was thought that at least five would have been represented. However, only two churches were represented. Further, it was expected that the pastors' previous leadership skills and knowledge would have resulted from experience or years in the ministry, not training. Finally, it was thought that most pastors would have had at least a high school diploma, with some college. A few were expected to have been college graduates.

A total of fourteen pastors participated. However, this was more than anticipated, especially given the difficulty of identifying a date that did not conflict with the pastors' previous commitments or other planned church activities. Of the fourteen actual clergy members, all were African Americans who were non-denominational ministers or pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches; eight (57.1%) were females, five (35.7%) were males, and one did not disclose a gender. Nine (64.3%) participants were between 50 and 69, and five (35.7%) were between 30 and 49. Regarding education level, six (42.9%) participants were college graduates (42.9%). This was followed by five (35.7%) high school graduates and three (21.4%) who had some college education.

Gender. The data showed that there were a higher number of females than males. This output was surprising and unexpected given the traditionally low number of females in ministry and the even lower number of female pastors. However, female membership in the church remains higher than male membership (Campbell-Reed, 2018). Gender disparity is a problem and presents a significant obstacle for women leadership that has persisted for centuries in the church and, notably, the Black church (Rudolph, 2023; Thomas, 2013; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

Thus, the larger output of females was encouraging and reflected Bishop Stokes's ongoing commitment to ordain, mentor, and train female clergy. Women pastors have reported that they received different training than their male counterparts for leadership positions, and most training was through observation and not formal instruction (Barnes, 2006; Leslie, 2013). This finding proves that the number of Black female clergy can be increased through support, encouragement, training, and preparation (Rudolph, 2023).

Table 10

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	5	35.7
Female	8	57.1
No response	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Age. While nine, or 64.3% of the pastors, were between 50 and 69, as expected, five (35.7%) were between 30 and 49. This was a welcomed finding because recent research suggests that the average age of clergy in America continues to grow (Finnell, 2024). For example, the median age increased to 57 in 2020 from 50 in 2000 (Thumma, 2021). Exasperating the problem is the large number of pastors leaving the ministry due to retirement and others quitting.

Table 11*Age*

	Frequency	Percent
30-49	5	35.7
50-69	9	64.3
Total	14	100.0

Education Level. While non-denominational organizations do not require formal education (Porter, 2014), most pastors who participated in this study were either college graduates or had some college. Of the fourteen, six (42.9%) were college graduates, three (21.4%) had some college, and five (35.7%) were high school graduates. Still, a college degree can be valuable to pastoral performance and effectiveness when combined with life experiences, on-the-job training, and mentoring.

Table 12*Education Level*

	Frequency	Percent
College Graduate	6	42.9
High School Graduate	5	35.7
Some College	3	21.4
Total	14	100.0

Differences Based on Age and Gender. Participant demographic data was captured and analyzed from electronic surveys completed online before the beginning of the training. The data included participants' age, gender, educational background, and length of time in the ministry. A comparison of expected and intended participant data was conducted to understand how these factors may have impacted training outcomes. Independent t-tests were conducted to determine

if there were significant differences in clergy effectiveness, perceived stress, and leadership based on age and gender. No significant differences were found ($p > .05$).

Website. The fourth output was developing and implementing a training conference held in Gainesville, Florida, on June 8, 2024. The successful execution of the training conference accomplished one of the program's four objectives and served as a solution to address the need for leadership and management skills. Training is necessary because it fulfills a biblical mandate found in Ephesians 4:11-12 where Paul directs the church to “equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the Body of Christ.” Further, this program provided relevant training in the areas most needed for the clergy of New Beginning Family of Churches, such as leadership, mental health, and conflict management to address their current needs.

Participation Rate. The fifth output was the participation rate. This number was calculated by determining the number of pastors who attended the training versus those who were members of the New Beginning Family of Churches. Twenty-five pastors were members of the New Beginning Family of Churches, and fourteen pastors participated, resulting in a rate of 56%. The sixth output was developing one website that offers increased access to training information. The website was completed and went live in April 2024. It was expected that by creating a website and providing learning resources, pastors would have 24-hour access to tools and resources to increase their knowledge and skills. Pastors who use the website to access information will continue to improve their learning after the training concludes.

Actual Outcomes

The actual outcomes of this program addressed the participants' changes or increases in skills. They also highlighted the program results and demonstrated its achievement. By defining the specific outcomes, we were able to determine the program's effectiveness by establishing the

immediate and long-term impact of its implementation. The survey results found that pastors' leadership and management skills increased, as indicated by differences in leadership and clergy effectiveness scores on pretest and post-test activity. Further, results from the stress scale indicated that pastors had low levels of perceived stress.

