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NAVIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AS AN ASSISTANT PASTOR, SERVING IN AN INTERIM PASTORAL ROLE

A Dissertation Submitted to

the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

By

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ASSISTANT PASTORS IN THE INTERIM PERIOD:
NAVIGATING ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES
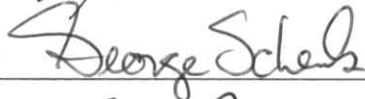
By

JOEL DAVID HATHAWAY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how assistant pastors navigate challenges of

adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor, and the assistant pastor is

expected to lead through the transition. A qualitative research methodology was

employed to explore the scope of this topic. This study found that the exiting senior

pastor, existing assistant/interim pastor, incoming senior pastor, and congregation all play

active roles in guaranteeing success during pastoral transitions. This study also identified

steps churches and pastors can take to retire outdated leadership models while integrating

collaborative leadership methods that prepare congregations for periods of transition.

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Acknowledgements

Non nobis, Domine, non nobis,
sed nomini tuo da gloriam.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Seminary training, insofar as it is able, adequately prepares pastors for the public aspects of pastoral ministry: preaching and teaching. As seminary professors Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie explain, "Pre-professional ministry training usually focuses on knowing the right content and on developing skills to accomplish ministry tasks..."[1] With this emphasis upon ministry tasks, seminary training often overlooks other key aspects of pastoral ministry. Seminaries, however, have begun to recognize and address the need for training in other essential areas, specifically leadership. A Lilly Foundation, Inc. funded grant enabled Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to study extensively issues in church leadership.[2] An informal survey conducted by Thom S. Ranier, CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources, put leadership training at the top of issues for which pastors coming out of seminary were not prepared. Quoting one pastor's reflections on leadership, Ranier writes, "I was well grounded in theology and Bible exegesis, but seminary did not prepare me for the real world of real people."[3]

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[1] Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 251-252.

[2] Wayne E. Goodwin, *Leadership in the 21st Century: Calling, Character, Competency, and Community* (Charlotte, NC: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2001).

[3] Thom S. Rainer, "Ten Things Pastors Wish They Knew Before They Became Pastors," *ThomRainer.com*, March 1, 2013, accessed January 12, 2016, http://thomrainer.com/2013/03/ten-things-pastors-wish-they-knew-before-they-became-pastors/.

With historic emphasis on preaching and teaching and more recent push for leadership development, seminaries primarily focus upon the senior minister. Meanwhile, the supporting pastor's roles, responsibilities, and areas of leadership widely differ and are of more immediate importance to the recent seminary graduate. The majority of Master of Divinity (MDiv) graduates first enter ministry in secondary or support roles, whether assistant, associate, or director-level positions (hereafter, "assistant pastor"). One practical reason for this is the number of support roles available relative to the number of senior ministry positions available. A survey of 881 MDiv alumni from Covenant Theological Seminary from 2000 to 2014 reveals that 552, or 62.6 percent, took a support role as the first ministry position after seminary.[4] The work of the assistant pastor is a fairly well studied topic, as exemplified in the research of Duke Divinity School by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson.[5]

Further complicating their roles, responsibilities, and areas of leadership, assistant pastors often find themselves in churches where their senior pastor takes another call or retires. What happens when a church loses its senior minister and the additional burdens of leadership, management, governance, and congregational care—in addition to regular teaching and pulpit preaching—fall upon assistant pastors already filling the role for which they were hired? What is the role assistant pastors play during this time of transition? What does successful leadership look like for these pastors, upon whom increased expectations are placed, often without additional training or increased

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[4] Joel D. Hathaway, "Comparative MDiv Placement Rates: 2000 to 2014," prepared for the Board of Covenant Theological Seminary, August 1, 2014, 4.

[5] Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

authority? And do the actions of assistant pastors during this time have an impact upon their ability to continue in the church after the hiring of the new senior pastor—assuming the assistant pastor either does not want or is not placed into the position as the new senior pastor, and assuming the assistant pastor desires to stay?

This type of situation occurs frequently. Churches tend to hire a second ministerial staff member when membership size is between 40-200. Tim Keller explained how pastoral care functions in churches of this size, writing, "It is a sociological fact that a full-time minister cannot personally shepherd more than about 150-200 people. At some point any human being loses the ability to personally visit, stay-in-touch, and be reasonably available to all the people." Keller continued, "The larger the church the smaller the basic pastoral span of care. In smaller churches the classes and groups can be larger, because virtually everyone in the church is cared for directly by full-time trained ministry staff, each of whom can care for 50-200 people."[6]

While 50 percent of churchgoers attend the largest 10 percent of congregations, the vast number of churches in the United States falls into the 50-200 member size.[7] Combined with statistics on pastoral turnover and attrition,[8] the stage is set for unprepared assistant pastors coming into leadership roles for which they were not hired, have not been equipped, and are not prepared.

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[6] Timothy Keller, "Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes With Growth," *The Movement Newsletter (*2006), 15.

[7] The median church in the U.S. has 75 regular participants in worship on Sunday mornings, according to the National Congregations Study http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/. Also look up: http://www.patheos.com/blogs/getreligion/2011/09/what-size-are-most-congregations/.

[8] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair,* 8.

The leadership issues present when expectations exceed the scope of formal power are complex and, often, detrimental to the leader. The leadership issues under consideration are not those for which there are technical processes established, but are those issues which Ronald Heifitz and Martin Linsky call adaptive challenges. Heifitz and Linsky defined adaptive challenges in this way,

> Every day, people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how and procedures. We call these technical problems. But there is a whole host of problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. We call these adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community.[9]

Assistant pastors regularly face adaptive challenges. An assistant pastor arrives at work on Monday to find out that the much-beloved organist left her husband the night before and moved in with a lover, revealing as she left that her plans had been two years in the making. He has no real authority to release the woman from her duties, and the session is divided over what action to take and how quickly. Yet, the assistant pastor is expected to provide answers and direction, navigate the varying parties, and lead through the time of healing in the absence of a senior pastor.

Another assistant pastor is hired for a Youth and Family Ministries position. She celebrates her six-month anniversary in a new church with the news that her senior pastor—an Army Reserve Chaplain—is going to be deployed. The church is mid-process in moving from a large-group didactic Christian Education (CE) model to a small-group,

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[9] Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 13.

dialogical, community-based CE. The senior pastor has been managing the congregational anxiety arising from the change. Despite his deployment, the session believes the church should continue with the transition. Only now, in the absence of the senior pastor, the assistant pastor is expected to manage congregational anxiety and lead the transitional process.

These are just two examples in which expectations of adaptive challenges fall upon assistant pastors neither hired nor trained for the challenges now facing them. Assistant pastors in their first role have a further disadvantage in that they do not have practical experience in observing situations that require adaptive leadership. Yet, how well these assistant pastors lead during these adaptive challenges, in the absence of senior leadership, has lasting impact on the overall health of the congregation, often determining whether the church will grow, stagnate, split, or continue at all.

These leadership challenges and expectations do not come in a vacuum. When a pastor leaves under good circumstances, the loss of that relationship can be personally disruptive to the assistant pastor. Kevin Lawson found that "[o]ver 80 percent of the long-term staff in this study were being supervised by their senior pastor…"[10] As such, the senior pastor serves in many cases as the arbitrator of the assistant pastor's interests, conductor of his evaluation, overseer of his job description, and—in periods of conflict—his defender. Assuming this is a trusted relationship, the loss of the senior pastor can expose assistant pastors to more than just leadership challenges, as they must now defend their own actions and performance to a governing board or the congregation.

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[10] Kevin E. Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2000), 24.

The simple, permanent or temporary, promotion of the assistant pastor does not solve these leadership issues. Studies showed that,

> in comparison with solo or senior pastors, associate staff members tend to have lower status in the congregation, lower salaries, and little job security. The work of many tends to be less visible to congregation members, resulting in fewer expressions of appreciation or support. Some denominations have a policy that when the senior pastor of a church resigns, associate staff members must offer their resignations to the new senior pastor.[11]

Promotion, temporary or otherwise, does not simply overcome issues that surround lack of formal authority, precisely because assistant staff members tend to have lower status and are often not as appreciated. Besides, whatever changes implemented under the newly bestowed formal leadership of assistant pastors can lead to congregational confusion when their vision and direction differ from that of the former or future senior pastor, or both.

Challenges strain relationships between the assistant pastor and congregants. These relationships are essential to a sense of vocational fulfillment, as Lawson found, stating that "over 90 percent of the thriving assistant staff who participated in this study reported that their friendship with members of their congregations were a strong source of support that helped them thrive in ministry."[12] And yet, assistant pastors are slower to develop deep and lasting influence within congregations, in part because of the view that these are transitional positions or stepping stones.[13]

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[11] Ibid., 4.

[12] Ibid., 91.

[13] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 12-13.

Many first-time pastors choose assistant positions specifically out of a desire to learn and grow under a senior pastor, to gain experience, or to focus in a specialized area of ministry, like youth or worship. When assistant pastors are suddenly expected to function formally or informally as the senior pastor, they can be overwhelmed. Lawson found that assistant pastors thrive when they "keep focus on the people served, not on the programs or activities organized and run."[14] Yet, most senior pastors have substantially more responsibility in meetings, with committees, and in administrative duties because of the breadth of their responsibilities. This complexity is assumed under senior leadership,[15] but it can wreck the ministry of an assistant pastor. Lawson described these challenges as storms, writing, "For some associate staff members, these storms are so overwhelming that they end up looking for a new church to serve or a new vocation."[16] So overwhelmed, assistant pastors may leave the church shortly after the senior pastor at exactly the period when consistency and leadership are so necessary and essential.

Moreover, many of these assistant pastors have been serving under senior pastors who have a view of the "one genius model" of leadership. Bonem and Patterson write, "[T]he implicit approach that many churches employ is a variation of the 'one genius' model. The senior pastor imparts all the ideas and is responsible for giving direction, and the members and other staff are expected to accept and implement." This may work sufficiently well as long as the health, energy, capacities, and family life of the senior pastor are stable. But the model will break down, demonstrated by the number of

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[14] Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry*, 47.

[15] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 8.

[16] Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry*, 173.

churches in significant conflict after the loss of a long-term senior pastor. Too often,

assistant pastors who have not been trained to lead are expected to do just that, during

times of transition. Bonem and Patterson explain, "The expectations placed on many

second chairs seem to be commensurate with the full authority of a first chair, but the

reality is that they often have limited formal authority."[17]

Consider this list from seasoned assistant pastors to new and would-be assistant

pastors, regarding their relationship with the senior pastor:

- It is our job to make our senior pastor look good.
- You are there to protect his back. In return, the senior pastor (hopefully) will guard your back and be your defender.
- Develop a mutually supportive relationship with the senior pastor… You need each other, and you need to know you can trust each other.
- Before you can expect your own vision to be respected and realized, it is important to learn to share someone else's vision.[18]

If these are important components to a thriving, assistant pastorate, then the disruption of

these—through the departure of the senior pastor—is equally difficult and unnerving.

Statement of the Purpose

During a season of senior pastor transition, associate pastors face the unique

challenges of growing expectations and responsibilities, often without the necessary

positional authority or informal influence necessary to navigate those challenges.

Examining assistant pastors who have navigated these leadership challenges during

senior pastor transition can help identify particular elements that have contributed to their

success in that role. Additionally, churches can better understand the difficulties that arise

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[17] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 11.

[18] Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry,* 160-161.

when an assistant pastor assumes senior leadership, even just temporarily, during a time of senior transition. The purpose of this study was to explore how assistant pastors in their first or second ministry position navigate challenges of adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study of assistant pastors leading adaptive challenges during times of transition within the church:

How do assistant pastors' areas of responsibility change when a church loses its senior pastor?

What leadership challenges do assistant pastors experience when a church loses its senior pastor?

How did assistant pastors navigate leadership challenges when an organization loses its senior pastor?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will provide resources to churches and assistant pastors during times of senior pastor transition, and to senior pastors who would like to set up their congregations for success after their departure. Churches will better understand the precarious nature of assistant pastor leadership during a time of organizational transition. This directly impacts the ability of the assistant pastor to thrive after the call of the next senior pastor or, at least, to transition well into another better-suited ministry context.

The impact of this study for assistant pastors will differ based upon the role individuals hope and desire to fulfill during and after the transition period: to fill the vacated senior position, to serve effectively during—and remain after—the transition, or to move to another congregation and role after the transition. Assistant pastors seeking to fill the vacated senior position are likely to have a more realistic view of their own

capacities and limitations, while better grasping the issues before them and expectations put upon them.

Assistant pastors desiring to lead the congregation during a senior pastor transition, and continuing in a support role after the transition, are often personally and professionally transformed by the period of interim leadership. Assistant pastors who thrive "appreciate the variety of tasks and challenges. Over time, as new challenges come, God draws out new gifts for ministry. It is not unusual for staff members to discover that they are good at and enjoy assignments that they had not considered when they first entered vocational ministry."[19] Assistant pastors who thrive during the transition between pastors usually grow through the process. Whether they return to a version of their previous role or a completely different role within the church under the new pastor, their capacities as a pastor are greater. What is more, their leadership is informed by experience gained in the time of transition.

Additionally, assistant pastors who do not desire to stay in the church during or after the transition will, nevertheless, understand how others have navigated the increased expectations placed upon them during transitional periods, preparing them for leadership issues they are likely to face in other ministry contexts.

Finally, this research will be beneficial for session boards seeking to support assistant pastors in their increased work, even as they oversee the church in the midst of transition. The research will also inform search committees as they engage with potential senior-pastor candidates in the pastoral search process.

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[19] Ibid., 59.

Definition of Terms

Assistant Pastor—Anybody ordained to and serving in an official support role within a church context, who should or does "understand that their authority and effectiveness as a second chair stem from a healthy, subordinate relationship with their first chair."[20]

Adaptive Challenge—Any of a host of problems that is not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. Adaptive Challenges cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. Adaptive challenges require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community.[21]

Complex System—In a complex system, "the many elements or parts interact with one another often exchanging ideas or information, responding to environmental stimuli, and are diverse (not homogenous); however, there is no central control of this process." [22]

Corinth—A former municipality in the 1st century in the providence of Corinthia, Greece. The city was home to a church planted by the apostle Paul during one of his three missionary journeys. Historians believe Paul wrote both First and Second Corinthians around 57 CE.

Differentiation—"Differentiation deals with the efforts to define oneself, to control oneself, to become a more responsible person, and to permit others to be themselves as

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[20] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 4.

[21] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 13.

[22] Lex Hoogduin, "Introduction to Social Complexity" (video lecture in course titled Decision Making in a Complex and Uncertain World, University of Groningen, FutureLearn website, February 15, 2015), accessed December 4, 2015, https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/complexity-and-uncertainty/2/steps/21615.

well. Differentiation is the ability to remain connected in relationship to significant people in our lives and yet not have our reactions and behavior determined by them."[23]

Family-Systems Theory—A theory introduced and developed by Dr. Murray Bowen suggesting that individuals cannot be really understood in isolation from one another but only in the broader context of their family as an emotional unit or ego mass.

Hegelianism—The philosophy of the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel in which he posted that "the rational alone is real."[24]

Industrial Revolution—A period in western society from about 1760 to 1840 when industry transitioned from the power and production models of the old hierarchical, agrarian, and mercantile systems to modern manufacturing and organizational systems.

Leadership—The art of serving within a system while holding some level of formal and/or informal authority in that system, practiced by one who is expected to—or desires to—achieve some outcome for the system as a whole.

Master of Divinity (MDiv)—The degree historically sought by and required for those seeking ordained pastoral positions, usually requiring some combination of study in the biblical languages (i.e., Hebrew and Greek), history, literature and theory, hermeneutical (i.e., interpretive) principles, homiletics, and often, various aspects of practical theology (e.g. counseling, governance and polity).

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[23] Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha L. Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 18.

[24] George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel: Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, translated by H.B. Nisbet, rev.ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Naturalist—One whose worldview sees all existence as purely physical, actively

denying—and usually negating—any claims of a spiritual realities; used interchangeably

with Darwinist.

Occupational Mobility—Refers to the ease with which individual workers can switch

from one field of employment or vocation to another; also known as Occupational Labor

Mobility.

Post-Industrial—The specific economic developmental stage in a society when the

service sector is responsible for more of the Gross National Produced (GNP) than the

manufacturing sector.

System—A "system is any group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent parts that

form a complex and unified whole that has a specific purpose."[25]

Senior Pastor—the individual who functions as the primary pastor within a church

context and is usually responsible for the majority of preaching, vision-casting, and

leadership oversight.

Taylorism—The principles and/or practice of Winslow Taylor's theory of scientific

management.

Worldview—The comprehensive system through and by which individuals interpret and

apply gained knowledge, and subsequently orient themselves to the world around them.

  This section has introduced the key ideas and goals of this study. It has defined

the limits by which the study will explore the issues. Key terminology used throughout

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[25] Daniel H. Kim, *Introduction to Systems Thinking*, Innovations in Management Series (Waltham, MA: Pegasus Communications, Inc., 1999), 2.

the paper has been defined. In the next section, the literature relevant to leadership issues facing assistant pastors will be reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore how assistant pastors in their first or second ministry position navigate challenges of adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor. In order to understand the ways in which assistant pastors navigate these challenges, questions pertaining to the issues have been put forth and explored with leaders serving in these positions.

This section presents a review and analysis of pertinent literature on the key aspects of the purpose statement. Three areas of literature were selected to provide insight into the uniqueness of assistant pastoral ministry, and they include a historic review and critique of 20th century leadership models, leadership literature specific to pastoral ministry, and literature on the biblical view of leadership.

Literature on leadership that applies across a wide range of disciplines provides an understanding of the difficulties of leading, irrespective of context. This literature also gives insights into the particular demands that arise from leading in the midst of change and transition in the face of adaptive challenges. Literature on organizational and emotional systems offers additional insights into the functioning of complex human dynamics. These insights are necessary in order to evaluate, interact with, critique, and change these systems successfully. Literature on the specifics of current church function contributes further insight into the actual systems in which pastors participate. Finally, biblical literature provides a framework for pastoral ministry and characteristics of

leadership specific to a Judeo-Christian context. While this section will examine the models of leadership that the respective literature presents, it is also important to ask how the literature addresses the unique challenges assistant pastors face in their first or second ministry position as they navigate challenges of leadership when the church loses its senior pastor, specifically: being thrust into a position the assistant pastor was not hired for; being thrust into a position for which the assistant pastor was not trained; leading through a period of transition.

Literature on Leadership

The discussion and subsequent evaluation of current leadership models and practices must include the context in which these models came to be. Not all organizations change at the same rate; some industries, because of specific, quantifiable requisites, can effectively continue under what others would consider an outdated view of leadership. By sketching the historic landscape of leadership models, it becomes possible to assess and evaluate the specific mode of leadership practiced and promoted currently, for the sake of this study, in Presbyterian and reformed church contexts.

Leadership as a field of study is relatively young. The ethical and philosophical landscape of the early 19th century was shaped by the Industrial Revolution,[26] in which leadership was simply one expression of management. Collective entities, precursors to corporations, were functionally mercantile in their organizing structure. The protestant work ethic drove production, even as Hegelianism drove a wedge between the natural and

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[26] The Industrial Revolution spans from roughly 1760, with improvements in the European textile industry, and ended around 1840. It is important to note that the revolution was geographically centered in western, European culture and dissipated in influence beyond the global influence of those national powers. The Industrial Revolution may be rightly viewed as the synthesis of scientific discoveries and technological improvements spurring more of the same in other industries: textiles (production), iron works, mechanization of labor-intensive work, energy, communication, finance, and media, to name a few.

the spiritual. Philosopher Hegel published his *Encyclopedia of Philosophic Thought* in

1816. Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard argued for non-rational faith in his writings circa

1840. Naturalist Charles Darwin presented a purely naturalistic thesis for the origins of

life when he wrote *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. This combination of post-

Enlightenment rationalism with naturalism provided the fertile soil from which modernity

sprung. Paul Johnson wrote summarizing the period,

> Among the advanced races, the decline and ultimately the collapse of the religious impulse would leave a huge vacuum. The history of modern times is in great part the history of how that vacuum had been filled. Nietzsche rightly perceived that the most likely candidate would be what he called the "Will to Power," which offered a far more plausible explanation of human behaviour than either Marx or Freud. [27]

Post-Industrial Era Leadership

As late as 1910, the European aristocracy framed leadership as just one more

expression of the ruling class over and against the common man. Earliest usages of the

word, leadership, were legal and political in nature, dating no earlier than 1834.[28]

In the United States, where no real aristocracy existed, the pursuit of a workable

model of leadership brought together budding consumerism with a nascent scientific

theory (as applied to the social sciences). Economic pragmatists on the one side, and

practical idealist on the other, offered very different models of leadership.

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[27] Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001), 48.

[28] *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 144.

The former employed theoretic methodologies made popular by Darwin, dividing labor into two classes: knowledge and physical. The basis for this division of labor was called scientific knowledge.

Frederick Winslow Taylor in, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, represents the philosophic approach stemming from the intersection of naturalism, rationalism, and laissez-faire industry. Taylor based his theories on "psychologists who are studying the endurance of the human animal."[29] These shallow studies failed in basic qualitative and quantitative methods, resulting in now-debunked formulations of human flourishing.

Taylor claimed his purpose for writing as the betterment of the employee. He stated, "No one can be found who will deny that in the case of any single individual the greatest prosperity can exist only when that individual has reached his highest state of efficiency; that is, is turning out his largest daily output."[30] Taylor equated individual significance with individual efficiency, a philosophically important connection. Girded by the framework of moral deism, Taylor clung to some semblance of intrinsic human dignity amid a growing naturalistic worldview.

Taylor posited that the cumulative aspects of actual labor and the study thereof— as two sides to the labor—were too much for any individual; therefore, a division of labor must occur. He wrote, "It is clear that in most cases one type of man is needed to plan ahead and an entirely different type to execute the work." [31] This premise had no factual

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[29] Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Norcross, GA: Engineering & Management Press, 1998), 4.