Leadership Skills. Leadership was measured by 20 items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Appendix C). This scale was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 *not at all* to 4 *frequently, if not always*. The mean of these responses was computed and served as an overall measure of leadership. This measure's reliability was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Leadership was deemed to have an excellent level of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .890. To determine if the mean responses for leadership were significantly different from a neutral response in the pretest, one-sample t-tests were conducted with SPSS. The results showed that the mean responses leadership, $t(13) = 12.601$, $p < .001$, were significantly different from a neutral response. This indicated that participants felt high levels of leadership, which revealed increased skills.

Table 13

One-Sample T-Test for Leadership

<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
12.610	13	.000	1.95	1.62	2.30

Clergy effectiveness was measured with the 15-item Clergy Effectiveness Scale (CES) (Appendix C), which utilized a six-point Likert scale with one being least effective/growth encouraged and six being most effective/well-developed. The mean of these responses was computed and served as an overall measure of clergy effectiveness. This measure's reliability was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Clergy effectiveness was deemed to have an

excellent level of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .991. To determine if the mean responses for clergy effectiveness were significantly different from a neutral response in the pretest, one-sample t-tests were conducted with SPSS. The results showed that the mean responses for clergy effectiveness, $t(13) = 4.394$, $p = .001$, significantly differed from a neutral response. This indicated that participants felt high levels of clergy effectiveness, which revealed increased skills.

Table 14

One-Sample T-Test for Clergy Effectiveness

<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
4.394	13	.001	1.71	.87	2.55

Stress and Pastoral Burnout. Ministry is challenging and stressful (Green, 2016). Based on their occupation, pastors have a high potential for burnout (Lee & Fredrickson, 2012). Pastors need coping skills to deal with the stress inherent in ministry work. One of the training objectives was to help pastors develop coping skills that can reduce stress and prevent burnout. Further, developing coping skills or other preventive methods helps protect pastors against burnout (Fulmer & Sinclair, 2023). The survey found that pastors' stress levels were low.

Stress was measured utilizing the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Appendix C). Each response was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 *never* to 4 *very often*. Increasing values corresponded to increased levels of stress. The mean of these responses was computed and served as an overall measure of perceived stress. This measure's reliability was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. A generally accepted rule is that α of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater is a very good level (Serbetar & Sedlar, 2016). This variable was deemed acceptable reliability with

a Cronbach's alpha of .690. Perceived stress was not significant, $t(13) = -1.338, p = .204$, indicating that their stress levels were low. Also, formative assessments supporting this outcome found that the pastors could identify and discuss stress techniques they would implement as coping mechanisms.

Table 15

One-Sample t-Test for Perceived Stress

<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
-1.338	13	.204	-.18	-.47	.11

Increased Mental Health Knowledge. It was expected that an immediate outcome would be that pastors would increase their mental health knowledge related to pastoral burnout. Further, it was expected that their stress level and potential for pastoral burnout would be decreased due to learning new coping skills by participating in a workshop on mental health. The workshop on mental health was conducted on June 8, 2024, by Zenia Harris, a trained and licensed clinician in multiple states, including Florida. She is also an expert in pastoral burnout and mental health.

After the workshop, the researcher conducted a quick and informal interview with three of the fourteen participants. Each of the three participants was asked one question, "What was your greatest takeaway from the session?" The first participant stated, "My knowledge regarding mental health has increased because of the training." The second participant said, "I never knew how important mental health is to avoiding burnout, and I never knew that so many people in the Bible also had mental health issues." The third participant stated, "Now that I know how much stress can affect my mental health and lead to burnout, I will pay more attention to it." This formative data supported the idea that the pastors gained knowledge about mental health. Pastors

who are aware of their mental health and its importance can prioritize it to affect their church and families positively. The increased knowledge about mental health will help pastors learn to navigate the challenges of their jobs to prevent burnout.

Continuous Learning. A primary benefit of the website created as a part of the training program was that it encouraged continuous learning by providing New Beginning Family of Churches pastors with 24-hour access to training and learning resources specific to their needs at no cost. Free training removes the cost barrier for churches, which is often a concern with smaller and rural churches (Irwin & Roller, 2000; Mckenna & Eckard, 2009). The churches affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches are small, with congregations of less than 100, and have financial constraints.

Continuous learning enhances pastoral competency and clergy effectiveness (Carpenter, 2022) by promoting growth and skills development. It also allows pastors to remain abreast of relevant knowledge to meet society's needs (Irwin & Roller, 2000). Manala (2010) argues that the pastor, as the church's Chief Executive Officer, must acknowledge the need for continuous learning to help set the church's organizational and spiritual trajectory.