[30] Ibid., 8.

[31] Ibid., 25.

substantiating evidence. By all accounts, it appears to be an evolutionary hierarchy replacing the medieval divine right: the assertion that monarchs derive authority directly from God.

The most obvious limit to Taylor's logic was the influence of 20th century United States culture upon him. At that time, education was widely valued, but only to a moderate degree; however, apart from the nascent fields of science, pragmatic people preferred physical ability. It was the intelligentsia who sought to establish a philosophic approach and standard for education. The Committee of Ten was established by the National Education Association in 1892, and as of 1910 (when Taylor was writing) only 72 percent of children attended school. The influence of John Dewey (circa 1902) was just beginning to shape the primary education of children, what Dewey called "superficial beings."[32] In these educational structures, a naturalistic, biological ethic prevailed. Edwin G. Dexter, reflecting on the recommendations of the Committee of Ten, viewed the human-directed system of education vis-à-vis a naturalistic biological lens.[33]

From a philosophic perspective, Charles Darwin captured this mind-body dichotomy a generation earlier when he wrote, "A weak man, unless he be a good hunter, and well-beloved, is seldom permitted to keep a wife that a stronger man thinks worth his notice."[34] Strong men labored, fought wars, exhibited dominion over the frontier, and won women. According to Bonnie S. McElhinny, "If in the earlier years of the U.S., men

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[32] John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum* (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2011).

[33] Edwin Dexter, "Influence of Report of Committee of Ten," *The School Review* 14, no. 1 (January 1906): 254–69.

[34] Charles Darwin, Adrian Desmond, and James R. Moore, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: Penguin, 2004): Chapter 19.

had grounded a sense of manliness in virtue, honor, public service, and the life of the

mind, by the late 19th century white middle class men were also encouraged to improve

their physical strength and develop martial virtues so they could compete with other

classes and races."[35]

Summarizing this cultural perspective, strong men were put to manual labor,

while men unsuited for hard labor were dismissed to the classroom, to learn and study.

By this reasoning, those Taylor would see trained to plan ahead were self-selected out of

more physically demanding vocations. Such men were initially promoted to planning

because of their physical deficiency, not necessarily out of recognition of their

intellectual superiority. The physically strong man may have brains and brawn. The

physically weak man certainly lacks the latter; yet on these grounds, Taylor promoted the

weak man to positions of intellectual superiority.

Still, Taylor had no hesitation placing the understanding of planning outside the

scope of those who do the physical labor,

> This work is so crude and elementary in its nature that…it would be possible to
> train an intelligent gorilla so as to become a more efficient pig-iron handler….
> Yet it will be shown that the science of handling pig iron is so great and amounts
> to so much that it is impossible for the man who is best suited to this type of work
> to understand the principles of the science, or even to work in accordance with
> these principles without the aid of a man better educated than he is.[36]

In such an environment, management served almost exclusively to eliminate among

employees "soldiering or hanging out, in order to avoid a full day's work."[37] While

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[35] Bonnie S. McElhinny, ed. *Words, Worlds, and Material Girls: Language, Gender, Globalization*, Language, Power and Social Process (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 213.

[36]Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, 26.

[37] Ibid., 8.

laziness may have been a legitimate issue, the only evidence Taylor provided for soldiering is that men had been known to jog home after work with as much stamina as when they jogged in that same morning. Taylor's unstated assumption is that a fully consistent man would and should desire the exhaustion of his energy in his vocational life. This assumption leaves no room for physical energy and cognitive capacity to be retained for the benefit of family, church, and community as spheres of relationship. Taylor does not appear to give much thought to the human, relational components of leadership. He gives even less value, passingly encouraging a manager to take "genuine and kindly interest in the welfare of those under him."[38]

The long-term success of Taylorism on industry in his day is debatable. The historic impact is much more damning. Post World-War II, Taylorism was implemented in the Soviet Union and East Germany with devastating, dehumanizing consequences. In the United States, Taylorism fueled the great divide between management and labor. The Clayton Act of 1914 would attempt to close that divide by establishing that "the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce."[39] But to what end? Passed only three years after the publication of *Scientific Management*, the Clayton Act was largely ineffective, and industrial abuses would give rise to unions as the manual laborers defense against management.

The popular theories of management that built on Taylor's work took on caricature qualities that were unrealistic in the best of times. Erwin Haskill Schell, in *The Technique of Executive Control*, described organizational leaders—what he called

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[38] Ibid., 22.

[39] United States Code, Title 15, Chapter 1, § 17.

executives—in terms of control, determination, self-conduct, and emotional detachment, "Good leadership requires careful penetrative thinking and, in addition, absolute self-control. It is through the mind with its power to guide emotional pressures into constructive behavior that man has progressed."[40] Schell claimed to advance the correct—that is, scientific—method of leadership,[41] saying, "Once [executive attitude is] established on a basis of sound principles of human conduct, executive action may respond to an infinite variety of circumstances and situations with consistently constructive results."[42] Ultimately, the leader is a conduit, "the medium for the flow of orders and policies from the administrators to the employees."[43]

Schell set as the first order of executive responsibility that he "'let his light shine no less than that he doeth the thing that is right and speaketh the truth from his heart'."[44] Schell had a slightly more nuanced view of human relationships. Where Taylorism reduced people to mere functions of their visible contribution, Schell acknowledged that human relationships retain a level of complexity. He discouraged employee isolation; more than that, he encouraged employee development. Schell even called for collaboration, specifically "among horizontal contacts and industry peers." Still, Schell and Taylor had more in common than less.

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[40] Erwin Haskell Schell, *Technique of Executive Control*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1926), 8.

[41] Ibid., 1.

[42] Ibid., 20.

[43] Ibid., 11.

[44] Ibid., 161.

Over and against Taylorism, there arose a camp that embraced a human resource view of labor. Where Taylorism was the thought-child of the institution of scientific evolution, the human resource view was the thought-child of the institution of consumerism. Some of these writers attempted to develop more integrated theories of employee-employer relationships. T. N. Whitehead, for example, drew heartily from physiology, social anthropology, sociology, and psychiatry as well as business administration.[45]

Whitehead, like those before, held two fundamental principles: First, industrial society was at its most basic an economic institution; second, however much informed by the nascent fields of social science, leadership theory remained largely mechanistic.

Whitehead wrote his text after observing problems facing "the stability of industrial civilizations and especially those that may broadly be described as democratic."[46] Whitehead's wordy definition of cultural stability includes concepts of high employment in work that benefits the present and improves one's vision of the future. Such a culture is socially integrated and self-satisfying, eliminating the bifurcation of work and social life. Such stable societies would not have room for disorganized personalities; that is, people whose "desires, ambitions and social sentiments find no adequate expression in the adventure of social living."[47] This differed from Peter Drucker's pursuit of a workable society on one key point: Whitehead attempted to solve

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[45] T.N. Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, reprint edition (New York: Arno Press, 1977), ix.

[46] Ibid., 225.

[47] Ibid., 236.

the problem of instability within industrial civilizations, whereas Drucker was concerned about a workable society regardless of and irrespective to the role of industry.

Whitehead was, like many before him, a naturalist with a rationalistic worldview. In his defense, it would be difficult to be otherwise in the post-Hegelian, post-Darwinian milieu. Many had progressed, as C.S. Lewis put it, "from Hegel into Hume, thence through Pragmatism, and thence through Logical Positivism, and out at last into the complete void."[48] Lewis and Francis A. Schaeffer are much agreed on this point.

Whitehead was convinced that "the economic institutions of an industrial community are at once its chief danger and its best hope."[49] Society is hierarchically structured from bottom to top. Whitehead specifically saw the role of family and church diminishing in importance as economic institutions became society's best hope. Whitehead believed the threat to stable democracy was social disintegration: "It is my central thesis that a modern industrial society suffers from a dangerous lack of social integration, and that certain characteristics of individual activities are likely to increase this condition unless steps to be taken to prevent it."[50] Business was the organization of social activity.[51] Where and when societal failure occurred, Whitehead blamed industry for "failing in its job of producing a widespread activity."[52]

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[48] C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1996), 353.

[49] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*., viii.

[50] Ibid., 231.

[51] Ibid., 16.

[52] Ibid., 238.

Despite decades of advancing an industrial based society, the disintegration Whitehead opposed has become almost reality in the 80 years since his writing. Whitehead predicted that, should industry fail, disintegrated people—unhappy and lonely—would require psychoanalysis (i.e., what may currently be known as psychological care) beyond the availability of those services.[53] Indeed, people—in the wake of the greatest global, economic period in history—require just that.

In 2015, the National Institute of Mental Health reported that ten million adults in the United States currently suffer a serious mental illness, representing 4.5 percent of the population.[54] Moreover, a total of 43.8 million adults in the U.S alone currently suffer any form of mental illness: 18.5 percent of the nation's population. Nearly 50 percent of incarcerated people suffer from mental health problems: 56 percent of state prisoners, 45 percent of federal prisoners, and 64 percent of jail inmates.[55]

In the past 80 years, what Whitehead called social disintegration in business has grown by exponents. Whitehead advanced economic industry as the institution of unparalleled primacy, and the modern history of Western civilization shows the detrimental results. Whitehead was determined to see organized industry reduce the importance of other institutions as integrators of society."[56] "The family as a focus for

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[53] Ibid., 235-236.

[54] "NIMH Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Among U.S. Adults," *National Institute of Mental Health*, accessed December 1, 2015, https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/serious-mental-illness-smi-among-us-adults.shtml.

[55] Doris J. James, and Lauren E. Glaze, "Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, September 2006 (NCJ 213600), 1. (https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/mhppji.pdf.)

[56] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, 165.

social activity and sentiment has been recognized for centuries, but the new element is the modern business firm as the next most important institution in the lives of millions of men and women."[57]

In contrast, a Christian worldview cannot be more different and at odds with an industry/economy based society. A Christian worldview holds that God has established three institutions "to resist decay in society and promote its flourishing. These are the nuclear family, the church, and the government."[58] Economy has not provided a model for human flourishing that incorporates meaningful labor and social integration. To the contrary, businesses have instituted practices that have undermined the family and the church to the detriment and disillusionment of democratic society.

Despite Whitehead's broader awareness of developing social sciences, there remain many similarities to Taylor and Schell. Whitehead also viewed individuals as a resource; thus, the task of modern leaders is to organize their "human material."[59] In order to accomplish this, leaders orient themselves toward some alternative social group—e.g., as a separate, socio-economic class—while the managed group orients toward informal leaders within their own group.[60] Managers have no relation to the social life of the managed in classic management-labor hierarchy. Whitehead reduced all social activity, what might be understood as human relationships, to providing individual

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[57]Ibid., 167.

[58] Scott Sauls, *Jesus Outside the Lines: A Way Forward for Those Who Are Tired of Taking Sides* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 2015), 4-5.

[59] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, 78.

[60] Ibid., 79.

expression promoting economic intentions.[61] Any endeavor is only beneficial if it is monetarily positive.

What role then does a leader play in this machine of society? Whitehead's answer is cryptic: a collage of set traits and characteristics. A leader was someone who leads technical advances.[62] Without the leader, there would be no substantial technological improvement.[63] Some leadership traits, such as an unusual skill in technical procedures, are dated. Moreover, a few of Whitehead's leadership traits are enigmatic: "the leader, in his semi-rational reveries and reflections, stumbles on a technical improvement."[64] Presumably, Whitehead was referring to what we now call intuition. Nevertheless, by including the trait of loyalty, he brings the concept of leadership back into the realm of relationship and outside the realm of human resources.

By the mid-1920's, the United States was economically post-industrial; that is, service industries generated more domestic revenue than industrial production. Taylor, Schell, and Whitehead spoke into this context. At the same time, in Europe, adherence to moral absolutes was abandoned. The burdensome reparations on Germany imposed by The Treaty of Versailles, international tariffs, and internal economic depression drove the German people to seek an enemy to blame and a narrative to shape their interpretations of events. Adolf Hitler offered both of these. The enemy was the Jew who was portrayed as an outsider who had gained wealth on the backs of impoverished Germans. The narrative

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[61] Ibid., 88.

[62] Ibid., 73.

[63] Ibid., 74.

[64] Ibid., 73.

defined the true German. In simple, though far from thorough terms, the Hegelianism that

gave rise to the non-rational faith of Kierkegaard was finally used to justify the

antagonistic unbelief of Friedrich Nietzsche. Eric Metaxas wrote,

> Hitler must be called a Nietzschean… He devoutly believed in what Nietzsche
> said about the "will to power." Hitler worshiped power, while truth was a
> phantasm to be ignored; and his sworn enemy was not falsehood but weakness.
> For Hitler, ruthlessness was a great virtue, and mercy, a great sin. This was
> Christianity's chief difficulty, that it advocated meekness. Nietzsche called
> Christianity "the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion...the
> one immortal blemish of mankind."[65]

This Nazi theology is Darwinian in extreme: a completely naturalistic origin of humanity

giving rise to a self-selecting national identity and power, purified of imperfection: the

Übermensch. Humanism was defined as, "the system whereby men and women,

beginning absolutely by themselves, try rationally to build out from themselves, having

only Man as their integration point, to find all knowledge, meaning and value."[66]

This excursus to 20th century history is specifically significant, in that it is an

early focus of Peter Drucker. Drucker's writings significantly impacted the course of

philosophical foundations and practical expressions of the modern business corporation

well into the early 21st century. He is known as "the man who invented management."[67]

Drucker's critique of the western world during World War II, and the rise of

fascism, points blame at the church. His book, *The End of Economic Man*, describes how

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[65] Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy: A Righteous Gentile vs. the Third Reich* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 168.

[66] Francis A Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There: The Book That Makes Sense out of Your World* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 9.

[67] John Byrne, "The Man Who Invented Management.," *Bloomberg.com*, November 27, 2005, accessed December 14, 2015. http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/stories/2005-11-27/the-man-who-invented-management.

medieval values of roles, power, and individual and national rights—as expressed in late

mercantilism—was doomed. Economically, the Industrial Revolution, and politically, the

French Revolution, underpinned by changing views of humanity and nationality, dealt an

unhealable blow to systems of the past. The rise of the economic man—that is, a

humanity that is purely naturalistic and industrious—was a temporary, intermediate

solution at best. It should have been the stopgap between strong, constructive models of

society. The church failed, however, "to formulate the new constructive concept of

society which they pretend to have."[68]

Drucker had a religious experience while reading Kierkegaard. He later wrote, "I

knew immediately that I had found a new, a critical, an existential dimension."[69]

Rejecting the notion of a purely "materialistic interpretation of history," he believed the

church should have offered the next vision for humanity and a new version of culture in

all its expressions.[70] Drucker saw fascism as spiritually irrational, and responded to it by

advancing the theology of Soren Kierkegaard, but lamented, "Christianity and the

churches have been unable to provide a religious social solution. All they can do today is

give the individual a private haven and refuge in an individual religion."[71]

Thirty years later, Francis A. Schaeffer drew the same conclusion. Schaeffer

draws the line of philosophic lineage from Kant to Hegel to Kierkegaard, dividing from

there into two branches of existentialism: secular and religious. According to Schaeffer,

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[68] Peter F. Drucker, *The End of Economic Man* (New York: John Day Co., 1939), 100.

[69] Peter F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York: Harper Business, 1994), 425.

[70] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 100.

[71] Ibid., 102.

Kierkegaard advocated the achievement of importance "by a leap of faith." Separated

from a rational basis, faith is rendered a non-rational optimism. Schaeffer explains the

importance of Kierkegaard this way: "When he put forth the concept of a leap of faith, he

became in a real way the father of all modern existential thought, both secular and

theological."[72]

Schaeffer believed "that historic Christianity stands on the basis of antithesis.

Without it, historic Christianity was then and is forever after meaningless."[73] Schaeffer

drew what he called a line of despair, "Above this line we find men living with their

romantic notions of absolutes (though with no sufficient logical basis)."[74]

Drucker and Schaeffer would agree on the role of despair in shaping the flow of

history. Drucker believed "the despair of the masses is the key to the understanding of

fascism…caused by the breakdown of the old order and the absence of a new one."[75] For

Drucker, the economic man was a transitional view of human individuality and society

rising from the old, medieval order, building toward a new, improved social organization.

Drucker looked to religious elites as paragons for this new social model: G. K. Chesterton

in England, Nikolai Berdyaev and Fyodor Dostoevsky in Russia, Henry Adams in

America, and Karl Barth in Germany. Drucker saw their push for social improvement

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[72] Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 16.

[73] Ibid., 8.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 22-23.

undergirding a new order that was both Christian and humanist.[76] From Drucker's

perspective, that push failed:

> Perhaps the clearest and most pathetic example of the social failure of Christianity is that of the brave and dominant leader of the German confessional movement, Pastor Niemöeller. Niemöeller shows better that the quest for a new basis of society is the motive for turning toward Christianity. Niemöeller, who had been a submarine commander during the war, had come out of it as crushed and uprooted as many other men of his age. He searched for a new society first among the socialist and communist workers in the coal mine and then, after disillusionment, among the first radical Nazi groups. Finally, he turned toward religion. He found in religion an individual peace and an individual Haven, an individual mission and an individual faith. But he did not find in it a lesson for society.[77]

Drucker provided components of this new society: how it would differ from the

economic society of his present, and in what ways it would be similar to the society that

came before. He never fully developed the concept. Perhaps he believed the task outside

his scope of knowledge and experience. Perhaps the influence of an existential religion

gave him doubt as to the reality of such a new society. Or perhaps his commitment to

models of institutionalization limited his ability to think about the individual nature of

organization. What is certain is that Drucker did not lack in intelligence, intuition, or

innovation.

One of the challenges of establishing a new society is the resistance of established

institutions to change. Historically, when faced with the inability or unwillingness of

institutions to change, individuals, groups, and societies have rejected, replaced, and

revolted against the institutions (e.g., of family, schools, military, corporation, and

government). In this regard, the church is unique. The historic, orthodox, confessional

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[76] Ibid., 94.

[77] Ibid., 102-103.

Body of Christ—through periods of change, restoration, and even reformation—has

never sought to *replace* (i.e., with something new) the church as the institution of primary

organizational life.

Drucker believed this new society included, but was intended to be more than,

social reform: care for the poor and the establishment of education, hospitals, and

orphanages. It follows naturally from exclusively material philosophies, rightly read

naturalistic and Darwinian. It is more than personal, not less. But neither does society

exist for its own purpose. Politically, it is not feudal. Economically, it is neither purely

capitalistic nor anticapitalistic.

Many years later, Hunter would describe such a society in terms that were

consistent with Drucker's view but still more complex than perhaps Drucker himself

could have anticipated. Hunter writes:

> ...the church is always a "community of resistance." Such a phrase can sound
> adversarial in a dreamy and idealistic way, but it contains a challenge that is
> difficult to imagine, much less realize. It is a challenge to think through resistance
> in an institutional way. The power of individual will is weak by comparison to the
> power of institutions. Institutions can only be effectively challenged by
> alternatives that are also institutionalized—either alternatives that are developed
> from within existing institutions or alternatives that are altogether new. First and
> foremost, of course, this means that the church itself must model its alternative
> both symbolically (e.g. through the Eucharist) and in actuality, that is in the
> conduct of the body.[78]

Here is expressed the tension Drucker identified, answered not with the offer or promise

of an alternative institution—whether evolution, consumerism, government, media,

etc.—but with a view of "community of resistance." No human institution will satisfy the

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[78] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 235.

tension, leaving Hunter to conclude, "Christians recognize that all social organizations exist as parodies of eschatological hope."[79]

Beyond his attempted scope of study and writing, Drucker's religious views set him further apart from his peers. Where Taylor and Schell were functional deists, conceiving of a possible absolute outside of themselves, Drucker believed in a personal "absolute good and evil."[80] Drucker was a theological follower of Kierkegaard in that his nascent faith remained non-rational and, thus, it fell short of any universally applicable presupposition of truth. This is seen in those he puts forward. Berdyaev, like Kierkegaard, was an existentialist. Barth was a dialectical theologian at the least, and Adams apparently had no functional religious views. Niemöeller was blinded by a dualistic sphere-sovereignty,[81] preventing him from discerning what many continuing church pastors saw: the absolute evil of the Nazi "Nietzschean social Darwinism."[82] Of those individuals Drucker promotes, perhaps only Chesterton and Dostoevsky held to historic, orthodox Christian views.

Drucker's and Schaeffer's positions eventually diverged. Drucker proposed that in this social conflict, religion—specifically Christianity—offered only two solutions: "the retreat to the socially ineffective position of 'personal religion' or the defense of the

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[79] Ibid., 234

[80] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 6.

[81] Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, 191.

[82] Ibid., 173.

existing institutions…"[83] Schaeffer proposed a third way: the reintegration of the natural

and the supernatural,

> The Bible insists that we live in reality in a supernatural universe…. As soon as
> we remove the supernaturalness of the universe all we have left is Aldous
> Huxley's *Brave New World*, in which religion is to be simply a sociological tool
> for the future. In Julian Huxley's concept of romantic evolutionary humanism,
> religion has a place, not because there is any truth in it, but because in the strange
> evolutionary formation, man as he now is simply needs it. So it must be
> administered to him, because he needs it. With the supernatural gone we are
> merely shut up to anthropology, psychology, and sociology, and all that we say
> about religion in general and Christianity specifically falls to the ground except as
> it relates to a mere psychological mechanism. All the reality of Christianity rests
> upon the reality of the existence of a personal God, and the reality of the
> supernatural view of the total universe.[84]

Schaeffer's description of Huxley echoes Drucker's conclusions about Christianity and

the church. Thus, Drucker could still say that the absence of God and "no concept of man

to respect" produces a fervent pursuit of organization as a means to its own end;[85] yet, no

personal God or supernatural reality is advocated. At the end of the day, Drucker was

convinced that unemployment and war were the demons of the modern world. In stark

contrast, the Bible declares the battle is not against "flesh and blood, but against the

rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,

against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."[86] In summary, it is a

supernatural battle against supernatural powers.

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[83] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 109.

[84] Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1985), 2:257.

[85] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 236-237.

[86] Ephesians 6:12.

The examination of Drucker's religious views is important for two reasons. First, his religious views framed his developing model of management and leadership. Secondly, and more importantly, Drucker discovered management in his search for "a just and workable society to replace what he regarded as the contemporary dysfunctional European ones."[87] While Drucker contemplated and developed his model of management over the greatest period of time, he was concerned with and wrote on broader topics of ethics, society, and economics.

This diversity of thought and concern is what differentiates Drucker from Taylor, Schell, Whitehead, and so many others. Taylor *et al* applied a simplified understanding of scientific theory to complex systems, rendering them reducibly simplistic. Drucker was at least aware of developing models of complexity. Friedrich von Hayek, the great Austrian economist, was a central figure in developing the framework for understanding complex systems; he was also a guest in Drucker's childhood home. In terms of managerial leadership, organizational modeling, and corporate ethics, Drucker embraced an irreducibly complex view.

Responding to the view advanced by Taylor and his "highest state of efficiency,"[88] Drucker—looking at the rise of organization in the absence of moral order—scathingly judged, "As to the efficiency of organization, nothing could be more dangerous than to set it up as an end in itself."[89]

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[87] Peter Starbuck, "Drucker's European Influences" (PhD diss., Open University Business School, 2007), v (quoted from abstract).

[88] Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, 1.

[89] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 222.

Drucker, writing on management, by which he meant a role of leadership within a workable society, stated,

> Management is deeply involved in moral concerns—the nature of man, good and evil. Management is thus what tradition used to call a liberal art—"liberal" because it deals with the fundamentals of knowledge, self-knowledge, wisdom, and leadership; "art" because it is also concerned with practice and application. Managers draw on all the knowledge and insights of the humanities and the social science—on psychology and philosophy, on economics and history—as well as on the physical sciences. But they have to focus this knowledge on effectiveness and results….

One question arising is, how did early management literature—by and large one dimensional—grow into a broad, diverse, complex, and multidimensional field of study? Recent leadership publications incorporate facets of psychology, human metrics and personality, natural gifting, the role of training, personal development, integrity, communication abilities, agility, behavior, practice, innovation, experimentation, failure, success, responsiveness, loyalty, vision, and empowerment, to name just a few. No single work of literature appears to address the question specifically; however, a theory of this evolution can be developed when placing leadership literature in its generational context.

Taylor (1911) and Schell (1926) wrote during a time when occupational mobility was at a low. Barriers for occupational mobility in the late 19th century were only just beginning to grow, and "the last twenty years of the 19th century had greater relative mobility in occupations across generations than the twenty years before 1973."[90]

This trend is captured in business data from the period. Identifying the total number of businesses in existence in the late 19th century is difficult, but looking exclusively at companies listed on the stock exchange gives some indication of the

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[90] Joseph Ferrie, "The End of American Exceptionalism? Mobility in the U.S. Since 1850," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 209.

growth of the last 135 years. As a baseline, the New York Stock Exchange began in 1792

with only five securities. By 1880, a few more than 100 companies were listed on

exchange. In 1920, there were 691 securities.[91] Today, the NYSE boasts 2,800 securities,

and there are 5,000 securities listed across all US based exchanges. In 2015, The World

Federation of Exchanges showed 45,000 companies listed across its 64 member

exchanges.[92] Additionally, there are 28 million small businesses in the United States[93]

and 125 million micro-, small-, and medium-enterprises globally.[94]

Occupational immobility reduces complexity. In the complete absence of

mobility, economic monopoly, political totalitarianism, or both, ensue, wrote Albert

Hirschman in his study of the power, effectiveness, and use of voice and exit to effect

organizational change.[95] When an employee has no other option, the organization has no

impetus to change.

Edmund Wilson described such an environment, writing about the Great

Depression. In his book, *The American Jitters; a Year of the Slump*, Wilson told of typists

required to "punch out" 3,600 words per hour, "And you've got the supervisor over you

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[91] Jerry W. Markham, *A Financial History of the United States* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 3:124.

[92] "About WFE | World Federation of Exchanges," accessed August 7, 2015, http://world-exchanges.org/about-wfe.

[93] Jason Nazar, "INFOGRAPHIC: The State of US Small Business," *BusinessInsider.com,* October 9, 2013, accessed December 14, 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/infographic-the-state-of-us-small-businesses-2013-9#ixzz3i9iVgXG7.

[94] Khrystyna Kushnir, Melina Laura Mirmulstein, and Rita Ramalho, "Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises," n.d., http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/9ae1dd80495860d6a482b519583b6d16/MSME-CI-AnalysisNote.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.

[95] Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

all the time."[96] Automobile employees had to spend upwards of 13 hours at the factory to

secure 2 hours of work.[97] One interviewee noted, "Finally I quit... I didn't mind factory

work in itself—for two or three hours it used to stimulate my mind. But eight or ten hours

of it deadens you."[98] Another laborer described how "a man checks 'is brains and 'is

freedom at the door when he went to work at Ford's."[99] Furthermore,

> When an accident happens nobody ever tells about it and sometimes you don't know definitely till a week later—but I could always tell if something had happened as soon as I came into the room: the place always seems very clean and everybody's very quiet. Once when I was there a girl lost her finger and gave a terrible shriek—and another time when the same thing happened to another girl, she just put a rag around her hand and quietly walked out.[100]

Quoting one man, Wilson surmised, "The fundamental principle of capitalist industry is

exploitation for profit..."[101]

Fueled by the technological innovation of the British's Tizard Mission and girded

by the World War II effort, United States' post-war industrial capacity exceeded prewar

organization. Political and economic changes removed barriers to entry, opening the way

for greater vocational mobility. Success transformed organizations beyond purely

mechanistic functionality, changing simple management practice into complex leadership

theory.

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[96] Edmund Wilson, *American Jitters; a Year of the Slump* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, Inc, 1932), 56.

[97] Ibid., 57.

[98] Ibid., 63.

[99] Ibid., 55.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 81.

The fields of leadership and management remained, then and now, integrally connected. Andrew Watterson Blackwood treats them as synonymous in the introduction to his book, *Pastoral Leadership*.[102] Drucker would go on to define management in terms primarily of economic performance.[103] In summary, there is substantial literary evidence to support viewing studies in management generally—Taylor, Schell, et cetera—as a precursor to, and integrally connected with, the study of leadership specifically.

Modern Era Leadership

By the 1950s, qualitative studies in the field of leadership proliferated. One might expect this to have produced a more unified and nuanced thesis of leadership. To the contrary, these studies documented even greater diversity and more contradictory approaches. Warren G. Bennis pointed out this contradiction, writing,

> As we survey the path leadership theory has taken, we spot the wreckage of "trait theory,"[104] the "great man" theory, the "situationist critique," leadership styles, functional leadership, and finally, leaderless leadership; to say nothing of bureaucratic leadership, charismatic leadership, democratic-autocratic-laissez-faire leadership, group-centered leadership, reality-centered leadership, leadership by objective, and so on.[105]

According to Bennis, this diversity was not due to the lack of research of leadership as a behavioral science: not enough data. Bennis believed the emergence of divergent models of leadership was the result of the volume and discrepancy of empirical data: too much

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[102] Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *Pastoral Leadership* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), 7.

[103] Peter F. Drucker, *The Practice of Management* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 7.

[104] "Trait theory" and "great man" theory were prevalent theories on leading and leadership in the 19th century, finding their origins in the writings of Thomas Carlyle.

[105] Warren G. Bennis, "Leadership Theory and Administrative Behavior: The Problem of Authority," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (December 1959): 259.

data.[106] Whether the error lay with the quantity of data, as Bennis suggests, or the quality

of or the means by which the data was captured, the result is the same: contradictory

theories of leadership.

In his work, *Leadership Theory and Administrative Behavior*, Bennis tried "to

outline chronologically and then describe the major themes and assumptions of the

application of leadership theory to administrative behavior."[107] Secondly, he sought to

establish a framework that would account for all valid models of leadership. These he

clustered into two categories; the Classical Theory and the Human Relations

Approach.[108]

In his comprehensive approach to the issue of leadership, Bennis came upon the

research of Herbert Shepard. (Bennis and Shepard would go on to write several texts

together.) Bennis came to adopt Shepard's taxonomy of leadership, in which he identified

five differences between traditional and modern (human relations) organizational theory,

> (1) wide participation in decision-making rather than centralized decision-making;
> (2) the face-to-face group rather than the individual as the basic unit of
> organization; (3) mutual confidence rather than authority as the integrative force
> in organization; (4) the supervisor as the agent for maintaining intragroup and
> intergroup communication rather than as the agent of higher authority; and (5)
> growth of members of the organization to greater responsibility rather than
> external control of the members' performance of their tasks.[109]

Against the backdrop of the research and methodology of the time, these propositions

about leadership were radical. Shepard knew as much, stating that groups have no place

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[106] Ibid., 259.

[107] Ibid., 260.

[108] Ibid., 289.

[109] Herbert A. Shepard, "Superiors and Subordinates in Research," *The Journal of Business* 29, no. 4 (October 1956): 261.

in traditional theory.[110] He goes on to write, "Traditional organizational theory is at odds with scientific ideals on almost every point."[111]

Most profoundly, Shepard anticipates the critic:

At first glance, the new emphases may seem "softer" than the old. In fact, they are harder. The supervisor must have a more complicated set of membership, leadership, and training skills. The subordinate must accept more responsibility. The manager's task is doubly difficult because he must take more information into account and cannot make arbitrary decisions.[112]

Many of Shepard's criteria find agreement with aspects of leadership as presented in a post-modern approach, to be discussed in the next section. Suffice it to say, Shepard's contributions were not widely received or readily embraced. Had they been, the shape of leadership in the 20th century United States would have looked different. As it was, many who identified themselves with the classical organizational theory or the human relations approach, borrowing Bennis' categories, rejected Shepard's contributions.

For example, James MacGregor Burns represents a group that advocated psychology as the touchstone of modern leadership studies. He critiqued the "cult of personality" approach leadership studies had taken to that point. Despite all the data-driven studies, Burns declares,

Leadership as a concept has dissolved into small and discreet meanings. A recent study turned up 130 definitions of the word. A superabundance of facts about leaders far out-runs [sic] theories of leadership… There is, in short, no school of leadership, intellectual or practical. Does it matter that we lack standards for assessing past, present, and potential leaders?[113]

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[110] Ibid., 262.

[111] Ibid., 261.

[112] Ibid., 264.

[113]James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 2.

Burns believed "the unheralded work in humanistic psychology" was the lens through which a standard approach to "the leadership process across cultures and across time" should be established.[114] Burns' book, *Leadership*, was published in 1978.

Burns was not against empirical scientific methodology *per se*; indeed, he critiqued the weakness of earlier writers for their lack of scientific substantiation. Instead, he redirected scientific methods from emphasizing primarily economic features—effectiveness, production and slack—to psychological facets. Burns admitted that insight from historians, biographers, psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists were relevant to any study on leadership, but his own initial emphasis would "be heavily dependent on theories of personality development."[115] What post-industrial leadership theory ignored—namely psychological and emotional realities—Burns placed centrally to the study of leadership.

The introduction of psychology into leadership studies is important. Subsequent writers further developed its place within the leadership genre. Burns specifically contributed to the development of this line of research by showing the limitations that occur when one embraces any monocular view of leadership; that is, viewing leadership exclusively as an empirically scientific field of study.

By his own admission, Burns was a moral relativist. He believed the source of moral leadership emerged from followers: specifically their needs, aspirations, and

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[114] Ibid., 3.

[115] Ibid., 26.

values.[116] Burns explained, "Only the followers themselves can ultimately define their entire needs."[117] Burns granted certain non-negotiables. For example, leadership must have real alternatives (i.e., it is not tyrannical) and be morally rooted, writing, "At the highest stage of moral development persons are guided by near-universal ethical principles of justice such as equality of human rights and respect for individual dignity."[118] This last phrase is regularly quoted as one of Burns' most poignant declarations.

But what happens when, as history shows, leadership is tyrannical, or there is a rejection of human rights and intrinsic dignity? Burns offers no answer to that question. Unfortunately, this oft-quoted axiom has no basis in anything beyond Burns' self-designed system of checks and balances. There is no absolute beyond Burns himself. Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Erik Erikson (from the perspective of human development) shaped his thinking, and his conclusions reflect their influence. Burns wrote, "Freud's theory of Oedipal conflict, as applied to broader social processes, and Jung's concern with ends, or purposes, are together most useful to students of leadership, for they make possible a concept of values forged and hardened by *conflict*."[119] He passingly acknowledged the limitations of his approach;[120] however, Burns remained

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[116] Ibid., 4.

[117] Ibid., 36.

[118] Ibid., 42.

[119] Ibid., 35.

[120] Ibid., 53.

anchored to assumed-but-unsubstantiated universals, guided by a personal commitment to the psychological sciences.

Ironically, the psychological approach to leadership rarely influenced business, politics, and organizations, where the emphasis remained upon process: decision-making, manager-employee relations, and the sharing of responsibilities. Vision, objectives, direction, goals, and the governing rules by which these were crafted and pursued, remained in the hands of the elite: management. Leaders were expected to have some working knowledge of the uniqueness of the individuals under his care, but psychology remained under a shroud of suspicion. Science had been replaced with social science, but pragmatism still ruled the day. Leaders were still mostly concerned about the motivation toward efficiency and production, less than human flourishing and development. Shepard's observation remained true: groups have no place in traditional organizational theory.[121]

This is where leadership theories and leadership practices diverge. Burns, like Taylor and Schell before him, emphasized leadership effectiveness within the parameters of organizational mission; that is, the effectiveness of a leader is measured by his achievement of organizational goals. Peter Drucker, by comparison, insisted the drive to pursue "effectiveness and results" was actually a *moral obligation*,

> Management is deeply involved in spiritual[122] concerns—the nature of man, good and evil. Management is thus what tradition used to call a liberal art—"liberal" because it deals with the fundamentals of knowledge, self-knowledge, wisdom, and leadership; "art" because it is also concerned with practice and application. Managers draw on all the knowledge and insights of the humanities and the social science—on psychology and philosophy, on economics and history, on ethics—as

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[121] Shepard, "Superiors and Subordinates in Research," 262.

[122] In earlier editions, Drucker used the term "moral" in place of "spiritual."

well as on the physical science. But they have to focus this knowledge on effectiveness and results….[123]

Drucker took leadership beyond the pragmatics of production and human efficiency. In 1943, Drucker studied the internal workings of General Motors (GM) as an organization. His findings led him to write, "Concept of the Corporation." Drucker presented ideas that advocated for a decentralization of organizational power and structure for the sake of future success. GM's management did not receive his book well.

Drucker stands in contrast to theorists before and after him. Taylor assumed executives were driven primarily by empirically measured and scientifically proven efficiency; morality was largely absent. His concern was the organization. Burns advanced the grandiose arrival of moral development, achieved by leaders but still determined by followers. His concern was the leader in relation to the followers. Drucker believed managers must be morally driven by some external reality that exists independent of the leader, the follower, or the organizations they serve. His driving concern across the decades remained a concept of a workable society,[124] rooted in moral absolute.

Drucker began from the premise of more absolute, a conviction he developed in response to the spiritual changes that he experienced while in Hamburg, Germany, in the late 1920s. This experience "shaped Drucker's conviction of ethics in management with his emphasis on integrity and morality and the need for managers to have a spiritual dimension to their lives. It also reinforced his emphasis on, and his practice of, the

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[123] Peter F. Drucker, and Joseph A. Maciariello, *Management*, Rev. ed. (New York: Collins, 2008), 24.

[124] Starbuck, "Drucker's European Influences," 50.

Protestant work ethic."[125] Drucker would later declare that his work, *The Unfashionable Kierkegaard*, "was thus written as an affirmation of the existential, the spiritual, the individual dimension of the Creature. It was written to assert that society is not enough–not even for society. It was written to affirm hope."[126]

The scope of Drucker's work was broader than just science and psychology, or management and organization. It was, and remains, spiritual pursuit that was universal in application, if not also existential in nature. Drawing from Kierkegaard, Drucker refused to submit individuals and their freedoms to the establishment of society. Drucker would not bow to the necessary collapse of society or the inexorable corruption of the individual. He believed "that if one has faith in the Christian God then you are always in his company in life, in death, and in eternity…"[127]

Thus, Drucker stated, organizations, societies, and business enterprises all "are organs of society. They do not exist for their own sake, but to fulfill a specific social purpose and satisfy a specific need of society, community, or individual… [M]anagement, in turn, is the organ of the institution." Certainly, management must make work productive; that is, there are measures of effectiveness. But, management must also define the mission of an institution, while managing "social impacts and social responsibilities."[128] If post-industrial era leadership can be described as corporate, then

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[125] Ibid., 16.

[126] Ibid., 54.

[127] Ibid., 58.

[128] Drucker, and Maciariello, *Management*, 93.

modern-era leadership can be rightly described as communal in nature, specifically

scalable.

Drucker expanded the role of the manager into many of the areas that more recent

authors categorize as leadership: personal skills, innovation, the pursuit of goals while

observing social impact and a "common good." Drucker maintained that managers must

be connected to the system they serve in order to achieve a desired end, for,

> Without the institution, there would be no management. But without management there would be only a mob rather than an institution. The institution is itself an organ of society and exists only to contribute a needed result to society, the economy, and the individual. Organs, however, are never defined by what they do, let alone how they do it. They are defined by their *contribution*. And it is management that enables the institution to contribute.[129]

Drucker found the long-standing definition of manager unsatisfactory. He argued

that post-industrial era management "was a specific kind of work that could be analyzed,

studied, and improved systematically." That limited "definition focused on essentially

new, large, and permanent organizations emerging to perform the economic tasks of

society."[130] He argued that the "separation of the managerial world"—that is,

Taylorism—only served "to emphasize the inferiority of those who do their own work as

compared with those responsible for the work of others. The emphasis is still on power

and authority rather than responsibility and contribution."[131]

As Drucker saw it, the responsibility of the manager was to set objectives for

organizing, motivating, communicating to, and developing people. This differed from the

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[129] Ibid., 3.

[130] Ibid., 4.

[131] Ibid., 6.

Darwinian perspective that Taylor commended; improving people within limits but always toward great productivity. Drucker made the case that "managers are those people who have a sense of being responsible for contributing to the results of the enterprise but are not responsible for the work of other people… They are executives, because they bear executive responsibility…"[132]

Drucker's writings convey an understanding of human interdependence absent in the approach of many of the other writers considered. Drucker firmly believed that managers will "develop, will grow or wither, become richer or become impoverished, improve or deteriorate" to the degree to which they improve others. This, Drucker posited, "requires integrity of character."[133] Drucker advanced a view of social integration that presumes a complex system theory of relationship, what would come to be called the family-systems theory.

Murray Bowen is the father of the family-systems theory. His first orderly presentation of the theory was in 1966.[134] Bowen asserted that up until 1957, psychological study depended upon and developed around an exclusively Freudian focus on individuals in exclusion to the collective relationships in which individuals existed. The theory took initial shape as Bowen attempted to "get beyond the conventional concepts" [135] he had long held as truth. He noted of his own approach, "An important development was the conceptual change from thinking of schizophrenia as a process

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[132] Ibid., 5.

[133] Ibid., 9.

[134] Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (New York: J. Aronson, 1978), xiii.

[135] Ibid., xiv.

confined within *the patient* to thinking of it as the manifestation of an active dynamic process involving *the entire family*"[136] [emphases added].

Here the word "system" is being used to refer to "any group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent parts that form a complex and unified whole that has a specific purpose."[137] Bowen saw the family as any number of different systems (not just one), but focused his work on the emotional and relational aspects of that system.[138] Bowen identified eight interlocking concepts of family systems: differentiation of self, triangles, nuclear family emotional process, family projection process, cutoff, multigenerational transmission process, sibling position, and societal emotional process.

Bowen developed his theory because of the failure of naturalistic, Freudian psychology to provide satisfying answers to the interdependent aspects of the human psyche. He wrote, "The more one observes families, the easier it is to detach from the narrow conceptual boundaries of individual theory; and the more one detaches from individual theory, the easier it is to see family patterns."[139]

The import of this observation becomes apparent when placed against the backdrop of the prevalent psychological theory. Freudian psychology assumed a powerful id driving the desires and actions of the visible ego, often to the ignorance of the ego.[140] The elemental reality is the individual, determined by external and

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[136] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice,* 3.

[137] Kim, *Introduction to Systems Thinking*, 2.

[138]Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 158.

[139] Ibid., 156.

[140] Sigmund Freud, and James Strachey, *The Ego and the Id*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (New York: Norton, 1989).

unrecognized forces. As Freud put it, borrowing from Georg Groddeck, "We are lived."[141] Consequently, the individual becomes an interchangeable component in social construction.

Bowen focused his theory on the ego mass—a term he coined to convey the shared emotional reality of those in a nuclear family.[142] He observed that the healthiest— rather than the sickest—member of the ego mass would be first to change. This reflected Bowen's commitment to the system over the individual aspects of human interaction. He concluded, "The family *is* a system in that a change in one part of the system is followed by compensatory change in other parts of the system."[143]

After shifting the focus from the individual to the system, differentiation is arguably Bowen's greatest contribution to the study of leadership. Bowen viewed differentiation as the ability of a person to remain "emotionally close to others without emotional fusion or loss of self."[144] A differentiated ego maintains "boundaries under stress without becoming involved in emotional fusions with others."[145] The practice of differentiation is juxtaposed with other possible responses: triangulation, projection, cutoff, and under- or over-functioning.

Differentiation rarely, if ever, is achieved without substantial anxiety, as Bowen explains,

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[141]Sigmund Freud, and Peter Gay, *The Freud Reader*, Norton paperback ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 635.