Servant Leadership. This study's theoretical foundation rested on servant leadership, positing that this style provided the best model for effective pastoral leadership in the 21st Century (Howell, 2003). It was advocated as the preferred leadership style for the New Beginning Family of Churches pastors because it places service as the highest level of leading and empowering followers (Greenleaf, 1977). The pastors participating in this study received training on servant leadership, which Dr. Gary Neal delivered. Based on results from the Clergy Effectiveness Scale, the pastors assigned an average score of four to the servant leadership measurement. The measurement was a “Caring Heart (servant leadership that cultivates the gifts

of the spirit and empowers others to claim their call and find their place in ministry).” A score of one indicated the least effective, and a score of six indicated the most effective or well-developed.

This higher score suggested that the pastors were at least incorporating some aspects of servant leadership into their leadership style. Pastors who use the servant leadership approach will improve their church outcomes since organizational effectiveness is connected to servant leadership (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003).

Summary of Results

This praxis project aimed to evaluate the impact training had on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches non-denominational pastors in south-central Florida. Results of one-sample t-tests revealed that the mean responses for clergy effectiveness, $t(13) = 4.394, p = .001$, and leadership, $t(13) = 12.601, p < .001$, were significantly different from a neutral response. This indicated that participants felt high levels of clergy effectiveness and leadership. Perceived stress, however, was not significant, $t(13) = -1.338, p = .204$, indicating that their stress levels were neither low nor high. Additionally, results of independent t-tests showed no significant differences in clergy effectiveness, perceived stress, and leadership based on age and gender.

Survey results found that training increased the skills of pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches based on post-survey results that revealed high clergy effectiveness and leadership scores. Additionally, clergy members' comments and feedback during the training support this finding. Pastors also showed increased mental health knowledge and indicated lower levels of stress based on survey results. After participating in the training, they gained additional coping strategies to reduce pastoral burnout. However, the results of independent t-tests indicated

no significant differences in clergy effectiveness, perceived stress, and leadership based on age, gender, and education.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND APPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses what happened after the project was implemented and answers the question, “So What?” It reviews evidence of the project's results and significance to leadership practice by examining its impact and potential benefits. This chapter further discusses the implications of this study for future research, noting limitations and future applications.

Findings, Impacts, Conclusions

Findings

The findings concluded that implementing the training program increased the leadership and management skills of the New Beginning Family of Churches clergy. The primary problem was that pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches needed to improve their skills to address the issues that confronted their congregations and communities. Descriptive measures of clergy effectiveness and leadership were used to determine if there were skills changes in leadership and management. The greatest mean was found with clergy effectiveness ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.46$). This indicated that participants felt that their leadership and management abilities were effective. The following highest mean was found with leadership ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.58$). The mean of $M = 3.96$ indicated that the participants felt a high leadership level overall.

The program's participant outputs confirmed that it trained 14 pastors, though it was intended to train between 15 and 20. However, while the program was expected to train primarily males, it trained more females. There were eight females and five males, and one did not disclose a gender. Also, the age of the participants was expected to be at least 50 since the average age of clergy is 57 (Thumma, 2021). However, only nine (64.3%) participants were between 50 and 69, and five (35.7%) were between 30 and 49. The participants' education level was also higher than expected, as six (42.9%) were college graduates, three (21.4%) had some

college education, and five (35.7%) were high school graduates. Still, independent t-tests determined no significant differences in clergy effectiveness, perceived stress, and leadership based on age and gender.

Table 16

T-tests of Clergy Effectiveness, Perceived Stress, and Leadership Based on Age

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Clergy effectiveness	.876	12	.398	.72	.82	-1.07	2.51
Perceived stress	-.115	12	.910	-.03	.29	-.66	.60
Leadership	1.024	12	.326	.33	.32	-.37	1.04

Table 17

T-tests of Clergy Effectiveness, Perceived Stress, and Leadership Based on Gender

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Clergy effectiveness	-1.370	11	.198	-1.14	.83	-2.98	.69
Perceived stress	-.818	11	.431	-.24	.29	-.41	.89
Leadership	1.058	11	.313	.35	.33	-1.08	.38

This program also emphasized the importance of pastoral mental health and coping skills. Mental health remained an urgent issue for the leader of the collaborating organization, Bishop Stokes because he saw it as essential to their performance and ability to lead (C. Stokes, personal communication, October 8, 2022). In this study, the discussion of mental health encompassed the reduction of stress and burnout. Stress is an ever-present challenge to the clergy community, as many suffer from anxiety that can lead to burnout. A survey administered after the training found that perceived stress had the smallest mean ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 0.50$), indicating participants did not

have high stress, which suggested that the probability of pastoral burnout due to stress was reduced. A long-term impact of decreased pastoral burnout is higher pastoral retention rates and fewer pastors leaving the ministry due to exhaustion (Barna Group, 2023).