[142] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 113.

[143] Ibid., 155.

[144] Ibid., 109.

[145] Ibid., 108.

> Anxiety is inevitable if you solve the problem. When anxiety increases, one has to decide whether to give in and retreat or carry on in spite of it. Anxiety does not harm people. It only makes them uncomfortable. It can cause you to shake, or lose sleep, or become confused, or develop physical symptoms, but it will not kill you and it will not subside. People can even grow and become more mature by having to face and deal with anxiety situations.[146]

Awareness of anxiety, and the leader's propensity in response to it, will garner substantial attention in the post-modern era of leadership.

The brilliance of Bowen's concept of differentiation is the scope of its application. Beyond the family ego mass, lack of differentiation can be experienced by those outside of but proximate to the family: neighbors, friends, fellow members of shared organizations, even medical staff serving members of the family. For example, Bowen regularly saw his own clinic staff drawn into triangulated relationships, functioning to enable cutoff within the family. Bowen himself described his own experience this way, "[W]hen I feel myself inwardly cheering the hero, or hating the villain in the family drama, or pulling for the family victim to assert himself, I consider it time for me to work on my own functioning."[147] This, he concluded, was the result of not having dealt with his own "emotional functioning sufficiently."[148]

Bowen's systems approach explains a great deal about the ordering of organizations and the functioning of those who lead them. The patterns of human behavior, as observed in the family ego mass, repeat in every organization. Thus, Whitehead's aforementioned industrial community would never produce relational

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[146] Ibid., 85.

[147] Ibid., 83.

[148] Ibid., 152.

integration *because* it neglected the fundamental reality of emotional systems. Leaders cannot truly integrate a group—which was one of Whitehead's goal for leaders—without acknowledging their participation in it.[149] Indeed, Whitehead urged leaders in any social organization to remain separate from, and not oriented toward, those they lead.[150] If one accepts Bowen's interpretation of relational interdependency, Whitehead's approach becomes untenable: namely, that executives have "no explicit relation" to the social lives of employees.[151]

Bowen agrees with Burns that psychology sets the parameters of human interaction. For Burns, leadership meant engaging people "to varying degrees, throughout the levels and among the interstices of society." [152] Burns wanted leaders judged in effectiveness by "social change measured by intent and by the satisfaction of human needs and expectations."[153] Bowen wanted leaders to be judged by their differentiation. For Burns, understanding leadership required understanding power.[154] For Bowen, understanding leadership required understanding people and their interactions.

Bowen practiced a scientific-experiential methodology, but not at the exclusion of the relational dynamics. He was acutely cognizant of the human condition, but held the deplorable and the comical in perpetual tension. He wrote, "The human phenomenon is

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[149] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, 70.

[150] Ibid., 69.

[151] Ibid., 79.

[152] Burns, *Leadership*, 3.

[153] Ibid., 3.

[154] Ibid., 12.

serious and tragic, but…there is a comical or humorous aspect to most serious

situations."[155] In this tension, Bowen refused to let patients objectify emotions or

emotionalize behavior, saying,

> In clinical practice, I have made a clear distinction between feelings, which have
> to do with subjective awareness, and opinions, which have to do with logic and
> reasoning of the intellectual system. The degree to which people say, "I feel
> that…" when they mean, "I believe that…" is so commonplace that many use the
> two words synonymously.[156]

Like many before him, Bowen primarily adhered to a Darwinian account of

human origins.[157] Still, without offering an alternative, he remained discontent with the

model. Specifically, Bowen saw "mental illness as a much deeper phenomenon than that

conceptualized by current psychological theory."[158]

Bowen made two passing observations that bear directly on this study of

leadership. First, he developed his scale of differentiation broadly enough to encompass

the functional extremes of the emotionally mature, on the high end, and the excessively

immature, on the low end:

> The lower the person on the scale, the more he holds onto religious dogma,
> cultural values, superstition, and outmoded beliefs, and the less able he is to
> discard the rigidly held ideas…, the more he makes a "federal case" of rejection,
> lack of love, and injustice, and the more the demands recompense for his hurts…,
> the more he holds the other responsible for his self and happiness…, the more
> intense the ego fusions, and the more extreme the mechanisms such as emotional
> distance, isolation, conflict, violence, and physical illness to control the emotion
> of "too much closeness…." In general, the lower the person is on the scale, the
> more the impairment in meaningful communication.[159]

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[155] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 229.

[156] Ibid., 159.

[157] Ibid., 105-106.

[158] Ibid., 158.

[159] Ibid., 164-65.

Bowen developed this theory while in search for answers to the problem of

schizophrenia, answers that lay beyond individualized psychodynamics.

Second, Bowen came to recognize the application of his theory beyond nuclear

family units. Later in life, he consulted in business contexts regularly, addressing

organizational problems, observing that patterns of family systems, "exist in businesses

and staffs of institutions in which the basic problem which exists on the highest

administrative level is triangled and retriangled again and again until the conflict surfaces

between two employees low in the administrative hierarchy."[160] Thus, advocates of a

predominantly socio-economic existence, naturalistic and materialistic, find their position

falling back before Bowen's observations.

Whitehead would go on to write that "[t]he essence of well-being is to be active

with others in an economically adequate purpose."[161] Bowen saw well-being as the

byproduct of differentiation, not mere activity.[162] Whitehead placed industrial structure at

the pinnacle of human purpose and interaction, "Very little organization is required

merely to keep alive; but a modern industrial structure gives to each person a logical

objective for the future, and the possibility of a complex yet orderly type of social living;

it permits purposeful relations between people."[163] Bowen's careful analysis of relational

systems—economic, industrial, social, and family—reduced the significance of the

modern industrial structure, placing it alongside all other human interactive systems.

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[160] Ibid., 503-504.

[161] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, 239.

[162] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 108-109.

[163] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, 25.

Even Whitehead's approach to change becomes suspect when viewed through the lens of Bowen's family system. Whitehead wrote, "The cohesion of society depends upon two things. The first is the habit of doing things together in understood ways; and the second is the sentiments which arise as to the high value of customary procedures and which cause people to resist change in their habits."[164] Stating it positively, Whitehead placed social stability between the counterbalance of collective comprehension and mutually held tradition. Bowen, coming it at it from the view of social and individual disintegration, declared emotional illness a "multigenerational process" rendering a "wide discrepancy between what man does and what he says he does."[165] Bowen's insight on undifferentiated individuals and their unquestionable commitment to the rigidly held belief will play particular importance when it comes to aspects of leadership within the church: an organization that claims an absolute (as opposed to relativistic) truth derived from an external source, presumed to be universally applicable.

Family-systems theory attempts to get beyond the common cause-and-effect reasoning behind human behavior, the propensity to seek meaning by asking, "why?" Bowen explained, "Man is deeply fixed in cause-and-effect thinking in all areas that have to do with himself and society."[166] More precisely, family system theory "focuses on *what* happened, and on *how* and *when* and *where* it happened, insofar as observations are based on *fact*. It carefully avoids man's automatic preoccupation with *why* it

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[164] Ibid., 240-241.

[165] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 418-419.

[166] Ibid., 420.

happened."[167] The entire system depends on what will later be called "group emotion."[168] Bowen described emotions within closely connected systems like an electrical impulse in electronic circuitry. Everybody is a node serving to expedite, delay, increase, decrease, manage or intensify the emotion: a role "programmed from birth to serve a certain set of functions…"[169]

Bowen's key observation was that "an emotional system responds to emotional stimuli. If any member can control his emotional response, it interrupts the chain reaction."[170] This is in contrast to Schell who urged managers simply to "study and explain" emotional contagions.

All the writers examined held a model that does more than regulate the interaction between leaders and followers. They presented models that are intended to improve human social interaction on a grand, even global, scale. Whitehead spoke of a cohesive society where leaders direct progress.[171] Drucker described a workable society where leadership is concerned with moral concerns. Taylor sought the greatest prosperity reached through the highest efficiency. The contradiction stands, namely, that thinkers— whose view of humanity is built upon the presumption of blind fate and accidental happenstance—would formulate and advance theories of social organization that

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[167] Ibid., 416.

[168] Sigal Barsade, and Donald E. Gibson, "Group Emotion: A View from the Top and Bottom," *Research on Managing Groups and Teams* 1 (June 1, 1998): 81–102.

[169] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 421.

[170] Ibid., 217.

[171] Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society*, 74.

outreached the accident that gave them birth: a nondescript, serene utopia of human

emotional satisfaction. Here, Johnson again shed poignant light, saying,

> Indeed, the political and social consequences of Darwinian ideas have yet to work themselves out… So, too, the public response to relativity was one of the principle formative influences on the course of twentieth-century history. It formed a knife, inadvertently wielded by its author, to help cut society adrift from its traditional moorings in the faith and morals of Judeo-Christian culture. The impact of relativity was especially powerful because it virtually coincided with the public reception of Freudianism.[172]

Bowen's scope of influence had far-reaching effects. His research served as the

basis for Edwin H. Friedman's seminal work on leadership, *Generation to Generation.*

Bowen's focus on fact against subjective feeling, and facets of certainty against

interpretation, influences portions of Nasim Taleb's work, *The Black Swan*, specifically

what Taleb called the narrative fallacy.

One final contributor to this section is Albert Hirschman, who was concerned

with the nature of communication. He specifically focused on how organizations use

communication as a means of reducing the exit of either customers or constituents, while

increasing their loyalty. When an organization is facing difficulty or going through

transition, Hirschman postulated two options available to members attempting to

influence organizational change: exit and voice. He defined exit as the choice to leave an

organization. He defined voice as the attempt to effect change within an organization

through communication. While the exit option usually remains a realistic option for

members, voice is only meaningful so long as one remains within the organization.

Hirschman observed that organizations lose customers as the quality of products

or services declines. Presumably, he would argue the same principle in the current

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[172] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 5.

knowledge-worker environment where service is the product. However, he stated, a

substantial decline in quality is not enough to cause exit among a certain population.

Hirschman wrote,

> A member with a considerable attachment to a product or organization will often
> search for ways to make himself influential, especially when the organization
> moves in what he believes is the wrong direction; conversely, a member who
> wields (or thinks he wields) considerable power in an organization and is
> therefore convinced that he can get it "back on the track" is likely to develop a
> strong affection for the organization in which he is powerful.[173]

Attachment and people's view of their own influence are stronger forces to maintain

organizational commitment than loss of quality or even degree of leadership success. Of

course, organizational members may express displeasure through voice.[174] He further

observed, "the voice option will be used over the exit option for higher quality products

and services than lower quality products and services."[175]

Voice, Hirschman states, is more than complaint; "[V]oice is essentially an *art*

constantly evolving in new directions... The presence of the exit alternative can therefore

tend to *atrophy the development of the art of voice*."[176] Thus, leadership that increases the

cost of exit improves the art of voice. Voice requires effort, "Hence, in comparison to the

exit option, voice is costly and conditioned on the influence and bargaining power

customers and members can bring to bear within the firm from which they buy or the

organizations to which they belong."[177] Voice requires greater investment in an

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[173] Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 77-78.

[174] Ibid., 4.

[175] Ibid., 53.

[176] Ibid., 43.

[177] Ibid., 40.

organization; greater investment increases the cost of exit. Until the cost of exit reaches a

tipping point, members stay through ridiculous amounts of tension, conflict, and even

uncertainty. Hirschman noted,

> [L]oyalty behavior of this type—the worse it gets the less can I afford to leave—
> can serve an all-important purpose when an organization is capable of dispensing
> public evils of truly ultimate proportions, a situation particularly characteristic of
> the more powerful states on the present world scene. The more wrongheaded and
> dangerous the course of these states the more we need *a measure of spinelessness*
> among the more enlightened policy makers so that some of them will still be
> "inside" and influential when that potentially disastrous crisis breaks out.[178]

Hirschman concluded,

> [L]oyalty is at its most functional when it looks most irrational, when loyalty
> means strong attachment to an organization that does not seem to warrant such
> attachment because it is so much like another one that is also available.[179]

This pattern of paradoxical loyalty is most apparent when there exists a value more

substantial than the organization or the individual member: the corruption of the one or

turmoil in the other.

Hirschman observed that to "the extent to which customer-members are willing to

trade off the certainty of exit against the uncertainties of an improvement in the

deteriorated product…customer-members have an ability to influence the

organization."[180]

Here, delineation between leaders as individuals and the contexts in which they

practice leadership is ambiguous, highlighting the complexity of this particular study.

Hirschman's research highlights a leader's capacities, practiced individually and

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[178] Ibid., 103.

[179] Ibid., 81.

[180] Ibid., 77.

corporately, that set the stage for organizational change. On this point, James MacGregor Burns judged, "One of the most serious failures in the study of leadership has been the bifurcation between the literature on leadership and the literature on followership."[181]

In summary, while some in the modern era sought to unify the divergent theories of leadership, others moved away from purely naturalistic, rationalistic, and individualistic approaches to organized human behavior. These writers, thinkers, and practitioners incorporated ideas from other disciplines, primarily psychology. As people were viewed less individualistically and more socio-collectively, organizations were no longer viewed as machines of interconnected parts, but as systems whose parts changed in relation to one another.

Post-Modern Era Leadership

Where the modern era of leadership was divided into competing camps, the post-modern era of leadership fragmented. Instead of settling into clusters of related approaches, advances in physiology and brain science elicited a rise of new approaches competing for acceptance.

This trend is exacerbated, if not directly caused, by postmodernism. The philosophical framework of postmodernism defies definition; postmodernism's rejection of hierarchical authority and absolute truth denies universal definition. Carl Raschke, wrestling with this topic provides a few consistent traits of postmodernism:

1. the flattening of hierarchies at all levels of organization;
2. the development of webs of interconnected nodes and modules, none of which have any priority over the other and which do not represent in any important sense a "chain of command;" and

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[181] Burns, *Leadership*, 3.

3. constant and dynamic change with ephemeral and superficial phenomena taking precedence over deep and abiding structures.[182]

When hierarchy is removed and the chain of command becomes spread across a web or network, the result is by definition a complex system:

> Complex systems involve a great many interacting individuals, particles, elements, also responding to their environment without full central control. Complex systems exist in nature but also in society. Complexity should not be confused with complicated. An aeroplane is a complicated system, but does not meet the criteria of a complex system. In complex systems, the many elements or parts interact with one another often exchanging ideas or information, responding to environmental stimuli, and are diverse (not homogenous); however, there is no central control of this process. [183]

In such a cultural context, writers on the subject of leadership avoid unpopular universal absolutes and, instead, default to becoming specialists at best, hyper-focused and self-promoting at worst. A look at the titles of books reveals this: The Arbinger Institute's *Leadership and Self-Deception*, Jim Collins' *Good to Great*, Stephen R. Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey's *Speed of Trust*, Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence*, James Hunter's *The Servant: A Simple Story about the Essence of Leadership,* Bill Joiner and Stephen Josephs' *Leadership Agility*, David Livermore's *Cultural Intelligence*, Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz's *The Power of Full Engagement*, John Maxwell's[184] *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions*, Kerry Patterson's *Crucial Conversations*.

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[182] Carl A. Raschke, *The next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 145-146.

[183] Hoogduin, "Introduction to Social Complexity," timestamp 3:17.

[184] Touted "America's #1 leadership authority." "Good Leaders Ask Great Questions: Your Foundation for Successful Leadership by John C. Maxwell | 9781455548071 | Hardcover | Barnes & Noble," accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/good-leaders-ask-great-questions-john-maxwell/1118480402?ean=9781455548071.

Taken individually, good leaders either listen well or ask good questions; engage in excellent conversation or develop trust; manage their energy better than others or practice seven habits; have cultural intelligence or emotional intelligence; are fully engaged or self-differentiated; are people of action or people of reflection. Taken collectively, the super-leader does it all. The skills, capacities, and characteristics compound: effective, motivated, efficient, interactive, conscious, extraordinary, persistent, decisive, strategic, humble, masterful, motivational, influential, inspirational, habitual, thoughtful, powerful, dependable, functional (as opposed to dysfunctional), empowering, serving, morally driven, socially aware, culturally relevant, economically sound, ecologically minded, and above all self-reflective.

A legitimate critique of contemporary leadership literature—emphasizing traits, characteristics, or behaviors in isolation—is the neglect of empirical data substantiating their working views. Evidence is more narrative than propositional, often asserted uncritically without consideration to confounding variables or what Nassim Taleb called silent evidence.[185] Most authors lack any meaningful engagement with other contemporary literature. There is almost the complete absence of scholarly research in the shared field. For example, a survey of the above texts reveals more collective references to Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud than any contemporary research; even less often does one of the above authors indicate awareness of the writings of another. Throughout these texts, scientific methodology is employed loosely. In the rare situation that contemporary literature is cited, it is usually circular or self-referential:

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[185] Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2010).

Stephen Covey, author of *The Speed of Trust*, also wrote the foreword to *Crucial Conversations*, by Kerry Patterson.

Taken together, a specific picture of leadership emerges. There is the growing sense that leadership exists as a category of type, but the leader exists as an individual. These writers invite individuals to participate in the act of leading—whatever conditions, situations, or choices have landed that person in his sphere of influence. But western models of leadership are always tapering upwards. Employees report to a supervisor. Multiple supervisors report to a manager. Multiple managers report to a director. Multiple directors report to an Executive. Multiple executives report to a president or board. What writers call "shared leadership" finds little support in actual leadership practice in the business realm.

The Speed of Trust is an example of the singular-behavior model of leadership. Stephen Covey presents a model presuming self-awareness, self-assessment, and differentiation in his premise that trust is the "one thing that changes everything."[186] His "simply put" model is anything but—constructed of five waves, four cores, and thirteen behaviors.[187] At issue is not whether these cores are valuable; rather, it is the unqualified elevation of trust, as Covey put it, as the absolute trait of good leadership that is suspect. It is nearly impossible to validate Covey's claim, in part because of the absence of propositional statements of fact. His copious anecdotes are his key evidence; nearly half of these derive from his own experience. Covey's different categories, formulas,

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[186] Stephen M.R. Covey, Stephen R. Covey, and Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (London: Pocket Books, 2008).

[187] Ibid., 4.

behaviors, waves, and cores confound readers; moreover, these interconnected parts are dynamic, hindering the reader's ability to test and retest the reliability of his statements. Covey is not alone. Patterson completely neglects the role of reflective listening and asking good questions in his book about conversations.

Good to Great is an example of a text that is self-promoting. Author Jim Collins writes in the introduction, "We believe every CEO, manager, and entrepreneur in the world should read this book." As if that isn't a large enough target audience, his admonition soliciting readers expands so broadly as to encompass most people.[188] Covey wrote of *Crucial Conversations*, "This is a breakthrough book."[189] Tom Peters declared that *The Leadership Challenge* has passed the acid test of the airport bookshelf; that is, it lasts.[190] And Stephen Covey, the author's father, said he loves *The Speed of Trust*, and is sure it will become a classic.[191] These authors are to be excused, owing to the unique epistemology of postmodernism that denies absolute truth. Reduced simply, when everyone is super, no one will be.[192]

Other writer-thinkers have constructed systems that condense key qualities, traits, or behaviors into a synergistic model of leadership. For Patrick Lencioni, these key qualities are trust, conflict, commitment, accountability, and results. His book, *The*

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[188] James C. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap--and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), xxiii.

[189] Kerry Patterson et al., *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), ix.

[190] James M. Kouzes, and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), xv.

[191] Covey, Covey, and Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*, xxiii.

[192] The Incredibles, Film, Brad Bird (Emeryville, CA: Pixar Studios, 2004).

Advantage, focuses on the leader through the lens of organizational health, an indicator he believed is ignored by most leaders.[193] Organizational health is a reflection of integrity, "when it is whole, consistent, and complete…when management, operations, strategy and culture fit together and make sense."[194] An organization with health has "minimal politics and confusion, high degrees of morale and productivity, and very low turnover among good employees."[195]

Todd Warner, reflecting on this rampant confusion in current leadership theory, offers this helpful critique: "Leaders want to get better in the here-and-now, not to be judged against a competency map or be sold an abstract theory about what leadership should look like."[196]

Lencioni suggests the only way to develop vulnerability based trust is through the sharing of personal narratives—stories. Though his bibliography gives no sense of exposure to, or awareness of, Bowen's model, Lencioni described a family-system approach to member interaction: people's past experiences and formative relationships impact present behavior.

This idea of using "story" as a tool of leadership and management is common among many post-modern era writers. Understandably, when absolute truth is abandoned, personal experience becomes the basis for human connection and ideological

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[193] Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 1.

[194] Ibid., 5.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Todd Warner, "What Separates High-Performing Leaders from Average Ones." *Harvard Business Review*. November 11, 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, https://hbr.org/2015/11/what-separates-high-performing-leaders-from-average-ones.

transference. There is agreement that narratives have power. The stories people tell

themselves elevate desired character qualities and reinforce behaviors. In their book, *The*

Leadership Challenge, James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner used examples drawn from

sociologists Joanne Martin and Melanie Powers to advocate for the power and place of

narrativization as a leadership tool. Martin and Powers found that stories were used

convincingly in situations where other methods of persuasion were not. They further

cited evidence "that information is more quickly and accurately remembered when it is

first presented in the form of an example or story."[197] Peter C. Brown gave this

explanation for people's dependence upon narration, "Our understanding of the world is

shaped by a hunger for narrative that rises out of our discomfort with ambiguity and

arbitrary events. When surprising things happen, we search for an explanation. The urge

to resolve ambiguity can be surprisingly potent, even when the subject is

inconsequential."[198] Leaders can use the art of storytelling positively.

But there is also a downside to stories or, more precisely, the interpretations

people apply to them. Stories can be easily misunderstood, especially when they provoke

emotional distress and anxiety in the hearer. In *Crucial Conversations,* the authors

identified the danger in narrativizing:

> [T]here is an intermediate step between what others do and how we feel. That's why, when faced with the same circumstance, ten people may have ten different emotional responses.… What is this intermediate step? Just *after* we observe what others do and just *before* we feel some emotion about it, we tell ourselves a story. That is, we add meaning to the action we observed.[199]

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[197] Kouzes, and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 226.

[198] Peter C. Brown, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014): 109.

[199] Patterson et al., *Crucial Conversations*, 98.

Nassim Taleb dubbed this the narrative fallacy, "…associated with our vulnerability to overinterpretation and our predilection for compact stories over raw truths."[200] As previously noted, Bowen sought to avoid the pitfalls of anecdotal interpretation by focusing instead on what happened and how it happened to the extent these observations are based on fact. Both men, in essence, sought to avoid human preoccupation with causality.[201]

If the first shortcoming of story is the lack of propositional truth, the second shortcoming is memory. Human recollection is inaccurate, as demonstrated by researcher Peter C. Brown. Noting the propensity of over-confidence in memory, he wrote, "Confidence in a memory is not a reliable indication of its accuracy. People can have utmost faith in a vivid, nearly literal memory of an event and yet find that they actually have it all wrong."[202] Citing a study of 1500 Americans and their memories of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he reported, "Respondents' most emotional memories of their personal details at the time they learned of the attack are also those of which they are most confident and, paradoxically, the ones that have most changed over the years…"[203] Edwin Friedman, applying Bowen's principles to western culture, observed, "People tend to generalize from their experience in their own personal family and attribute its

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[200] Taleb, *The Black Swan*, 63.

[201] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 261.

[202] Brown, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning,* 117.

[203] Ibid., 119.

emotional characteristics to its cultural and sociological background, rather than to the way in which members of that particular family are connected."[204]

When it comes to personal stories, these seem most often corruptible by faulty memory, emotional distress, unchecked desires, and self- or other-preoccupation. The emotional ego mass in which people are enmeshed further corrupts narrativization. Throughout the process, leaders are encouraged to use narrative as a vehicle for conveying meaning and deepening trust, but only if they are mindful of the pitfalls associated with the practice. Above all, if the expectation is that stories shared are personal experience, leaders must be willing to set the example.[205]

The scope of Lencioni, Kouzes and Posner, and Bonem and Patterson should not be overestimated. None of the authors advocated for the universal application of personal experience. Stories are contextual. In this way, the use of storytelling to shape community identity and personal formation is by no means new. Jesus told at least 46 parables—stories with embedded moral instruction. Abraham Lincoln told stories as a means of shaping moral fortitude and directing ethical formation. Doris Goodwin wrote that Lincoln's stories "provided more than mere amusement. Drawn from his own experiences and the curiosities reported by others, they frequently provided maxims or proverbs that usefully connected to the lives of his listeners."[206]

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[204] Edwin H Friedman, Margaret M Treadwell, and Edward W Beal, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership In The Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 111.

[205] Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 29.

[206] Doris Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2006), xc-xci.

Eugene Peterson goes so far as to place narrative central to communication. He writes:

> All words turn, eventually, into stories. Narrative is the most basic form of speech. If the recovery of contemplative exegesis begins with a realization that words are basically sounds that reveal, it matures with the recognition that when words are put together they form stories that shape. Whenever we open our mouths to speak, it isn't long before we are telling a story.[207]

But why, if not new, was the art of story not emphasized more as a component of leadership in the previous eras examined? Probably because narration ultimately depends upon experiences which are unique and non-repeatable thus, they are non-scientific (in the truest sense of the word). In the previous eras considered, there remained a fascination with the scientific method. Of course, anything based on narrative would come under scrutiny.

This renewed openness to the power of narrative also comes in the wake of decades of data fatigue. As mentioned, Lencioni made reference to the susceptibility of data-driven analytics. Edwin H. Friedman argued that societal regression drives the pathology of data analytics, which in turn fuels the anxiety that exacerbates the problem. Most data-set pursuits are "formatted in anxiety-provoking formulas that, precisely because they leave out emotional variables, give a deterministic impression."[208] Determinism is Darwinian; thus, if leaders cannot control the outcome, they may at least study and diagnose the process in minutia. As long as absolute confidence could be

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[207] Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 81.

[208] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 104.

placed in scientific methodology, storytelling took a back seat. In the decline of confidence, storytelling takes center stage.

Friedman called this compulsive pursuit of a data both an addiction and an abuse. He wrote, "One reason that the abuse metaphor is appropriate is that all forms of addictions are related to…anxiety, lack of nerve, and poorly differentiated self. [T]he vicious cycle that is always characteristic of addiction…is remarkably descriptive of what has happened to America's leaders and healers with regard to data and technique."[209] Thus, the extolling of narrative appears to be, at least partially, a response to the dependency-abuse cycle of data analytics. Not unexpectedly, when truth becomes relative, the basis for moral agreement must become a collective endeavor: shared story. This field of study is extensive and growing, known as second-person standpoint.[210]

When leaders share personal stories of hurt, loss and, even failure, trust is created. It is safe for followers to hurt, lose, and fail. Trust is essential if honest constructive criticism and conflict can occur. Lencioni concluded, "Contrary to popular wisdom and behavior, conflict is not a bad thing for a team. In fact, the fear of conflict is almost always a sign of problems."[211] Lencioni notably viewed conflict positively, as the second most necessary component to healthy organizational life. The absence of conflict in an organization, or the avoidance of conflict by leaders, is to be viewed with suspicion. Thus

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[209] Ibid., 114.

[210] Stephen L. Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[211] Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 28.

far, only James MacGregor Burns looked to conflict as an indicator that leadership is being practiced.[212]

Conflict can be positive. Dean Hoge and Jacqueline Wenger, in their book *Pastors in Transition,* stressed, "Conflict is a part of life; psychologists consistently remind us that it should not be seen as something inherently bad. It is an inevitable part of any close relationship, especially relationships in which people have a strong personal investment."[213] Lencioni believed healthy leadership encouraged value-driven conflict, avoiding the tendency to fight over people and personalities, even to the extent of mining for conflict within the group.[214] On a sliding scale between artificial harmony and mean-spirited personal attacks, Lencioni maintained most organizations "live somewhere fairly close to the artificial harmony end of this continuum."[215]

Viewing conflict positively is only a recent development. Erwin Schell's executives were to stem the contagious spread of "fear, anger, and enthusiasm,"[216] even as they guarded themselves against the waves of this tide. Anything which excited the organization, conflict being just one example, the executive must study "hypothetically, establishing a plan of procedure in advance."[217] James MacGregor Burns, a generation

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[212] Burns*, Leadership,* 36.

[213] Dean R. Hoge, and Jacqueline E Wenger, *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005), 76.

[214] Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 45.

[215] Ibid., 42.

[216] Schell, *Technique of Executive Control*, 87.

[217] Ibid., 166.

later, saw conflict as beneficial in what it revealed. He held that "the process of leadership must be seen as part of the dynamics of conflict and of power."[218]

Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linksy elaborated on conflict as something to orchestrate and sometimes even instigate, saying, "When you tackle a tough issue in any group, rest assured there will be conflict."[219] Human nature is to avoid and reduce conflict, but "conflicts, at their root, consist of differences in fervently held beliefs...."[220] That is, conflict reveals otherwise unseen differences.

Why the interest in conflict as a core capacity of leadership? Because conflict is the crucible in which leadership is tested and proved. When there is relative peace and agreement, leadership can afford to be benevolent or act passively. Leadership occurs when there is discontent.[221] Regardless of the field of study, examples of successful leadership involve individuals who rise up in periods of confusion or challenge and shepherd conflict toward progressive change. Thus, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain is remembered either for his failure to address the rising tide of Nazism under Adolf Hitler, or not at all; alternately, his successor, Winston Churchill, is largely remembered as a successful leader in the same theater of conflict.[222]

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[218] Burns, *Leadership*, 3.

[219] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line,* 101.

[220] Ibid., 101.

[221] Kouzes, and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 50.

[222] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 433.

An interest in the concept of anxiety naturally follows this renewed focus upon

conflict. Anxiety accompanies conflict. Authors of *The Leader's Journey* described the

situation as follows:

> When anxiety rises, we become rather predictable. Our thinking becomes less clear and more reactive. Some of us withdraw; others engage in conflict. We begin to place or accept blame in an effort to avoid taking responsibility for making personal changes. We begin to see ourselves as the victim of others' actions. We assign motives to others' behavior, or we take it personally. Demand for conformity in thinking and behavior increases. We look for a quick fix to the symptoms that develop. The least mature members among us begin to attract most of our attention. Leaders are pulled in many directions and find it more and more difficult to think for themselves. The gravitational pull of relationships has its effect on the behavior and response of each person in the group; the behavior and response of each person affects the emotional gravity of the system.[223]

Anxious, predictable, nearness-distance cycles, victimization, and an emotion ego

mass—this is a modern summation of Murray Bowen's family-systems theory, of which

these authors are well aware.[224]

Heifetz and Linsky viewed such periods as an indication the system is facing an

uncommon challenge or going through substantial change, either one usually leading to

the other. These are adaptive challenges. Heifetz and Linsky categorized individual and

collective challenges as either technical or adaptive. A technical challenge is one in

which "people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how

and procedures."[225] However,

> …there is a whole host of problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. We call these adaptive challenges because

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[223] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*, 31.

[224] The authors list eleven references to Bowen, family-systems theory, or the Bowen Center for the Study of Family.

[225] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 13.

they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values, and behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment.[226]

Adaptive challenges require people to change mentally and in their commitments, not simply in behavior. Adaptive challenges do not respond to technical fixes, regardless of the number employed. Also, "the persistence of conflict usually indicates that people have not yet made the adjustments and accepted the losses that accompany adaptive change." Finally, "…crisis is a good indicator of adaptive issues that have festered. Crises represent danger because the stakes are high, time appears short, and the uncertainties are great."[227]

Under such circumstances, systems tend to respond as designed. Observing this in his tenure at Proctor and Gamble, Arthur W. Jones stated, "All organizations are perfectly aligned to get the results they get." Friedman called this toxic combination chronic anxiety: "The five aspects of chronic anxiety are reactivity, hurting, blaming, a quick-fix mentality, and lack of leadership—the last not only a fifth characteristic of societal regression but one that stems from and contributes to the other four."[228]

During challenge and change, there arises a fear of difference. This push for homogeneity results in a call to toe the party line. Fear of difference is a powerful force in periods of unease, contributing to environmental hostility. Friedman found chronically anxious systems similar to pathogens in this attribute: "All organisms that lack self-

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[226] Ibid., 13.

[227] Ibid., 60-61.

[228] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 24.

regulation will be *perpetually invading the space of their neighbors*." There is a second attribute, namely, "organisms that are unable to self-regulate *cannot learn from their experience*, which is why the unmotivated are invulnerable to insight."[229]

What organizations do when pursuing unity at the eradication of different is, Friedman proposes, similar to what viruses do to cells. Viruses defy easy categorization as animal, vegetable, or mineral. They reproduce but have no propulsion and lack animus. Unlike cells and bacteria, "their behavior and direction are determined by what is outside rather than inside."[230] Viruses take over a host's DNA in order to reproduce. They burst the cell membrane in order to spread, killing the cell. In contrast, normal cells differentiate from parent cells, specialize, form colonies, communicate with one another, have limited proliferation, and can actually self-destruct in order to preserve the larger organism: apoptosis.[231] Thus, Friedman argued, chronically anxious people or systems function more like a virus, defined by what they are not rather than by what constitutes them. In short, differentiated people or systems resist blanket uniformity as healthy cells resist viruses.

Ideologically, difference invites doubt. Doubt can threaten one's sense of integrity by challenging deeply held, or core, beliefs. Core beliefs function as a nervous system network, providing meaning and purpose for, and awareness of, one's worldview. A healthy response to difference is self-reflection; an anxious response restores a false sense of confidence through the eradication of difference. Difference is only eliminated through

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[229] Ibid., 138.

[230] Ibid., 139.

[231] Ibid., 140.

the establishment of homogeneity. Thus, "the entities that are most pathogenic lack self-regulation and self-definition. They always invade the space of others…"[232] The problem is not the deeply held beliefs, as Friedman pointed out, but in how people function while holding to those beliefs.[233].

Heifetz and Linsky wrote, "Adaptive change stimulates resistance because it challenges people's habits, beliefs, and values. It asks them to take a loss, experience, or uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures."[234] Adaptive challenges remind that "when you ask people to do adaptive work, you are asking a lot. You may be asking them to choose between two values, both of which are important to the way they understand themselves."[235] This involves real loss. "Habits, values, and attitudes, even dysfunctional ones, are part of one's identity. To change the way people see and do things is to challenge how they define themselves."[236]

The leader's role in such times is both complex and nuanced. One temptation is to become merely empathetic, but Friedman said this reorientation to empathy (as an emotional response) away from responsibility (as a practical response) is actually an emotional barrier to the work of leadership.[237] He explained, "As understood today, empathy may be a luxury afforded only to those who do not have to make tough

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[232] Ibid., 147.

[233] Ibid., 146.

[234] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 30.

[235] Ibid., 92-93.

[236] Ibid., 27.

[237] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 133.

decisions. For 'tough decisions' are decisions the consequence of which will be painful to others (although not *harmful* to others—an important distinction)."[238]

A leader cannot afford to engage such dangerous endeavors arbitrarily, capriciously, or carelessly. Already leaders "risk getting marginalized, diverted, attacked, or seduced." For all the reasons stated above, resistance to adaptive change is intense. Those who resist change desire "to shut down those who exercise leadership in order to preserve what they have."[239]

Thus, leaders must continually work on themselves first, or as Friedman stated, "putting their primary emphasis on their own continual growth and maturity."[240] Bowen agreed. Using the family as the context for chronic anxiety, he wrote,

> In considering change in the research families, we have come to think more in terms of change in the parental relationship then of change in the psychotic symptoms. The parents can change in relationship to each other. When there is a change in the fixed rigidity of the parental relationship, there follows a change in the patient, irrespective of the immediate level of psychotic symptoms.[241]

Leaders do not remain focused exclusively on self, but must engage and reengage the anxious system, as Heifetz and Linsky explained: "Thus leadership requires disturbing people—but at a rate they can absorb."[242]

In summary, industrial models of leadership largely discount the individuality of leader and followers alike, focusing more on the essence of corporate interaction while

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[238] Ibid., 137.

[239] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 31.

[240] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 138.

[241] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 89.

[242] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 20.

dismissing or, worse, ignoring the existence of emotion. Modern models of leadership acknowledge aspects of the individual but usually in terms of the collective, acknowledging the presence of emotion but with little directive. As the "political and social consequences of Darwinian ideas"[243] continued working themselves out, post-modern models of leadership have become hyper-individualistic, disparate and disconnected, advocating multiple intelligences—of which cognition and emotion are but two. The model is not fundamentally different. As C.S. Lewis wrote, while "the pattern grows…nothing is ever repeated."[244]

Drucker concludes:

> The emergence of management as an essential, a distinct and a leading institution is a pivotal event in social history. Rarely, if ever, has a new basic institution, a new leading group, emerged as fast as has management since the turn of [the 20th] century. Rarely, in human history has a new institution proven indispensable so quickly; and even less often has a new institution arrived with so little opposition, so little disturbance, so little controversy.[245]

Current Church Leadership

This section will look primarily at the practices of churches evangelical, reformed, and orthodox in their theology and practice. While the patterns observed are predominant among the churches studied and observed, broader implications may not be transferable to congregations of other faith traditions.

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[243] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 5

[244] C. S Lewis, *Perelandra: A Novel* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 126.

[245] Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, 3.

Historic development of leadership as a field of study in the western world, as laid out thus far, provides the backdrop for how the church and church leadership today are viewed. The church today functions as a modern organization. Jimmy Long wrote,

> Since the church has been immersed in modern culture in the twentieth century, we have created a heroic church-leadership culture that attracts the modern corporate leadership style. So, like the corporate world, the modern church has emphasized a corporate culture where the goals are clear, the mission is clear, and there is not a lot of fluff. This type of leadership is goal and program oriented. To move the church forward in this leadership style, the church incorporates a senior pastor and a hierarchical authority leadership model....[246]

Long observes the church functioning as a corporate entity. He observes that leadership, for many years, has been "defined by industrial society."[247] Such instruments of industry are about production, where leaders function as managers, and authority is "based upon rules, roles and organizational structures."[248]

Drucker, writing for a very different audience and purpose, concluded the same point:

> Management will remain a basic and dominant institution perhaps as long as Western civilization itself survives. For management is not only grounded in the nature of the modern industrial system and in the needs of the modern business enterprise to which an industrial system must entrust its productive resources—both human and material. Management also expresses basic beliefs of modern Western society. It expresses the belief in the possibility of controlling man's livelihood through systematic organization of economic resources. It expresses the belief that economic change can be made into the most powerful engine for human betterment and social justice...[249]

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[246] Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 48-49.

[247] Ibid., 25.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, 4.

Long's thorough examination of leadership as a field of study, in its history and development, came to rest on this point:

> In the modern world, symbolized by the Cold War, life was compartmentalized, regimented and strictly organized. Leadership in the corporate world and the church was highly regimented. For several centuries, leadership was defined by industrial society. We were in the business of producing and making things. Leaders defined themselves as managers. Authority in the modern world was based upon rules, roles and organizational structures. Carl Raschke calls the modern church a "managed faith body." Leadership was based upon reason, and the leader followed the plan. The result is that many existing leaders represent the hierarchical and controlling view of leadership.[250]

Carl Raschke actually went so far as to diagnose the church as having "ingrained habits" of seeing the organization as a vertical hierarchy: God is at the top, then denominational agencies or administration, then the pastors and local-congregation governing bodies, with the congregation at the bottom.[251] Raschke proposed a different model for church organization that accounts for complex systems: different individuals with differing levels of connectivity within the broader network. Church organization is not to be confused with church government. A complex approach to church organization allows for differences. Differences require change and, often, the abandonment of traditional practices. Raschke is not proposing the abandonment of theological positions or views, but merely the expression they have assumed under a modern leadership style, in a post-modern culture. Raschke stated, "Existing leaders will have to be willing to give up their stability and the predictability of the past."[252]

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[250] Long, *The Leadership Jump*, 25.

[251] Raschke, *The next Reformation*, 154.

[252] Ibid., 18.

Raschke, borrowing from William Beckham and expounding on his ideas, called this different model a "cell church." It is not a new idea, but the resurrection of an extremely old one. Reading Raschke, the reader realizes his description of what the church should look like sounds distinctly like a complex system. He wrote, "The theological template of the cell church is not just a religious application of nouveau organizational or management theory. Beckham contends that it springs forthwith from a close reading of Jesus' ministry and the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament."[253]

Hoge and Wenger suggest there is movement away from this model of church leadership culture, writing, "We believe that authoritarian leadership by church leaders is less acceptable in 2005 than it was in 1960. The leveling between clergy and laity in education and training results in church members today demanding a more collaborative and less arbitrary leadership style."[254] Whether preference and practice line up in the day-to-day management of church bodies should be visible in the way assistant pastors are prepared for, trained in, and given authority in their respective areas of responsibility. Raschke does not extrapolate to what degree a change in the organizational structure of the church requires a change in the leadership structure.

Ultimately, the modern church remains a managed "faith-body," Raschke wrote.[255] Leadership is based upon reason; in fact, there is a reason for everything the church does. The role of the leader in this setting is to follow the established plan. The result is that many leaders represent the hierarchical or controlling style of leadership,

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[253] Ibid., 155.

[254] Hoge, and Wenger, *Pastors in Transition,* 9.

[255] Raschke, *The next Reformation,* 157.

and "the implicit approach that many churches employ is a variation of the 'one genius model'."[256] Bill Joiner and Stephen Joseph call this heroic leadership. Heroic leaders "assume *sole* responsibility for setting their organization's objectives, coordinating the activities of their subordinates, and managing their performance…. [H]eroic leadership overcontrols [sic] and underutilizes subordinates."[257] Hero-leaders function best where "technocratic theories of church organization follow the social engineering paradigm…the modernist-humanist conception of control…."[258]

That the organized, western church is structured toward the hero-leader is no surprise. Distinctly secular literature on leadership defines a leader by some measured criteria, behind which is an imperative: she *must*. Following suit, the organized church has borrowed many of these criteria, spiritualizing where necessary. As Bowen observed, systems are anxious, and the undifferentiated desire is to put an end to anxiety. The triggers of anxiety within the organized church are not, taken individually, particular to that organization; however, in combination, they are unique. Peter Steinke found that five or six of the following anxiety triggers usually occur serially or simultaneously within congregations:[259] money, sexuality, the pastor's leadership style, lay leadership style, growth and survival, boundaries, trauma and transition, staff conflict, old versus new, contemporary and traditional, worship, the gap between ideal and real, and building or

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[256] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 7.

[257] Bill Joiner and Stephen Josephs, *Leadership Agility: Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 9-10.

[258] Raschke, *The next Reformation,* 157.

[259] Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006).

constructing new space. When you add anxiety to the modernist hierarchy of organization, the system produces a hero-leader.

How does the church today fare against Friedman's criteria of unhealthy system? To answer this question, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is an ideal, though not necessarily unique, case study, primarily because of the thoroughness of their data collection and the public availability of that data.

First, member retention is at an all-time low. A survey of fourteen of the largest congregations in the PCA found an overall reported membership decline of seven percent, from 2000 to 2014.[260] When comparing reported membership against average weekly attendance, there is a 51.3 percent decline. And those churches with the greatest decline in both membership and attendance were congregations in which a founding pastor had recently departed. While the PCA as a denomination grew fractionally in the same timeframe, membership decline in these fourteen churches nearly erased the positive growth across the other 1,450 churches.

One of the reasons these churches are in decline is the result of the collapsing hero-leader model. One PCA congregation in Fort Lauderdale reported an 80 percent decline in membership after the death of the founding pastor. Almost 400 of the members left after the founding pastor's daughter led an unsuccessful attempt to have his successor removed.[261] The deceased founding pastor was remembered as "a towering figure among

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[260] Joel D. Hathaway, "Considerations Impacting Planning of Church Facility Expansion," *Academia*.edu, March 2015, http://www.academia.edu/9120151/Considerations_That_Impact_Planning_of_Church_Facility_Expansion .