Developing an organizational website provided an avenue for constant, on-demand education through online programs and resources that can encourage continuous learning. It was concluded that enhanced leadership and management skills among pastors benefit the pastor, church, and community. These skills will allow pastors to respond effectively to 21st-century challenges confronting their churches and communities and help foster church growth (Porter, 2014). Further, pastoral competency fulfills a biblical mandate to ensure pastors have the skills to lead their churches and congregations (Carpenter, 2022).

Impacts

The training program positively impacted the leadership and management skills of the pastors of New Beginning Family of Churches, as demonstrated by the skill increases. This directly addressed the problem of inadequate leadership and management skills. Pastors can use these skills to address their churches' unique issues, including stagnated church growth and tithing concerns. Pastoral competency and effective leadership allow the church to respond to congregational problems. Though the New Beginning Family of Churches organization comprises pastors from different churches, skilled leaders can contribute to the church's stability and growth.

The Perceived Stress Scale showed that pastors did not have high stress. This may be attributed to the pastor's ability to develop coping strategies to deal with stress. Coping skills can aid in increasing pastor retention. Also, high ratings on the Clergy Effectiveness Scale related to servant leadership showed that participants have incorporated some of its approaches into their

leadership style. Aydin and Onjun (2016) found that the servant leadership style may also reduce burnout.

Yet, while some of these were immediate impacts, this program can potentially move pastors beyond impact to transform their community. The increased skills the pastors have gained can help them address the social, economic, and political issues that confront their communities and affect their congregation. For example, Micanopy faced several challenges, including police brutality, social injustice, racism, and discrimination. The church is expected to respond to societal ills and issues (Porter, 2020). Therefore, pastors must know how to manage the church's operations in addition to societal needs. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu theorized that pastors' inability to confront societal ills resulted from ineffective training (Masenya & Booyse, 2016). Poorly operated churches and ill-prepared leaders not only weaken the church's vision and mission but can also disrupt the growth of the surrounding community. Transformational organizations are elevated to the next level of maturity and can work productively to solve complex problems and achieve high performance. In the Bible, transformation refers to change or renewal. It can only come from Christ (Acts 4:12). Transformational churches can transform lives by spreading the gospel message of Jesus Christ and bringing those who were once far from God to draw near to Him through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13).

Conclusions

The church must concern itself with the training of its leaders because the needs of the 21st-century church require that clergy possess various skills, specifically those relating to leadership and management. This praxis demonstrated that training could impact skills and can be used to increase leaders' skills, as confirmed by formative and summative assessments.

Further, the mental health of pastors must be a priority in the church since pastoral work is demanding and stressful. This study showed that training can increase pastors' mental health knowledge and help them develop coping skills and techniques to reduce stress.

The vision of this program was that pastors under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches possess the leadership and management skills to meet the diverse needs of the 21st-century church and its congregation. This is a realistic vision. However, to achieve this, training must be ongoing. While this program was a step in the right direction, it cannot be a one-time event. The organization must incorporate training conferences and other events into its budget to ensure at least annual training for all its pastors. Bishop Stokes recognized the need for training and continues to advocate for it. However, training must be consistent and planned. Also, a focus must be placed on developing pastors' leadership and management skills. Future workshops must include training on these skills. Further pastoral skill development must be seen as a lifetime effort since societal needs change, and pastors must remain abreast. This means that pastors must be encouraged to visit and use the website created under this program to access training resources. While the online component of this training could not be implemented, it is strongly encouraged to be combined with in-person training to increase participation and accessibility.

Implications for Organizations and Leaders

While this study's findings applied to the immediate organization, they also have broader implications. The findings of this study are important to the professional practice of ministry training and retaining clergy. This study may include training strategies that church leaders can adopt to increase their clergy's leadership and management skills. While other approaches can be used, this study confirms that training effectively increases clergy skills. Further, the findings of

this study can encourage church leaders to prioritize developing the leadership and management skills of their leaders. It also confirmed existing research, which points to the need to develop clergy leadership and management skills (Smith, 2017; Porter, 2014; Cunningham, 2022; Young, 2020; Nkonge, 2011). To be successful, pastors must continually advance their knowledge of leadership and management practices.