[261] Bobby Jr. Ross, "Tullian Tchividjian: Allow Your Critics to Teach You," *ChristianityToday.com*, September, 2009, accessed November 30, 2015, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/septemberweb-only/138-41.0.html.

evangelicals. He was a brilliant theologian with a passion for evangelism."[262] A representative from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals credited this pastor with creating an "impressive empire."[263] How pastors can simultaneously advance a king and his kingdom theologically while building their own empire seems beyond the purview of the article.

Another congregational in St. Louis, Missouri, saw membership decline from over 1500 to less than 600 in the five years following the departure of the long-time founding pastor. In 1991, at the midpoint of organizational maturation, this senior pastor preached 84.4 percent of the time, or 41 times per year. The other 13 pulpit appearances featured denominational leaders, missionaries, and prominent figures; none featured internal staff.[264]

How do those numbers compare to other churches of similar size and practices? By comparison, another senior pastor in St. Louis, Missouri, preached only 56.4 percent of the time. Other church staff preached 15 percent of the time, with other ordained congregants preaching 29 percent of the time. Outsiders preached only twice in 94 appearances, or less than 1 percent.[265]

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[262] Pat Robertson, *Statement from Pat Robertson Regarding the Passing of Dr. James Kennedy*, *Yuricareport.com*, accessed December 25, 2015, http://www.yuricareport.com/Dominionism/OnDJamesKennedyLegacy.html.

[263] Sarah Pulliam, "D. James Kennedy Dies at 76," *ChristianityToday.com*, September 6, 2007, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/septemberweb-only/136-42.0.html.

[264] Joel D. Hathaway, "Comparative Analysis of Pulpit Appearances by Organizational Insiders" (unpublished paper, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO, February 25, 2016).

[265] Ibid.

Another congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, reported 3,235 members in 2000; after the founding pastor left, the church reported average weekly attendance of 596. Unlike those listed above, this pastor was known for his gentleness, kindness, and pursuit of racial reconciliation. The pastor even remarked, "Churches like ours can become too dependent on a central 'hero figure'."[266]

The issue of heroic leadership is not a denominational phenomenon. Congregational churches function in much the same way. The rapid rise, and more rapid collapse, of a prominent congregation in Seattle, Washington, were driven in both cases by the personality of the senior pastor, described as "a persuasive speaker with a strong attitude."[267] The church started with three families and grew to a congregation of 6,400 with 15 sites and an average attendance of more than 14,000. Over time, it became, as one member described it, "the personal ministry of one very ambitious man."[268] On the outside, the pastor was viewed as dynamic, humorous, and charming; behind closed doors, he "could be vicious, abusive, and controlling."[269]

There are ample illustrations of failed heroic leadership after the fact. Are there markers of heroic leadership in process and prior to organizational transition? The regularity with which senior leaders share the task of public preaching appears to denote

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[266] Cissy Fleet, "Christ Community, Franklin, TN Founding Pastor, Scotty Smith, Announces Departure," *TheAquilaReport.com*, December 12, 2011, accessed December 1, 2015, http://theaquilareport.com/christ-community-franklin-tn-founding-pastor-scotty-smith-announces-departure/.

[267] Joanna Petry, "My Story," *JoyfulExiles.com* (blog) entry posted March 20, 2011, accessed December 15, 2015, http://joyfulexiles.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/jonna-mhc-story-29.pdf.

[268] Ibid.

[269] Craig Welch, "The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill Church," *SeattleTimes.com,* September 13, 2014, accessed November 30, 2017. http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/the-rise-and-fall-of-mars-hill-church/.

their willingness to give voice and power to other constituents. Raschke concluded that "large charismatic churches often run the risk of becoming staging areas for the showmanship of their charismatic leaders...."[270]

These senior pastors fit Joiner and Josephs' description of the heroic leader. In each case, the senior pastor assumed sole responsibility for the organization, and there appears to be partial or complete enmeshment wherein the senior leader and the organization were viewed as a single entity. A critique of either was viewed as an attack on both. Heroic leaders "usually act as if they only must choose between being assertive or accommodative."[271] Many even switch between the two styles of interaction based on their own assumptions about power in the immediate relationship.[272]

Joiner and Josephs believed that heroic leadership—what they call an expert leader—depended upon two capacities: situational awareness and a sense of purpose. Expert leaders are more tactical than strategic. Power is based on expertise or organizational authority. Furthermore, expert leaders tend to be accommodative toward those in authority over them but assertive toward direct reports.[273]

The logic is sound in formulation: The person to gain senior leadership does so only through some combination of expertise, education, and experience. This combination of quality traits becomes the basis from which leaders come to expect loyalty from organization members. Such leaders usually believe their perspective is right

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[270] Raschke, *The next Reformation*, 157.

[271] Joiner and Josephs, *Leadership Agility,* 58.

[272] Ibid.

[273]Ibid., 55-58.

(morally, if not also absolutely) and not merely a matter of opinion, "…being right is so important that, when you say you respect others' right to disagree, what you usually mean (implicitly) is that you respect their right to be wrong."[274]

Those who agree follow willingly. Those who disagree find themselves rebuked by the pre-modern values of the church as a historic organization. Lencioni called this false-dichotomy (i.e., agree completely or be judged a moral violator) artificial harmony:

> Nowhere does this tendency toward artificial harmony show itself more than in mission-driven nonprofit organizations, most notably churches. People who work in these organizations tend to have a misguided idea that they cannot be frustrated or disagreeable with one another. What they're doing is confusing being nice with being kind.[275]

As stated previously, one of the delineations of a modern organization is the emphatic commitment to empirical information and established process. This is no less true of churches seeking to adhere to, proclaim, and model the historic, orthodox teachings of the Bible. While the Bible remains the "only infallible rule of faith and practice," interpretive documents adjoin.[276] The PCA reflects these values in the foundational document, *The Westminster Standards,* the document of governmental policy, *The Book of Church Order (BCO),* and the structure of governmental process, *Robert's Rules of Order.*

By Friedman's definition, the PCA is a regressively stuck organization. Leadership is viewed essentially as a cognitive exercise.[277] Analysis of the recorded

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[274] Ibid., 58.

[275] Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 44.

[276] "Westminster Confession of Faith | Presbyterian Church in America: Administrative Committee," accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.pcaac.org/resources/wcf/.

[277] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 13.

interactions at the denominational level shows symptoms, as defined by Friedman, of a chronically anxious system. Emotionally dependent members of the organization set agendas or drive agendas; therefore, individuals are devalued. There is a compulsive focus on data and technique, as well as widespread misunderstanding of the relationally destructive processes often employed.[278]

These habits and practices are observed in the denominational overtures where two trends emerge. First, there is a push for greater clarity in polity and practice. Second, there is a disproportionate reliance upon technical responses to adaptive challenges. From 1990 to 2015, hundreds of overtures have attempted to change, remove, replace, augment, or clarify the language of the *Book of Church Order* specifically in the areas of gender roles, worship expression, and what qualifies a legitimate theological exception. In most cases, the language was already excessively clear, and many times changes were rejected on those grounds; nevertheless, new overtures continue to press these same issues year after year.

In 1994, Overture 9 requested the Assembly "Reaffirm Position that Offices are Open to Men Only." Subsequently, the following measures were presented:

Overture 15 (1997): Study Committee on Role of Women in the Church
Overture 06 (1997): Concern about Women Leaders in MNA Seminars
Overture 16 (1999): Forbid Women to Preach/Teach at Worship Services
Overture 12 (2000): Prohibit Women from Preaching in Public Worship
Overture 10 (2000): Restrict Preaching or Exhorting to Qualified Men Only
Overture 25 (2001): Forbid Women to Preach/Teach in Corporate Worship
Overture 09 (2008): Erect Study Committee on Deaconesses

Presumably, the rationale behind these redundant overtures is to clarify ambiguities. Evidently, some church or churches perceived the practices of another church outside the

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[278] Ibid., 12.

parameters of the BCO, but not sufficiently so as to garner support for a judicial case. This is the fear of difference that Friedman referenced, where anxious systems press obsessively for data and technique—clarity—while pressuring differentiated views toward homogeny.[279]

There are other examples. After passing a Statement on Women in the Military, Overture 1 in 2003, another overture in 2004 requested clarity on it. Overtures dealing with perceived or real differences in creation views came to the Assembly in 1998, 2001, and 2014. And a Study Committee on Issue of Diversity in the PCA appointed in 1995 resulted in negligible changes denominationally. Twenty years would pass before a personal overture of repentance by two pastors would spark "a movement of public repentance by the gathered PCA that was more intense than any of us envisioned."[280]

Reliance upon technical responses makes organizations ill-equipped to address adaptive challenges. Organizations are unable to respond to the substantial shifts in the cultural view of morality, secularism, material excess, and technology that have multiplied in the last 30 years. In fact, this seems to be the single point upon which there is near universal agreement. Books on marketing, innovation, management, investing, litigation, and public information systems, as well as management and leadership agree on this point: "The world has changed dramatically…"[281] Covey called these changes

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[279] This is Edwin Friedman's premise in chapters one and two of his book, *A Failure of Nerve.*

[280] George Robertson, "We … and Our Fathers Have Sinned (Daniel 9:8) – First Presbyterian Church." FirstPresAugust.org. June 26, 2015 accessed November 30, 2015, http://firstpresaugusta.org/we-and-our-fathers-have-sinned-daniel-98/.

[281] Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 7.

sweeping and shifting. Others use the term "accelerated change."[282] By Heifitz and

Linsky's definition, these are adaptive challenges.

Instead of engaging in the messy work of adaptive challenges, the PCA at large

has resorted to technical work. The 2012 General Assembly is an example of this.

Overture 30, Regarding Intinction,[283] came to the floor. A remarkably few PCA churches

at the time practiced intiction. Some argued the BCO was clear on the matter, prohibiting

it.[284] Nevertheless, the Assembly—comprised of some 1,100 commissioners—spent more

than three hours debating the matter, or 3,300 labor hours: the equivalent of one pastor

working 50 hours a week for 66 weeks.

That same year, another overture sought to change how theological exceptions are

reported. Another focused on how the excommunicated are reinstated. Yet another added

two paragraphs on joining membership as it related to a particular congregation. And

another required reaffirmation of the *Apostles' Creed* for church members.[285] Overture 10

sought to reject all evolutionary views of Adam, a matter discussed and debated in

similar overtures or tried in judicial cases in 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001,

and 2002. An advisory committee on creation established in 1998 concluded in 2000

saying, "The Committee has been unable to come to unanimity over the nature and

duration of the creation days."[286] One minority report observed that such inward focused

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[282] Arjen E. J. Wals, ed., *Learning for Sustainability in Times of Accelerating Change* (Wageningen, Netherlands: Wageningen Academy Publications, 2012).

[283] Intinction is the practice of dipping the bread into the cup during the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

[284] "Minutes of the Fortieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America," July 19, 2012, 75.

[285] Ibid., 794.

[286] "Report of the Creation Study Committee of the Presbyterian Church in America," May 19, 2000.

issues have "consumed the resources of the church to the detriment of many congregations."[287] No doubt some believe such debates central to mission, vision, and philosophy.

These debates would seem excusably intramural were they not contrasted with the great human issues said to be central to the core beliefs of the denomination. In the 12 months leading up to the 2012 General Assembly, the United Nations declared a famine in Somalia. Nearly 13 million people were displaced in Thailand due to serve flooding. Global stock exchanges fell dramatically due to the global debt crisis wreaking havoc on the economies of second- and third-world countries. A gunman in Norway killed 77 people. Flooding killed 207 people in Cambodia. More than 600 people died in an earthquake in Turkey. Almost 1,300 people died in flash floods in the Philippines. Over 3,000 died in the Arab Spring in the fall of 2011, a crisis that has since killed 220,000, including 500 children, wounded more than a million, and displaced an additional 6.5 million human beings.[288]

In 2012, 832 ordained pastors, called teaching elders, and 288 ruling elders comprised the 1,100 assembly commissioners. That year, the denomination had approximately 4,248 teaching elders and 7,252 ruling elders: 11,500 total. This means that General Assembly commissioners represented less than 10 percent of denominational, voting leadership. While the focus of assembly business is not in question, the weight such matters carry denominationally is most certainly worth

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[287] "Minutes of the Thirty-First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America" (Charlotte, NC, June 10, 2003), 160.

[288] "UNHCR - Syrian Arab Republic," UNHCR.org. Accessed December 1, 2015, http://www.unhcr.org/sy/.

reexamining. Considering the preceding analysis, there is a sad irony that the vision

statement of the PCA from 2002 concludes, "[T]he PCA will become a renewed

denomination committed to revival and reformation in North American and the

World."[289]

Friedman defined a society in regression by five characteristics: intense reactivity

of members to events and one another; togetherness forces triumphing over the

individual, or "herding;" an emotional focus on victimization or abuse; low tolerance for

pain and the subsequent pursuit of symptom relief; and the lack of well-differentiated

leaders.[290] The PCA appears to function as just such a society. The intense reactivity is

documented in a history of judicial cases giving way to overtures giving way to

committee nomination, together with one goal: forced unanimity as a means of relieving

the uncomfortable reality of difference.

The push for clarity and correction, adjustment and changes in process, and

perspective is nothing short of an "orientation toward data and technique rather than

emotional process." Friedman went on to say this obsessed orientation overwhelms

leaders with confusing and contradictory results while emphasizing weakness over

strength and de-valuing self by "ignoring the variable of individuation."[291]

Friedman posits that chronically anxious systems have another propensity: the

subversion of their most innovative leaders. Again, the PCA provides further case-study

material. When the larger denomination is not embroiled in internal debates on structure

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[289] "Minutes of the Thirtieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America" (Birmingham, AL, June 18, 2002).

[290] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 54.

[291] Ibid., 98.

and individual churches are not coming apart, individual leaders often take up the pen to

battle one another. These tend to be most intense, least emotionally differentiated, and

most personally destructive on weblogs. Web results from the keywords "PCA Problems"

offer invitations to leave the denomination,[292] a suggestion for the denomination to

split,[293] and calls to rise up against the apostasy of the denomination.[294]

One less contentious example involves Tim Keller, founding pastor of Redeemer

Presbyterian Church in New York City, who is viewed as an innovator. Christianity

Today Magazine wrote, "Tim Keller will be remembered as the pioneer of the new urban

Christians."[295] The church he planted in 1989 now draws 5,000 people weekly at three

locations and has helped start over 337 churches in 45 cities through its training ministry,

Redeemer: City to City.[296] Yet, several theologically like-minded pastors have taken up

the task to examine his writings and teachings to test his orthodoxy.[297] While remaining

gracious and civil in tone, some critics find Keller's arguments weak,[298] while others

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[292] Andrew Webb, "5 Reasons It Might Be Time to Leave the PCA | Building Old School Churches," *Bible Based* (blog), entry posted May 12, 2014, accessed December 15, 2015, https://biblebased.wordpress.com/2014/05/12/5-reasons-it-might-be-time-to-leave-the-pca/.

[293] Sam DeSocio, "Could A Split Be Good for the PCA?," *Vintage73.com*, January 2013, accessed December 4, 2015, http://vintage73.com/2013/01/could-a-split-be-good-for-the-pca/.

[294] Paul M. Elliot, "The PCA's Apostasy: No More Lines in the Sand," *TeachingTheWord.org*, May 2014, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.teachingtheword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=79218.

[295] Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009), back cover.

[296] "About, Redeemer: City to City," accessed December 4, 2015, http://www.redeemercitytocity.com/about/.

[297] Iain D. Campbell, and William M. Schweitzer, *Engaging with Keller: Thinking through the Theology of an Influential Evangelical* (Darlington, England; Grand Rapids, MI: EP Books, 2013).

[298] Jeremiah Montgomery, "Orthodox Presbyterian Church," *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, April 13, 2014, http://www.opc.org/review.html?review_id=479.

conclude Keller's own texts prove he "is not orthodox in his theology, and…does not demonstrate a commitment to sound Reformed doctrine."[299]

How does one explain the propensity to attack members—especially in an organization founded on more than 3,000 years of scriptural attestation, summarized in a 350-year-old document, expressed in nearly 400 pages of governmental policy? Friedman described this phenomenon as peace-mongering among the power-holders for the sake of avoiding risk and diminishing anxiety.[300]

This does not imply that deeply held convictions, even theological commitments, cannot also be held in a well-differentiated manner. As documented in an earlier section, many students on leadership theory view conflict positively, including James MacGregor Burns, Patrick Lencioni, James Kouzes, and Barry Posner. Even research involving pastors in transition document the benefits of conflict. "Conflict is a part of life; psychologists consistently remind us that it should not be seen as something inherently bad. It is an inevitable part of any close relationship, especially relationship in which people have a strong personal investment."[301]

Combining Bowen's research on families with the current consensus on leadership, conflict is not a result of an undifferentiated position; but, undifferentiated positions inevitably lead to unresolvable conflict. Lack of differentiation results in an uninformed over-confidence wherein complex systems are reduced to complicated systems. This produces simplistic solutions that, when challenged, elicit reactivity and

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[299] "Engaging with Keller Review, The New Calvinist," *NewCalvinist.com*, accessed December 4, 2015, http://www.newcalvinist.com/tim-kellers-false-gospel/engaging-keller-review/.

[300] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 13.

[301] Hoge, and Wenger, *Pastors in Transition, 76*.

blaming. Bowen went so far as to develop a scale on which he placed all members of a family system. The more emotionally differentiated from the ego mass people become, the higher on the scale they rate, and vice versa. Bowen observed the ironic tendency of less-mature members of a family to take the position of unassailable truth. He designed the scale to capture basic levels of differentiation and to notate the level at which differentiation functions, writing,

> The more intense the degree of ego fusion, the more the "borrowing" and "lending" and "giving" and "sharing" of self within the family ego mass…. The lower the person on the scale, the more he holds onto religious dogma, cultural values, superstition, and outmoded beliefs, and the less able he is to discard the rigidly held ideas. The lower a person on the scale, the more he makes a "federal case" of rejection, lack of love, and injustice, and the more the demands recompense for his hurts…, the more he holds the other responsible for his self and happiness…, the more intense the ego fusions, and the more extreme the mechanisms such as emotional distance, isolation, conflict, violence, and physical illness to control the emotion of "too much closeness." The more intense the ego fusions, the higher the incident of being in touch with the intrapsychic of the other, and the greater the chance that he can intuitively know what the other thinks and feels. In general, the lower the person on the scale, the more the impairment in meaningful communication.[302]

In short, the more dogmatic certainty is expressed by an individual or in an organization, the more rigid and uncritically these views become; the more uncritical, the more likelihood of catastrophic error: a black swan event.[303]

Nassim Taleb attempts to solve the underestimation of catastrophic errors in his book, *The Black Swan.* He identifies what he called "regressing counterfactuals."[304] By regressing, he means the philosophical regress argument in which propositions depend

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[302] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 164-165.

[303] Taleb, *The Black Swan*.

[304] Nassim Taleb, "The Future Has Thicker Tails than the Past: Model Error as Branching Counterfactuals," https://www.scribd.com/document/57035805/The-Future-Has-Thicker-Tails-Than-The-Past-Model-Error-As-Branching-Counterfactuals

upon justifications that depend upon propositions. Simply put, all logic is circular: eventually it rests upon an absolute authority. This is what Christians call presuppositional apologetics.[305] Taleb attempts to interrupt the regressing of errors not through the establishment of an absolute authority, but through the full disclosure of one's assumptions beforehand "to avoid radical skepticism…" without which presenters and hearers of the argument alike "risk falling into a certain form of incoherence…"[306] Taleb's model of probability connects to the issue of leadership because it makes room for healthy self-doubt and curiosity.

Friedman summarizes, "The great lesson here for all imaginatively gridlocked systems is that the acceptance and even cherishing of uncertainty is critical to keeping the human mind from voyaging into the delusion of omniscience. The willingness to encounter serendipity is the best antidote we have for the arrogance of thinking we know...."[307]

The PCA is by no means an exception, nor should the above critique be read critically. All leaders are dealing with the tension between inherited structures of organization, commitment to core values, transition from heroic leadership models to shared leadership models, and a chronic fear of change. And these are just some of the internal challenges facing them.

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[305] "Presuppositional Apologetics: An Introduction Part 1 of 2: Introduction and Creation," *ThirdMill.org*, accessed December 4, 2015, http://www.thirdmill.org/files/english/html/pt/PT.h.Frame.Presupp.Apol.1.html.

[306] Taleb, "The Future Has Thicker Tails than the Past: Model Error as Branching Counterfactuals."

[307] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 46.

Friedman pointed out that all leaders have to deal with such pathogenic pathologies: "Leaders, in fact, will find these entities are interchangeable from church to synagogue, from profit to non-profit institutions, from school to health care practice, from small business to large corporation."[308]

Raschke raised a challenge to the prevailing models of leadership. Citing Martin Luther's tenant from the Reformation, Raschke wrote:

> The phrase "priesthood of all believers" sounds like a contradiction in terms, because priests almost by definition are singular and special. They are mediators of God to their flock. If everyone is a priest, then no one is a priest. On the other hand, that is precisely what Luther had in mind. He took the phrase from the biblical idea of Israel as a "nation of priests"….

Raschke does not extrapolate this concept into church leadership to its logical extent; however, the Apostle Paul does in 2 Corinthians, modeling a view of team leadership that does not deny authority but neither does it result in hero-centric leadership.

In summary, using the PCA denomination as a case study, there is substantial evidence indicating the modern evangelical, reformed, and orthodox churches practice leadership through the lens of a post-industrial, heroic style. The hyper-focus on accuracy and clarity indicate a propensity for technical solutions to the adaptive challenges facing the church today. This is one indication that these denominations, particularly the PCA, are socially regressive organizations, as defined by Edwin Friedman. The role of team leadership is a perspective that stands in contrast to the prevailing model of the individualized approach.