This study confirmed that churches must recognize the importance of helping clergy develop coping skills to reduce stress. Church leaders who apply the findings of this research may increase their pastor retention since research suggests two out of five pastors have considered leaving the ministry (Barna Group, 2023). As such, the retention of pastors is of concern to all churches. Finally, the participant outputs revealed a need to train more younger ministers to fill the advancing leadership gap (Barna Group, 2023). Pastoral leadership succession is an unavoidable conversation that churches must have, and they must set up a new generation for leadership (Barna Group, 2023).

Applications for Organizations and Leaders

The New Beginning Family of Churches organization's obvious application from this study is creating a permanent training program to prepare and train clergy throughout the community based on the effectiveness of training in skill acquisition. Developing or enhancing clergy leadership and management skills is not just a problem the collaborating organization faces. Research has proven it is a broader issue for clergy, churches, and organizational leaders (Cunningham, 2022; Porter, 2014; Irwin & Roller, 2000; Graham, 2023). Yet, as this program and other research findings demonstrate, training can improve these skills (Porter, 2014; Graham, 2023; Green, 2016; McClymonts, 2016). Based on the positive results of this training

program and as a well-known and active community resource, the New Beginning Christian Worship Center could host an annual training for other non-denominational churches.

A particular focus should be developing relationships and recruiting pastors from smaller congregations to aid their training since they have limited resources. This will also help increase the number of churches under the leadership of the New Beginning Family of Churches. Also, the organization's leadership is encouraged to continue its focus on developing women clergy. The actual outputs showed that this program trained more females than males. This is exciting as it can contribute to more female clergy answering the call of God on their lives. It can also help with their preparation and retention.

Advice to Future Research Practitioners

There is a need for future research related to clergy training to increase leadership skills. Further investigation concerning training conducted for a longer period should be explored to evaluate its effects on skill increases. Further, mentoring, coaching, strategic writing, and reading methods should be explored to determine their impact on increasing pastoral skills. While this research focused on nondenominational pastors, future research can explore other denominations. Also, the scope of this research was limited to pastors within the state of Florida, but future research can expand to different geographical areas. However, though the survey data showed increases, several limitations to this study must be noted and avoided if replicated. The study's small sample size for the pre-test and post-test was a methodological limitation that may suggest limited confidence in the differences found in the statistical mean. It is therefore recommended that replication studies increase the sample size.

Another limitation of the study was that its primary data collection method was closed-end surveys. More qualitative data was needed to support and strengthen the research findings

by clarifying participant responses properly and gaining insight into their feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. While formative assessments such as one-on-one interviews with participants were held, they were short and informal and occurred with less than half the participants. In future studies, structured interviews should be conducted with a more significant number of participants and for a longer time to allow the researcher to gather richer and more revealing information.

The survey was used because it provided many benefits. It could be conducted with any number of participants. It was also administered at different times during the study, such as pre-activity and post-activity, with the same participants to determine whether changes occurred throughout the activity or over time. As a web-based instrument, it was easy to administer and collect data, and it had strong validity and reliability because it included three popular scales. Finally, a valuable insight gained from this study is ensuring the collaborating coach can devote the time needed to the project and maintain consistent communication and ongoing feedback. While existing relationships with organizations can be beneficial, this approach requires a strong partnership between the researcher, collaborating organization, and coach.

Project Summation

This praxis project addressed the problem that clergy who led churches under the New Beginning Family of Churches lacked the leadership and management skills to address their churches' diverse challenges and needed training. Implementing a training program was proposed as a response to increasing clergy skills. Though the total number of workshops and the total hours of the program decreased, the program delivered training that improved the pastor's leadership and management skills, as supported by increases in clergy effectiveness as measured by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale and increases in leadership as measured by the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire. These skills will allow the pastors to better address the problems that

confront their church and community. Also, by developing the New Beginning Family of Churches website, pastors were provided with on-demand access to educational and learning resources that can encourage continuous learning. Further, pastors learned increased coping skills that reduced stress and decreased pastoral burnout.

This study was significant because it provided a greater understanding of the relationship between training and skill increases. It supported the need for churches to provide training to help develop leadership and management skills in the clergy. Further, it encouraged church leaders to recognize that training must be consistent and continuous to ensure pastors can keep abreast of society's changing needs.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Title of the Project: An Examination of How Training Impacts the Leadership and Management Competency of Pastors of Non-denominational Congregations

Principal Investigator: Christine Rudolph, Student, School of Education in Christian Leadership, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a pastor of New Beginning Family of Churches in south-central Florida and at least 18 years or older. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

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

Research has concluded that clergy need management and leadership skills to lead the 21st-century church and meet its diverse challenges effectively. These leadership skills can be taught and developed through training, mentoring, and modeling. This proposed praxis project will evaluate the impact training has on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches non-denominational pastors in south-central Florida as determined by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale, Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire, and Perceived Stress Scale.

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. Participate in a training conference via a face-to-face meeting to serve as a kick-off to the training program, which will be held before the online training sessions begin.
2. Complete an online survey to measure your baseline leadership/management skills, financial literacy, continuous learning, and mental health knowledge.
3. Participate in an online training program designed to increase learning continuously. This program will provide on-demand access to training resources, available 24 hours a day.
4. Participate in a training course that will educate pastors on mental health to reduce the possibility of pastoral burnout.

5. Complete an online survey measuring your leadership/management skills, financial literacy, continuous learning, and mental health knowledge. This survey will determine whether the training was effective in improving leadership/management skills, financial literacy, continuous learning, and mental health knowledge.

6. Participate in interviews which will be used to measure pastor's opinions, views, and knowledge and allow them to express your thoughts regarding the effectiveness of the training.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, benefits to society include, through the creation a training program, the leadership and management skills of pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches will be increased, which will allow them to meet the demands of their ministry. Additionally, this study will help pastors keep pace with societal changes and church needs.

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. However, there may be some questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. If you do experience any sort of discomfort and need to discuss, please feel free to reach out to me anytime via my contact information provided.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Participant responses will be anonymous by replacing names with pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

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

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Christine Rudolph. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the researcher at [phone number and/or email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [name], at [email].

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

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 15, 2024

Christine Rudolph
Deidra Jackson

Re: IRB Application - [REDACTED] An Examination of How Training Impacts Leadership and Management Competency of Pastors of Non-Denominational Congregations

Dear Christine Rudolph and Deidra Jackson,

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 that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study/project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

For a PDF of your IRB 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.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

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

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX C

Survey

Form

AN EXAMINATION OF HOW TRAINING IMPACTS THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY OF PASTORS OF NON-DENOMINATIONAL CONGREGATIONS

Informed Consent

Title of the Project: An Examination of How Training Impacts the Leadership and Management

Competency of Pastors of Non-denominational Congregations

Principal Investigator: Christine Rudolph, Student, School of Education in Christian Leadership, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a pastor of New Beginning Family of Churches in south-central Florida, and at least 18 years or older. 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?

Research has concluded that clergy need management and leadership skills to effectively lead the 21st century church and meet its diverse challenge. These leadership skills can be taught and developed through training, mentoring, and modeling. The purpose of this proposed praxis project will be to evaluate the impact training has on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches non-denominational pastors in south-central Florida as determined by the Clergy Effectiveness Scale.

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. Participate in a training conference via a face-to-face meeting to serve as a kick-off to the training program and which will be held before the online training sessions begin.
2. Complete an online survey that will measure your baseline levels of leadership/management skills, financial literacy, continuous learning, and mental health knowledge.

3. Participate in an online training program that is designed to increase learning continuously. This online training program will provide on-demand access to training resources, available 24-hours a day.
4. Participate in a training course that will educate pastors on mental health to reduce the possibility of pastoral burnout.
5. Complete an online survey that will measure your levels of leadership/management skills, financial literacy, continuous learning, and mental health knowledge. This survey will determine whether the training was effective in improving leadership/management skills, financial literacy, continuous learning, and mental health knowledge.
6. Participate in interviews which will be used to measure pastor's opinions, views, and knowledge and allow them to express your thoughts regarding the effectiveness of the training.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, benefits to society include, through the creation a training program, the leadership and management skills of pastors affiliated with the New Beginning Family of Churches will be increased, which will allow them to meet the demands of their ministry. Additionally, this study will help pastors keep pace with societal changes and church needs.

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. However, there may be some questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. If you do experience any sort of discomfort and need to discuss, please feel free to reach out to me anytime via my contact information provided.

How will personal information be protected?

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

have access to the records. Participant responses will be anonymous by replacing names with pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

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

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Christine Rudolph. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact the researcher at [phone number and/or email].

You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [name], at [email].

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

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about.

You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I consent to take part in this study and understand I will be offered a copy of the completed form.

☐

Name

Email

Phone Number

Education Level

AGE

What Church are you affiliated with?

New Beginnings Christian Worship Center

How long have you worked in Ministry?

What is your gender? (Will not be used for inclusion/exclusion)

What is your Race? (Will not be used for inclusion/exclusion)

I fail to interfere until problems become serious.

I talk about my most important values and beliefs.

I am absent when needed.

I wait for things to go wrong before taking action.

I spend time teaching and coaching.

I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group.

I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.

I display a sense of power and confidence.

I articulate a compelling vision of the future.

I avoid making decisions.