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[308] Ibid., 146.

Role of Assistant Pastor as Defined by Polity and Practice

The concept of assistant pastor is not new. Historically, the role of curate has incorporated much of what is meant by assistant pastor. The Church of England (COE) used "curate" in the 1662 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* to refer to an individual with set pastoral duties but who is neither a Priest nor a Deacon.[309] Today, the COE uses the term to refer to priests in their first ministry position after ordination. Rectors and victors appoint curates, usually for one year, following completion of the Initial Ministry Education, or IME.[310] In 2015, the COE General Synod permitted the extension of the term of office for a curate by an additional year.

The position of curate has long been considered a preparatory post for senior ministry. For example, after passing his doctoral examination and defending his dissertation in 1927, at the age of 22, Dietrich Bonhoeffer received an appointment as curate in Barcelona. There, Bonhoeffer served under Pastor Friedrich Olbricht.[311]

However, as individual congregations abandoned the parish model, due in part to societal changes and increased mobility in the 20th century, congregation sizes grew. The decline of localized ministry was captured in a 1920 study of rural America. Researchers found only 20 percent of churches had even one full-time resident minister.[312] Over the

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[309] *The Book of Common Prayer, And Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Church of England* (In Ave-Mary Lane, London: John Baskerville, 1662), http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1662/Baskerville.pdf.

[310] Norman Boakes, "Archdeacons' News," *Bulletin* (The Church of England and the Church of Wales, July 2015), https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2284198/news%20bulletin%209.doc.

[311] Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, 72.

[312] Jan Stievermann, ed., *Religion and the Marketplace in the United States* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 38.

next 80 years, population and social shifts put downward pressure on the average

congregation—where many declined from 150 to 135 members. At the same time, the

average congregant experienced an increase in congregation size.[313] That is, a majority of

churchgoers attended larger churches. In response, the role of the assistant pastor

changed.

Like the position of curate, the assistant pastoral position still maintains an aspect

of ministry training; nevertheless, a perpetual class of assistant pastors has arisen. These

individuals anticipate serving in and seeking out support-role positions throughout the

lifetime of their ministry. One part of this trend may be explained by the reluctance of

younger leaders to take senior leadership positions.[314] Another part involves the

delineation of duties for an assistant pastor. In most cases, an assistant pastor's area of

responsibility is defined by church leadership: the session, the senior pastor, or some

combination of the two. The PCA *Book of Church Order* (BCO) delimits the role of

assistant pastor as follows:

> An assistant pastor is called by the Session, by the permission and approval of
> Presbytery…. He is not a member of the Session, but may be appointed on special
> occasions to moderate the Session under the provisions of *BCO* 12-4. In contrast,
> the pastor and associate pastor are elected by the congregation and thus become
> members of the Session. "The relationship of the assistant pastor to the church is
> determined by the Session."[315]

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[313] Mark Chaves, and Shawna L. Anderson, *Changing American Congregations: Findings from the Third Wave of the National Congregations Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University, October 14, 2014).

[314] Long, *The Leadership Jump*, 16.

[315] *The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 6th ed. (Atlanta: The Administrative Committee of the PCA, 2015), http://www.pcaac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2015BCO-Reprint-with-bookmarks.pdf, 23-2, 23-3, 23-4.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) defines the position and responsibility of the assistant pastor, thus: "The terms of call…shall be for a definite period of time and is renewable. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Assistant."[316] Here, neither the position nor the duties are guaranteed consistent.

A survey of 270 ministry postings from 2010-2016 highlight the discrepancy of expectations on the lead pastor verses the assistant pastor (table 1). While more detailed job descriptions usually accompany each posting, key words are drawn from the short-form description of these publicly posted positions. Limited to 765 characters, short-form descriptions require churches to emphasize key terminology, primary duties, principal expectations, and perquisite requirements. Terms are color-coded for ease of comparison.

Lead Pastor (140)	Count	Assistant Pastor (130)	Count	Non-ordained Youth (90)	Count
Lead, Leading, Leadership	179	Lead, Leading, Leadership	145	Lead, Leading, Leadership	74
Preaching	102	Worship	92	Christ	71
Teaching	101	Christ	76	Disciples	55
Reformed	76	Disciples	64	Reformed	40
Christ	61	Reformed	56	Teaching	29
Worship	51	Teaching	47	Mission	19
Bible	46	Mission	36	Bible	19
Vision	45	Pastoral Care	25	Vision	17
Disciples	35	Shepherding	25	Worship	17
Mission	25	Vision	21	Shepherding	10
Pastoral Care	20	Bible	16	Preaching	7
Evangelism	18	Evangelism	9	Pastoral Care	6
Counseling	12	Administration	7	Evangelism	3
Shepherding	11	Preaching	6	Administration	2
Administration	9	Counseling	5	Holy Spirit	2
Sacraments	9	Visitation	4	Counseling	1
Visitation	6	Holy Spirit	3	Sacraments	0
Holy Spirit	4	Sacraments	0	Visitation	0

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[316] *The Book of Order of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church* (The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 2013), 1:11-744.

Churches generally expect candidates for these positions to demonstrate leadership in their respective area of responsibility. Beyond that, the expectations differ, often in the extreme. The central emphasis for senior pastors is on *preaching* (102), *teaching* (101), and *worship* (51) from a *reformed* (76) perspective with *dependency upon Christ* (61).[317] For assistant pastors, expectations include *worship* (51), *making disciples* (64), and *teaching* (47), with *dependency on Christ* (76) and a *reformed* perspective (56). Looking at the bottom of the list, mention of the Holy Spirit is scant. *Administration* is deemphasized. The idea of pastoral care consistently rates higher than expressions of it: *counseling*, *shepherding*, and *visitation*.

A more thorough examination of 31 long-form assistant pastor job descriptions from the same dataset consistently revealed the primary responsibility of an assistant pastor thus: "to support the senior pastor in his duties." Invariably, there fall out some duties specific to both the senior and the assistant; however, in the long-form description; as in the short-form, areas of ministry practice assigned to assistant pastors typically are not central to developing senior-leadership skills and competencies in the assistant pastor.

Where there is a measured level of consistency in expectations for the lead pastor—teaching, preaching, leadership—the expectations for an assistant do not form into a clustered analysis or a Gaussian curve. The authors of *Leading from the Second Chair* recognized the ambiguity of this position, noting, "You should have a clear idea of the first chair's strengths and weaknesses, and how your abilities might complement

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[317] Key terminology is italicized. Term occurrence listed parenthetically.

them."[318] This puts an incredible burden of discernment and intuition on the

inexperienced assistant pastor. Because of the uniqueness of each lead pastor, whatever

experience an assistant pastor gains in context may not transfer to the next. The line

between what two senior pastors may need and how they may be open to help are not the

same. Bonem and Patterson called it the line of responsibility, saying, "The line defines

your responsibilities—what you are expected to do, what you are authorized to do, and

what is out of your bounds."[319] Bonem and Patterson believed this line of responsibility,

between a lead pastor and an assistant pastor, is the hardest to define because the line is

dynamic (i.e., always changing) and subtle.[320]

Such ambiguity contributes to conflict between the senior and assistant pastors, as

experienced by the latter. In their research on pastoral attrition, Dean Hoge and

Jacqueline Wenger found that assistant pastors experience conflict with a senior pastor

more often than with individual congregants. Conversely, senior pastors reported more

conflict with congregants than with staff members.[321]

There are several possible interpretations of this observation. Congregants may

voice complaints about an assistant pastor to lead pastors, thus conducting congregational

frustrations through them. Another possibility is that congregants see the assistant pastor

as having some authority but not ultimate accountability. In either case, the senior pastor

becomes the recipient of congregational frustration, and this fact alone accounts for the

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[318] Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 47.

[319] Ibid., 45.

[320] Ibid., 46; cf. 52.

[321] Hoge, and Wenger, *Pastors in Transition*, 47.

documented level of conflict between the two. Hoge and Wenger observed this difference, saying, "[Assistant pastors] reported fewer feelings of loneliness; and they confessed fewer self-doubts about their abilities as ministers. Fewer had experienced marital problems. As this list suggests, the differences between senior pastors and associates were greater in our sample than those between women and men."[322]

Ironically, all of the previously mentioned long-form descriptions analyzed expected the candidate be able to preach, clarifying "when the opportunities arise, particularly when the Senior Pastor is out of town, or otherwise unable to preach." Only one of the positions indicated the number of times the assistant pastor would have that opportunity: eight to ten. In every other case, the expectation that one could preach and the provision that one would preach were never reconciled. Conversely, lead pastor long-form descriptions always list preaching/teaching as the first or second requirement for the position.

Assuming an assistant pastor stays in a position for five years, he may preach only 15 out of 104 (morning and evening) services a year: 10 percent. Most assistant pastors preach substantially less than this in their first ministry position.[323] The duties to which an assistant pastor is deployed simply do not line up with experience requisite for a lead pastor.

At first glance, this appears to be the common plight of second-chair leadership. In the words of John Adams, on being elected Vice President of the United States, "I am

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[322] Ibid.

[323] Beth Py-Lieberman, "How the Office of the Vice Presidency Evolved from Nothing to Something", *Smithsonianmag.com,* November 18, 2014, accessed on December 15, 2015http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-office-vice-presidency-evolved-nothing-something-180953302/?no-ist.

Vice President. In this I am nothing, but I may be everything." John Adams eventually

went on to become president. In the case of assistant pastors, there is little chance of

being "everything" unless they are willing to embrace the stresses of uprooting family,

moving, and changing jobs.

Most of the denominations considered in this study have provisions limiting the

ability of an assistant pastor from assuming the role of lead pastor in the same

congregation, in an attempt to secure the church against the politics of leadership

jockeying. The EPC *BCO* is perhaps most rigid in terms of succession, granting no

exceptions to the policy, saying, "A person serving as Assistant Pastor on the same

church staff at the time the pastor position becomes vacant shall not be called to fill that

position in the same church, by any means."[324] The EPC differentiates between the

assistant and the associate pastor roles. Assistant pastors must have their contract

renewed annually by vote of the session, while associate pastors receive a stable call.

Under terms of the PCA *BCO*, an assistant pastor must first serve in a "different

field of labor" prior to succeeding his previous lead pastor. [325] The PCA granted a

provision where "a congregation by a secret ballot with four-fifths (4/5) majority vote

may petition Presbytery for an exception which by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote

Presbytery may grant."[326]

If assistant pastors transition to a senior position, they usually must upheave their

entire world: a new house in a new community, new schools for children, and a new

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[324] *The Book of Order of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church* (The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 2013), 1:10-4.

[325] *The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 23-1.

[326] Ibid.

relationship for them and their spouse. The blurring of every sphere of life is a unique aspect of pastoral ministry, according to Burns, et al., "how [vocational ministry] affects and defines all areas of life. Work, family and personal responsibilities blur together through the week…"[327] A pastoral transition generally includes 10 of the top 50 stressors as measured by the Life Events Inventory (LEI) including: a period of homelessness, moving houses and purchasing a home; a new job, changes in responsibility at work, and changes to income; serious restriction of social life, new neighbors, and behavior problems in children.[328] One pastor explained, "Most people in our church have a life that is like a stool with three legs. They've got their spiritual life, their professional life and their family life. If one of these legs wobbles, they've got the others they can lean on. For [pastors], these three legs can merge into one leg."[329]

Biblical Leadership

Because of the vast scope of biblical literature, this study will concentrate on the letter of Second Corinthians. The letter, called an epistle, was written to the church at Corinth. In Second Corinthians, the apostle Paul provided a case-study involving church leaders and members. This study provides illustrating components of the biblical model of leadership. Paul originally planted the church and was well familiar with the problems and issues facing this congregation.[330] Second Corinthians specifically defended Paul's

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[327] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 15.

[328] A. Spurgeon, C.A. Jackson, and J.R. Beach, "The Life Events Inventory; Re-Scaling Based on an Occupational Sample," *Occupational Medicine* 51, no. 4 (2001): 287–93.

[329] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 15.

[330] Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 1ST Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 165.

apostolic authority, as the church a number of articulate, well-credentialed, people who were making money from their attestation of "a different gospel"[331] and leading the church off mission.

The Corinthian church showed all the signs of an organization in transition: There were discipline cases that bordered on abuse.[332] There was criticism of founding leadership.[333] There was a desperate search for identifying dynamic leader's pedigree[334] and communication skills.[335] In the midst of these challenges, Paul attempted to direct the Corinthians back to the larger kingdom vision, increasing loyalty to the institution through giving generously.

The Character of a Leader

Leaders are willing to suffer for a vision bigger than themselves. There is emotional pain (burden for the saints), relational hardship, and personal loss. There may even be physical pain. The temptation is to find symptomatic relief or to escape the hardship altogether. The desire is to demand rights and exact justice. But leaders stay engaged. Leaders give up their personal claims on retribution, willing even to seek the restoration of offenders.

Leaders suffer because of those they lead. Some unnamed church participant had wronged Paul, causing him pain. Paul could have demanded an exaction of justice;

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[331] 2 Corinthians 11:4.

[332] 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

[333] 2 Corinthians 10:14; 11:12; cf.1:15-17.

[334] 2 Corinthians 3:1; cf.11:5.

[335] 2 Corinthians 10:10.

instead, he opted for a restoration of the individual. Greater than his desire for personal recompense was his commitment to those who identify with the values of the church. He wrote, "I beg you to reaffirm your love for him."[336]

Leaders also suffer because others make assumptions about their motives. Paul had intended to visit the Corinthian church a second time.[337] His (perceived) failure to visit has caused some to impugn his character.[338] The Corinthian church questioned Paul's credibility. In such circumstances, a leader is often temptation to defend.[339] Paul, instead, appealed to his history of involvement with this congregation, saying of himself and other leaders, "For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity…"[340]

Sometimes, leaders suffer because others seek to undermine them. In this case, some number of individuals had established themselves as leaders in the church.[341] Their character will be examined in the next section; nevertheless, Paul's response was to appeal to his past actions and his current behavior. Appealing to past actions, Paul declared that they "will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you… For we were the first to come all the way to you with the

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[336] 2 Corinthians 2:5-8.

[337] 2 Corinthians 1:16.

[338] 2 Corinthians 1:17-18.

[339] 2 Corinthians 12:19.

[340] 2 Corinthians 1:12.

[341] 2 Corinthians 11:5.

gospel of Christ."[342] Appealing to current behavior, Paul said there is a daily pressure of

worry and care on him for churches.[343]

Still, leaders sometimes suffer due to no part of the organization or its members;

yet, leaders are willing to have their sufferings known, not as a means of evoking loyalty

or sympathy, but to be an encouragement to those observing. Paul and the others he

mentions kept in view the benefits of such suffering. On the one hand, such suffering is

seen as a participation in the sufferings of Christ—a marker of identification with him.[344]

On the other hand, such suffering and subsequent comfort is an example to those who

observe—encouraging others who may suffer to suffer confidently, anticipating the same

comfort that Paul received.[345] Organizational participants are invited to view others'

suffering as proving the validity of faith, seeing the comfort of others as this assurance:

the same comfort is provided them under similar circumstances.

Leaders are emotionally healthy and relationally connected. Despite charges of a

vacillating character,[346] questionable competency,[347] illegitimate authority,[348] and

suspicions about his spiritual condition,[349] Paul remained connected to those in the

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[342] 2 Corinthians 10:13-14.

[343] 2 Corinthians 11:28.

[344] 2 Corinthians 1:5.

[345] 2 Corinthians 1:6.

[346] 2 Corinthians 1:17.

[347] 2 Corinthians 10:9-12.

[348] 2 Corinthians 13:5,10.

[349] 2 Corinthians 10:7.

congregation. Six times Paul spoke about his love for the Corinthians.[350] Four times Paul spoke of the Corinthian believers being in and on his heart.[351]

The Associations of a Leader

Leaders seek the associations of individuals who will encourage them in their missional focus. Here, the practice of Paul stands in sharp contrast to that of the false apostles. Paul left a successful ministry initiative in Troas because he lacked the support of Titus.[352] Paul went on to depend regularly upon others—Timothy, a group of fellow leaders,[353] and an unnamed co-laborer simply referred to as "the brother."[354]

In communication, Paul shared the role of proclamation with Timothy and Sylvanus.[355] With respect to finances, Paul removed himself from a place of any personal temptation and public accusation by sending others to mediate the collection and distribution of such resources.[356] We can presume Paul deliberately did not collect the gift himself both because he wanted to be above reproach[357] with regard to its securing and distribution, on the one hand, and he wanted to discourage the type of hero-leader worship this church was already prone to.[358]

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[350] 2 Corinthians 2:4; 6:6; 8:7; 11:11; 12:15.

[351] 2 Corinthians 2:4; 6:11; 7:2-3.

[352] 2 Corinthians 2:12-13.

[353] 2 Corinthians 9:5; 11:9.

[354] 2 Corinthians 8:18-23; 9:3-5; 12:18.

[355] 2 Corinthians 1:19.

[356] 2 Corinthians 8:16-24.

[357] 2 Corinthians 12:18.

[358] 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

Paul practiced shared leadership, founded in the authority given to him from God.[359] It is not authority by degree of comparison—more to less. Paul wrote instead, "We regard no one according to the flesh."[360]

What prevented Paul's selective associations from becoming self-reinforcing oligarchical power? Presumably, Paul never ceased to identify himself with his followers. Paul used collective verbs throughout the letter. Paul primarily used the first-person plural in chapters 1, 4, 6, and 10, employing the first-person singular primarily in chapters 2, 7, and 11-13. Paul used the first-person singular to reference events or experiences that were uniquely his. His use of the first-person plural had both leaders and followers in view. Granted, his first-person plural pronoun use appears sometimes a technique of rhetoric style;[361] nevertheless, Paul's language throughout was inclusive and participatory: κοινωνός (to share) in chapter 1 and συνεργέω (working together) in chapter 6.

By contrast, the false apostles distanced themselves from the members of the Corinthian church. Their attestations of credibility were self-referential—they "measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another"[362]—pointing at a résumé that is about human (flesh) accomplishments.[363] What is more, they charged fees for their service of proclamation and presumed knowledge. These issues will be

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[359] 2 Corinthians 10:8; 13:10; cf. 1:1.

[360] 2 Corinthians 5:16.

[361] Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 167.

[362] 2 Corinthians 10:12.

[363] 2 Corinthians 3:1.

discussed in greater detail below. In summary, power becomes corrupt when it is held unchecked by those under it who are unwilling or unable to speak into it, and the leader is isolated behind a status that is beyond correction.

Post-modern leadership has tolerance for the situations which bring people together; that is, one of any number of motivations may be at the root of organizational participation. Paul refused to let the church have such privilege. Either the Gospel joins us together, or nothing does. Either one is joined with Jesus, or he is joined against Him. Either you are "in Christ" along with Paul, or you are not.[364] There is no other initial starting point.

There is only one head of the church: Jesus. From that vantage point, all others hold limited and parochial authority. Thus Paul can entrust the collection and distribution of the gift to Barnabas, Titus, and "the brother who is famous among all the churches."[365] Hierarchy is out of his purview. Elsewhere, he would say position made no difference to him, even among "those who seemed influential."[366]

Paul ultimately empowered the members of this congregation to judge the actions of real and presumed leaders. He laid out the essence of the gospel life and spiritual renewal in chapters 3-4, concluding, "We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart."[367]

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[364] 2 Corinthians 13:4-6

[365] 2 Corinthians 8:18

[366] Galatians 2:2, 6.

[367] 2 Corinthians 5:12.

On the topic of association, 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 has been widely applied to marriage, when textual evidence supports the application more narrowly to discerning the nature of leadership. Paul wrote, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?"[368]

The application of this passage to marriage, though not essentially inaccurate, was not in the purview of the original author. Nowhere else in the book does the writer mention marriage, and only once, near the conclusion, sexual immorality and sensuality.[369] The substantiated quotes from the Old Testament also do not pertain to sexual immorality or marriage. Second Corinthians 6:2 is a direct quote from Isaiah 49:8 about the restoration of Israel. Scholars further agree that verse 16 is a quote from Leviticus 26 which addresses the sin of idolatry, juxtaposed to the Lord's intentions of freeing the people of Israel from slavery; and, verse 17 is a quote from Isaiah 52, speaking again of the freedom of Israel from the bondage of their enemies, namely Egypt and Assyria. Verse 18 appears to be an indirect reference to several Old Testament texts. None of these original texts speak to issues of marriage, sexuality, or physical purity.

However, in the broader, preceding context of 2 Corinthian 6:14-16, Paul has sought to renew the passion of the Corinthians in the Kingdom mission,[370] while also

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[368] 2 Corinthians 6:

[369] 2 Corinthians 12:21.

[370] 2 Corinthians 4:7–5:12.

restoring their confidence in him as a legitimate spokesman on their behalf.[371]

Immediately preceding this section, Paul described the pattern of his behavior as a leader

in the church. To assume Paul was speaking of marriage would be an excursus from his

main point: namely, that submitting to the teaching and leadership of unreasonable,

irrational, self-promoting, and emotionally unhealthy people is no less than spiritual

slavery. The Church's response to such individuals should not be capitulation, tolerance,

or permissibility. These are not the fallen-but-repentant believers within the body,[372] but

are "false apostles, deceitful workmen," merely disguised as apostles of Christ. Paul, in

one of the harshest passages of the book, equated these men with Satan.[373]

Thus, the application of this passage primarily to marriage distracts from the main

point of the author. A critical reading of this passage should empower church members to

evaluate the hearts and characters of their leaders—a risky endeavor for leaders,

especially those experiencing systemic distrust or lack of differentiation.

The Motivation of a Leader

Mission and vision motivate leaders. They pursue missional results through

restored relationships. This is most clearly seen in contrast to the opposite. Individuals

motivated primarily by self-interest are egoist, as defined by psychology, "Psychological

egoism is the thesis that we are always deep down motivated by what we perceive to be

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[371] 2 Corinthians 3:12–4:6; 5:13–5:20.