I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.

I get others to look at problems from many different angles.



I help others develop their strengths.



I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.



I delay responding to urgent questions.



I express satisfaction when others meet expectations.



I express confidence that goals will be achieved.



I am effective in meeting others' job-related needs.



I heighten others' desire to succeed.



I am effective in meeting organizational requirements.



Clergy Effectiveness Scale

Score each area of clergy effectiveness on a scale of 1-6, with 1 being least effective/growth encouraged and 6 being most effective/well-developed.

SPIRITUAL AUTHENTICITY
(disciplined spiritual life; healthy boundaries; self-awareness; ability to self-assess; accountable for work and actions)



INTEGRITY (responsible behavior aligned with Christian beliefs; selfcare; holistic stewardship; professional boundaries/practices; upholds UMC)



SOUND THEOLOGY



(understands/knows/celebrates power of Christ to bring healing & wholeness/forgiveness & reconciliation/justice & peace)

CARING HEART (servant leadership that cultivates the gifts of the spirit and empowers others to claim their call and find their place in ministry)



RELATIONAL (ability to listen; develop working teams; equip persons for ministry; manage conflict in a way that leads to healthy resolution)



ADAPTABILITY (ability to be flexible through openness to the Holy Spirit; engaged in life-long learning)



VISIONING AND IMPLEMENTATION
(identifies & articulates a vision; implements & assesses the work of making a vision reality)



PASSIONATE WORSHIP AND PROCLAMATION (communicates & applies the Gospel in culturally relevant ways, rooted in UM doctrine/theology)



RADICAL HOSPITALITY
(challenges the people to give their utmost to offer the gracious invitation and reception of Christ)



INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT
(helps disciples mature in faith; leads church in forming disciples for transformation of the world)



RISK-TAKING MISSION (engages in/mobilizes others in evangelistic



witness and practical, hands-on involvement in the world)

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY
(models/encourages sharing and giving that exceeds expectations) .



ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP
(demonstrates administrative skills for overseeing congregational life)



PASTORAL CARE (devotes time to pastoral care; encourages/equips laity for congregational care)



Perceived Stress Scale

For each question choose from the following alternatives:

- 0 - never
- 1 - almost never
- 2 - sometimes
- 3 - fairly often
- 4 - very often

In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?



In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?



In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?



In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?



In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?



In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?



In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?



In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?



In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?



APPENDIX D

Trainers' Biographies

Bishop Christopher Stokes, Senior Pastor, New Beginning Christian Worship Center

Christopher Stokes is the esteemed founder and Senior Pastor of New Beginning Christian Worship Center. Additionally, he holds the positions of founder and Executive Director of the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center. In 2019, he was consecrated to the office of Bishop. Noteworthy for his service as an Army veteran, Bishop Stokes pursued studies in criminal justice at the University of Maryland, followed by scholarly pursuits in Biblical Studies at Liberty University. A dedicated and passionate community advocate and leader, Bishop Stokes diligently fosters the advancement of Micanopy. Manifesting a profound vision of unity in service to Christ across all age groups, from the youth to the elderly, Bishop Stokes has notably worked with the youth population at the former Gainesville Job Corps Center and various locations throughout Florida. He exhibits unwavering dedication to the training and enhancing the skills of his clergy team and church leaders.

Reverend Christine Rudolph, Doctoral Candidate & Lead Researcher

Christine Rudolph is an ordained minister and a doctoral candidate pursuing her Ed.D. degree in Christian Leadership and Ministry at Liberty University's Rawlings School of Divinity, expected to be conferred in August 2024. She is a senior executive with over three decades of experience in management and leadership roles within the for-profit and non-profit sectors. She is a former commissioned officer in the US Army, responsible for leading, managing, and training diverse teams, and she also functions as a small business proprietor. Christine obtained an M.S. in Management from Minot State University, an M.Ed. in Counseling, and an M.S. in Criminal Justice from Auburn University, Montgomery. Her undergraduate studies culminated at Spelman College, where she earned a B. A. in Political Science. Her research focal points encompass clergy studies, leadership dynamics, and matters of race and gender. The most recent publication authored by Christine is titled "A Different Perspective: A Study of Challenges Confronting Black Clergywomen Through the Lenses of Critical Race Feminism," featured in the Journal of Values-Based Leadership.

Captain Dorian Keith, Alachua County Sheriff's Department

Dorian Keith serves as the Contract Monitor and onboarding liaison at the Alachua Sheriff's Department, boasting a tenure of over 24 years. She has occupied various roles as detention officer, sergeant, and lieutenant. Her extensive expertise encompasses specialized training in crisis intervention, ethics, integrity-focused leadership, diversity in the workforce, officer accountability, and investigative procedures. Noteworthy is her prolonged tenure of more than 22 years on the crisis intervention team. She pursued her education at Santa Fe Community College, where she obtained a certification in Childcare Development. Furthermore, she completed the FDLE Florida Command Leadership Academy.

Reverend Dr. Gary Neal, Sr, Associate Pastor, New Beginning Christian Worship Center

Rev. Gary L. Neal, Sr. is the Associate Pastor at New Beginning Christian Worship Center in Micanopy, FL. He is a renowned life coach who has based his life on the Christian worldview and uses his lens to guide willing individuals to reach their true potential. Dr. Neal published his book *Embracing Your New Beginnings* as an author, **allowing** him to share the knowledge and wisdom he has learned from his experiences following God's path. He founded Redeemed Ministries to spiritually and professionally mentor individuals, including ex-inmates. He served 26 years as a police sergeant in Elgin, IL, and now manages security operations at UF Health Shands Hospital. Dr. Neal holds a doctorate in Theology from Adullam Bible College and an MA in Organizational Leadership from Judson University.

Zenia Harris, LCSW-QS, MSW, Clinical Social Worker

Zenia Harris is a licensed clinical social worker and therapist in Florida, Rhode Island, and Maine. With extensive experience, she specializes in clinical and case management services. Zenia is also the respected founder of Grace Behavioral Health, which is dedicated to empowering career-focused women, millennials, and Generation Z members to lead anxiety—and depression-free lives.

Zenia works to reduce mental illness stigma through education, outreach, therapy, and founding a non-profit Mental Health Ministry. She collaborates with professionals, clergy, and the community to address mental health issues and offers consulting for ministry leaders. Zenia holds a master's degree in social work from the University of New England and a bachelor's degree from Saint Leo University. She is pursuing a doctorate in behavioral health leadership at Arizona State University.

APPENDIX E

Training Agenda

Saturday, June 8, 2024

7:30 -8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast and Welcome

8:00 -8:30 a.m.

Training Overview & Assessment

- Bishop Christopher Stokes
- Elder Christine Rudolph

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

General Session: Conflict Resolution & Sanctuary Safety

Location: New Beginning Worship Center Sanctuary

- Capt. Dorian Keith, Alachua County Sheriff's Office

10:00-10:15 a.m.

BREAK

10:15-11:45 a.m.

General Session: Servant Leadership

Location: Willie Mae Stokes Community Center

- Reverend Dr. Gary Neal, New Beginning Christian Worship Center

11:45 a.m.- 1:45 p.m.

General Session: Mental Health and Burn-Out: From Soul Care to Self-Care

Location: Willie Mae Stokes Community Center

- Zenia Harris
- Working Lunch

1:45-2:00 p.m.

BREAK

2:00-3:00 p.m.

General Session: Woman, Thou Art Loosed- Empowering, Equipping, and Encouraging Female Leaders in the Church

Location: Willie Mae Stokes Community Center

- Elder Christine Rudolph

3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Assessment & Closing Remarks

APPENDIX F

Permission Request Letter

March 7, 2024

Bishop Christopher Stokes



Dear Bishop Stokes,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctorate degree. The title of my research project is “An Examination of How Training Impacts the Leadership and Management Competency of Pastors of Non-Denominational Congregation”. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the impact training has on increasing the leadership and management skills of New Beginning Family of Churches non-denominational pastors.

Though you have already granted me verbal approval on March 4, 2024, to begin my research with New Beginning Christian Worship Center, I am writing to request your permission to contact pastors of the New Beginning Family of Churches to invite them to participate in my research study.

If you plan to recruit participants, be sure to list all study procedures. Participants will be asked to participate in a one-day, six-hour in-person training conference and three hours of online training sessions. They will also be asked to complete an online questionnaire. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to crudolph6@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Christine Rudolph
Researcher and Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX G

Permission Approval Letter

Date: March 8, 2024

Christine Rudolph

[REDACTED]

Dear Christine,

Following our discussions, and after a careful review of the Executive Summary for your Praxis Project entitled, *An Examination of how Training Impacts the Leadership and Management Competency of Pastors of Non- Denominational Congregations*. I approve your research to be conducted at New Beginning Christian Worship Center/Family of Churches, the Collaborative Organization.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

X ☒ I have granted permission for ___ Doctoral Candidate's Name ___ to contact the Collaborative Team members and to invite them to participate in the Praxis Project.

X ☒ I am requesting a copy of the results upon study publication.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] es _____

Signature

Bishop Christopher Stokes
Executive Director and Senior Pastor

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]