[372] 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 7:12.

[373] 2 Corinthians 11:13-14.

in our own self-interest."[374] Ultimately, motivation of self-interest devolves into a pursuit of power, wealth, or both, which leads to the hardening of character.[375]

Paul is excessively redundant on the topic of finances, claiming they invested in the Corinthian church without charge,[376] not as a seller of everyday wares[377] but freely drawing upon the generosity of other churches.[378] They did not burden the Corinthians,[379] nor constrain them in any way.[380] They did not compel the Corinthians to give, nor demand of them by exaction. [381]

By comparison, the epistle suggests the egoists subjected the Corinthians to financial hardship. The verbs used are in the present active tense: enslaves (καταδουλοῖ), devours (κατεσθίει), and takes (λαμβάνει); but the voice is passive. These were being done to the Corinthians, and they bore it willingly.

The verbs are used repeatedly in opposition, placing Paul over and against the egotists in how he and they treated and were received by the Corinthian believers.

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[374] "Psychological Egoism | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy," accessed December 2, 2015, http://www.iep.utm.edu/psychego/.

[375] Ibid.

[376] 2 Corinthians 11:7.

[377] 2 Corinthians 2:17.

[378] 2 Corinthians 6:11.

[379] 2 Corinthians 11:9; 12:13-14; 12:16.

[380] 2 Corinthians 6:12.

[381] 2 Corinthians 9:5-7.

Paul	Corinthians
to suffer: ἀνέχομαι	
11:1 - I wish you would *bear* with me in a little foolishness. Do *bear* with me	11:4 – you *put up with* it readily enough 11:19 –you gladly *bear* with fools, being wise yourselves 11:20 –you *bear* it if someone makes slaves of you
to take (advantage of): λαμβάνω	
11:8 - I *robbed* [took from] other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you 11:24 Five times I *received at* the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one 12:16 - But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and *got the better* of you by deceit	11:20 –you bear it if someone…*takes advantage* of you

The egotists took from others for themselves, thus subjecting the Corinthians to financial hardship, making slaves of them. As if this were not enough, when crossed, the egoists were emotionally reactive, and physically abusive: striking people physically in the face.[382] There is nothing to imply Paul and his companions were employing hyperbolic language; thus, this statement should be taken literally.

Not that Paul was ambivalent concerning the Corinthian's wealth; to the contrary, he cared immensely. They advocated for the broader mission and expanse of the kingdom. Paul implored the Corinthian believers to give financially to the mission of the church for the sake of the hungry and poor.[383] This generosity benefited Paul in no measurable, physical way; so much, that Paul "refrained and will refrain from burdening"

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[382] 2 Corinthians 11:20.

[383] 2 Corinthians 8:14; 9:12.

the congregation.[384] Other congregations funded Paul's original mission to the church.[385] Even Paul's final visit to the church was not to gain anything for himself.[386] Drawing from Hirschman, one may summarize Paul's actions as seeking to increase loyalty through the advocacy of financial generosity. Generosity increases thanksgiving, opening doors for greater evangelism of unbelievers.[387]

But Paul stated there is a benefit to the individual donor as well. This was not the give-and-get of a health-and-wealth gospel. First, the generosity must originate with the individual, cheerfully, "not under compulsion."[388] Second, members are called to give out of what they have, "not according to what he does not have."[389] Finally, the gift given under these conditions has actual, spiritual implications—an increase in the harvest of righteousness.[390] How physical acts impact and reflect the spiritual nature is never in question scripturally. While it would be a leap to make giving generously a sacrament, there is no less a physical-spiritual connection here as there are in the elements of water, bread, and wine.

Summary Conclusion of Literature Review

The picture that emerges is of a pre-modern theology expressed through modern institutions to post-modern congregants with post-industrial leadership structures.

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[384] 2 Corinthians 11:9.

[385] 2 Corinthians 11:8.

[386] 2 Corinthians 12:14.

[387] 2 Corinthians 4:15; 9:11-12.

[388] 2 Corinthians 9:7.

[389] 2 Corinthians 8:12.

[390] 2 Corinthians 9:11.

Medieval structures of authority were replaced with no-less arbitrary hierarchies—the former being based on religion and the later on a humanistic scientific theory.

Church systems today remain predominantly hierarchical in their authority structures. They are process-dependent, resistant to change, uncomfortable with ambiguity, and prone to reductive tendencies. A few who hold power and express it through pulpit proclamation determine value, vision, and implementation. The exaltation of oratory skill so overshadows the relevance of abilities and intelligences—emotional, cultural, and interpersonal—that personality and individuality are diminished, if not altogether dismissed. This disproportionate distribution of power contributes to the emergence of hero-leaders. Pulpit-sharing is viewed a forfeiture of power, real or perceived.

Serious thought to the development of future leaders fails at the level of implementation, since real and meaningful experience infringes on the realm of senior leaders. Support staff members are hired for specific periods, for jobs that are sufficiently vague and vocationally broad. They are deployed to tasks outside the purview of senior leadership, often tangential to the requisite skills and capacities necessary for that position, with little opportunity to use the primary skills that theological training developed.

Polity often raises as many questions as it answers. Conflict is viewed as lack of clarity or personal confusion. Differences are analyzed and assessed, then resolved or dismissed, leaving no room for the concept of adaptive challenges. Where policy guarantees due process, it does little to ensure the basic development of young ministers beyond the pre-entry requirements of theological training.

The Bible draws a very different picture of senior and support leaders, who share access to wisdom and insight, each playing a role in rebuke and reconciliation, participating with more than presiding over others. Polity is the navigational tool of a culture of gospel practice. Gospel proclamation has in view the spiritual, emotional, and relational maturing of all members toward shared power, purpose, and vocation.

This concludes a review of literature on the topic of leadership. This section has reviewed and analyzed pertinent literature on the key aspects of the purpose statement. The three areas of literature that provide the most insight into the uniqueness of assistant pastoral ministry include general leadership literature, leadership literature specific to pastoral ministry, and literature on the biblical view of leadership. In the next section, the methodology behind this study will be presented.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore how assistant pastors in their first or second ministry position navigate challenges of adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor. In order to understand the ways in which assistant pastors navigate these challenges, questions pertaining to the issues have been put to and explored with leaders serving in these positions.

1. How do assistant pastors' areas of responsibility change when a church loses its senior pastor?
2. What leadership challenges do assistant pastors experience when a church loses its senior pastor?
3. How did assistant pastors navigate leadership challenges when an organization loses its senior pastor?

Design of the Study

In order to explore these questions, a constant comparative qualitative method was utilized. Qualitative research is defined as "the notion of inquiring into, or investigating something in a systematic manner… Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences."[391] Because the examination of pastoral leadership in practices grows out of contextual, non-repeatable events, interpreted by participants in those events, and acted upon or reacted to in the moment— this study is best suited to qualitative research. "The overall purposes of qualitative

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[391] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 3, 5.

research are to achieve an *understanding* of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience."[392]

The situational, non-repeatable nature of the data supporting this study required the researcher to serve as the information-gathering agent, as well as the interpreter of this data. This allows for the researcher to gain a more intimate knowledge pertaining to the nature and practice of pastoral leadership.

This study was collected using interviews. In qualitative research "the focus is on the process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive."[393] Interviews conducted adhere to "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system."[394] In this case, the boundaries of this study look at the particular interaction of several assistant ministers who have lost their senior pastor due to benign circumstances.

These interviews were conducted using the semi-structured interview protocol. "The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information… Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate."[395]

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[392] Ibid., 14.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Ibid., 40.

[395] Ibid., 88.

Research questions were organized in a semi-structured format, in which "the questions are more flexibly worded or the interview is a mix of more or less structured questions."[396] Because reflecting on the role of pastoral leadership is contextual and personal in nature, this less structured format allows individual respondents to "define the world in unique ways."[397] The research questions sought to recount behavior in and experience with pastoral issues relevant to this study, and then elicit opinions about and reflections on these experiences.

Participant Sample Selection

For the sake of this research, qualified participants were defined as meeting all of the following criteria: Each participant is an MDiv graduate from a seminary offering a residential program, and is currently serving in their his or her or second ministerial position as an assistant pastor in the first six years of pastoral ministry when the senior pastor left the church. Furthermore, the assistant minister must have had a substantial role in church leadership, formally or informally, during the interim period.

Limiting participants to MDiv graduates of a seminary offering a residential program assumes a level of academic rigor, due to individual state requirements for residential programs, that may not be present in non-residential programs. Furthermore, it reduces the possibility that participants missed content available but not transferable to other theological degrees or exclusively distance learning. Limiting participants to two ministry positions allows for the reality that at least 46% of seminary graduates move into

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[396] Ibid., 90.

[397] Ibid.

their second ministry position within five years of graduation.[398] Limiting participants to less than six years total ordained ministry experience reduces the likelihood of confounding variables affecting how the assistant pastor acted and reacted in navigating the leadership challenges.

This study does not look at challenges that arise with the loss of an assistant pastor because such loss does not normally result in a significant change in job expectations or areas of responsibility for the senior leadership. It is usually assumed that a senior pastor already has a defined role in leadership during a time of transition. Furthermore, this study attempts to avoid situations where the senior pastor left under duress or because of significant conflict, moral failing, corruption, or other issues of character or sin, since these issues more significantly impact the reaction of the church congregation and staff, potentially eroding trust, creating suspicion, and deepening fears, all of which confound variables to identifying expectations of the role and function of the assistant pastor and the response of the assistant pastor in managing those leadership challenges. However, during the interview process, every assistant pastor indicated there was some level of discontentment with the exiting senior pastor, giving rise to the doubt that pastors ever leave one position or church for another under completely benign or favorable reasons.

Research questions were designed to explore the experience of assistant pastors navigating adaptive ministry challenges in the absence of senior leadership. Adaptive ministry challenges are those which fall outside the scope of established polity, practice, and theological tradition. The questions were also designed to expose and highlight the

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[398] Based on the analysis of 881 MDiv seminary graduates from 2000-2015 conducted by Joel Hathaway.

extent to which assistant pastors were prepared for adaptive leadership challenges. The questions put to participants sought to expose their leadership in practice within the context of a local church. Once qualified respondents were identified, demographic information was gathered and evaluated.

The research required participants who had first-hand experience as an assistant pastor functioning as an interim pastor, in the same congregation, in the period immediately following the exit of a senior pastor. Participants were required to reflect honestly on their experiences in navigating adaptive challenges during this time of transition. Participants had to have spent at least one year of in the interim position, providing adequate time for them to develop the necessary categories to assess the organization and constituent interaction, and observe a variety of challenges. While it was not necessary for the participants to be the only remaining ordained ministerial staff at the church during the period of transition, the participate had to have substantial, if not exclusive, authority in areas that were previously the responsibility of the exiting senior pastor and became the responsibility of the new, entering senior pastor.

The requirement that this interim experience be limited to a participant's first or second ministry position diminishes the influence of earlier personal discovery and vocational development, prior to the interim period. Likewise, the requirement that the participant be no more than five years and one ministry position removed from the interim position and period diminishes the impact of time on memory and reflection. Active reflection is a requirement for accurate memory, as Peter C. Brown discovered in his research, noting, "Reflection is a form of retrieval practice…enhanced with

elaboration."[399] Without reflection, memory becomes corrupted by neglect, leading to inaccuracies.

The study was conducted through personal interviews with ten pastors. All participants were currently or had recently been ordained as an active minister in a Presbyterian and reformed denomination. This allowed for similarities common in the polity of these denominations without having to account for different leadership dynamics resulting from forms of leadership structures established in other common forms of church government: Congregational, Catholic, and Episcopal. Each participant was invited to participate via email. A total of 18 participants were initially identified as potential candidates. One candidate never responded to requests for inclusion in the study. Seven additional candidates were eliminated after their answers on a diagnostic questionnaire revealed they did not meet the above criteria. The remaining 12 participants provided demographic information necessary for the study. Possible participant variables of interest included marital status, membership size, location of congregation, congregation size before and during the interim-ministry period, length of time in the interim period, length of time since the interim period, and other ordained ministry positions held (i.e., whether in the same congregation or subsequent congregations).

Research Subjects

Information about the research participants and their particular ministry experiences is provided here. Pseudonyms have been provided to each participant, and the specific geographic information has been removed to prevent participant identification. The participants are listed in order in which they were interviewed.

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[399] Peter C. Brown, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*, 66.

George

George is married and has five children. He began as an assistant pastor in his first ministry position, after graduating seminary, though he had some experience as a non-ordained staff person at two churches just prior to seminary. The church is an urban church in a metropolitan area in the southwestern United States. At the time of his arrival, the church had a membership of 200, with average attendance near 175. Within eight months at the church, his senior pastor informed George of his intentions to depart. A transition plan was established, and by George's first anniversary at the church, he was functioning as the unofficial interim pastor. In the role, he functioned as the clerk of session, ran the session meetings, preached the majority of the time, wrote weekly liturgy for the worship service, helped shape vision and direction of the church, and provided the primary shepherding for the elders and their families. George served as the interim pastor for almost two years before he was elected the new senior pastor by a supermajority of the session and the congregation.

Jimmy

Jimmy is married and has three children. He entered into ordained pastoral ministry immediately upon graduating from seminary. He joined the staff of a small church in the rural southeastern United States. The congregation had approximately 100 members, with attendance near 90. The senior pastor of the church told Jimmy of his intentions to accept another call just as Jimmy was completing his fourth year at the church. The senior pastor discouraged the session from bringing in an outside interim, instead recommending Jimmy to assume most of the general pastoral and preaching duties in the interim period. In that role, he moderated session meetings, preached every

week, and managed administrative aspects of the church. Jimmy served in that position

for 18 months before a new senior pastor was hired and installed. Jimmy continued at the

church for one year before accepting an assistant pastoral position in a slightly larger

community in a similar part of the country. He continues to serve in that position.

Calvin

Calvin is married and has two children. He initially served two years as an

assistant evangelist. Then, he joined the staff of a church in a suburban area, outside a

major metropolitan city in the southeastern United States. The congregation had roughly

150 members, with 85 in weekly attendance. Calvin was on staff just over one year when

the existing senior pastor left, during which time Calvin served as the unofficial interim.

In that role, he preached more regularly; however, a pastor from outside the church was

brought in to preach about 66% of the time. The interim period lasted 18 months, during

which time Calvin served as the clerk of session and moderated the session meetings,

managed office duties and responsibilities, served as the initial evaluator of mercy

requests, and provided counseling to individuals and families both in the church and

outside of it. Calvin accepted his next ministry position about 10 months before the hiring

of the new senior pastor.

Calvin is unique among the participants, in that he served in two churches where

the senior pastor exited the organization, leaving him functionally the interim pastor.

Calvin's second experience was at a church of about 170 members and 140 people in

worship. This church is located in the northeastern United States. Calvin was at the

church for 12 months and was called as associate. Shortly thereafter, the senior pastor of

this church had to take a medically induced leave of absence. This leave intermittently

kept the pastor from fulfilling his responsibilities for almost six months, after which time

he exited his position due to health issues. Calvin served as the unofficial interim pastor

for an additional six months, during which time he moderated session meetings,

facilitated deacon training, acted as head of staff, and handled all counseling and pulpit

responsibilities. Afterwards, Calvin was elected the new senior pastor where he continues

to serve.

John

John is married with three children. He entered into ordained ministry

immediately after graduating from seminary. The church is located in a suburban area of

southeastern United States. At the time, it had approximately 800 members and nearly

500 in regular attendance on Sunday mornings. John had been at the church a little over a

year when he was assigned the Clerk of Session responsibilities. Two years after John

arrived at the church, the senior pastor took a medical leave of absence. While the church

had two other ordained staff, John continued to function as the Clerk of Session, managed

the office staff and oversaw the day-to-day responsibilities of the church, continued to

develop young family ministry opportunities, and preached one-third of the time. There

was discussion of his becoming the executive pastor when the senior pastor returned to

duty, but this fell through. After the senior pastor left, the church went through another

period of interim ministry, during which John continued in many of the above roles. John

remained at the church an additional 10 months after the hiring of the new senior pastor.

He is now serving in an associate ministry position in a church in the southeastern United

States.

Herbert

Herbert is married and has two children. He entered into ordained pastoral ministry immediately upon graduation from seminary. The church is a suburban church that straddles two demographics, one highly white collar and urban and the other blue collar and urban. It has a membership of nearly 100, with regular attendance of just over 150. Almost a year after arriving at the church, the senior pastor informed Herbert he was taking another ministry position. It would be another 6 months before the new ministry position was offered and accepted, and the senior pastor exited the organization. Herbert was officially called as the interim pastor, adopting a job description that included preaching 66% of the time, moderating session meetings, hiring temporary and part-time staff, and overseeing all the staff, identifying and recruiting guest preachers, overseeing the nomination of new deacons and actively training them, and launching a new church-wide mercy ministry. Herbert served as the interim pastor for one year before the hiring of the new senior pastor. He remained at the church almost two more years before accepting a call as solo pastor of the church where he currently serves.

Benjamin

Benjamin is married and has two children. He entered into ordained pastoral ministry upon graduation from seminary. The church is a suburban church in an economically depressed area of the Midwest United States. The church had nearly 400 members when Benjamin joined the church staff, but it declined to under 200 in subsequent years. Benjamin was originally called as the Director of Young Adult Ministries, a group that included everybody who had graduated high school up to anybody who still had a student in high school. In the interim, Benjamin was the regular

preacher and the moderator of session. He also oversaw all the ministries of the church. He served in that position for 13 months before being called as the new senior pastor of the congregation. He continues serving in that position today.

Andrew

Andrew is married but didn't have any children when he entered his first pastoral position, immediately after graduation from seminary. The church is located in a suburban area in the Southeastern United States. It had approximately 150 members, with average attendance of about 115. Andrew served at the church for 18 months when his senior pastor had to be gone for approximately three months. After his return, Andrew served another year when his senior pastor resigned from the position. Andrew saw increased duties in areas of preaching, moderating the session, counseling, pastoral care, and broad administrative duties. Andrew served in the position for 13 months before a new senior pastor was called, and Andrew transitioned into a para-church ministry focused on college students.

Martin

Martin is married and has four children. He entered into ordained pastoral ministry immediately upon graduation from seminary. The church is a suburban church in the Midwestern United States. It had a membership of about 170, with average attendance just above 200. Martin served at the church over five years before the senior pastor announced his intentions to depart. In the interim period, Martin assumed full responsibly of moderating the session and half the annual preaching duties. He continued in many of his pre-interim duties focused on youth and the pastoral care of families. Several part-time staff began reporting to Martin by default. He served in that position for

more than a year before the new senior pastor was hired and installed. Martin returned to his previous responsibilities and continued at the church for another year before transitioning into a para-church ministry focused on college students.

Data Collection

Select respondents were interviewed through an audio-video platform. This may have minimized the trust necessary for participants to speak in completely forthcoming terms. It also limited the ability of the participant and researcher to observe non-verbal facial and body language, potentially limiting necessary trust further. However, this format permitted greater interaction with the most-qualified participants across greater geographic distances. Also, each of the participants was able to select the space for his interview, accommodating their greatest sense of ease and safety during the interview process.

Each interview lasted approximately ninety minutes. These interviews were captured using a digital voice recorder. Transcripts of the interviews were typed by the researcher and immediately analyzed. This allowed for the researcher to identify common ideas, repeated terminology, and clustered concepts. Interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative method—defined as "comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences"[400] within datasets.

Data Analysis

Throughout this study, the constant comparative method of analysis was used:

> [T]he constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a

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[400] Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 30.

similar dimension. The dimension is tentatively given a name; it then becomes a category. The overall object of this analysis is to identify patterns in the data.[401]

Repeating terms and concepts were initially noted and documented during the interview process. Using open coding, these concepts were labeled consistently across the various sources. Categories were further refined to reflect the greatest consistency and most narrowly defined specificity. Indicators of idea- and concept-patterns include the following: pronoun usage, repetition of key terms or phrases, and/or the comprehensive similarities-dissimilarities of the situations described.

Researcher Position

I am an evangelical Christian, which means I believe that the Bible is a flawless message from God in its original recording. What inaccuracies might exist from transcription errors do not undermine the clear, comprehensive, and unified message of the Bible: that the Creator created all things good, that humanity chose to break relationship with God, and that God has pursued the reconciliation of that original relationship through the incarnate birth, perfect life, and substitutionary death of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

I grew up the son of a pastor from the reformed and Presbyterian tradition, witnessing first hand many of benefits and difficulties of pastoral ministry. Since that time, I have been involved in seven separate congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), usually as an active member and volunteer of the congregation. I have prior experience on a pastoral staff as an un-ordained minister. Subsequently, I had three years' experience in the mission organization affiliated with the PCA. I received my Master of Divinity from a reformed and Presbyterian seminary. I have eight years'

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[401] Ibid.

experience assisting pastors in ministry placement and retention, and ten years'
experience in pastoral relations. This last position provided opportunity to participate in
annual pastoral gatherings and assemblies, regular quarterly interaction with regional
presbyteries and synods, and weekly interaction with pastors in their first five years of
post-seminary ministry.

Many of these experiences benefit the quality of research due to my personal
observations and depth of experiences with the cultures of Presbyterian and reformed
churches. They provide decades-long opportunity to reflect on and interrogate the
experiences of pastors in the context of the organized church, both from the perspective
of the church staff and the perspective of the average congregant. These experiences
further inform the type of questions asked and assumptions avoided.

It is possible these experiences could have distorted the interpretation of the data.
Distortions have been mitigated in part by the comparative analysis of participant
perspective with regard to their experiences. Finally, my ethically framed and morally
composed worldview requires that I attempt to capture, represent, and report data with
integrity.

Study Limitations

While interviewing younger pastors potentially eliminates confounding variables,
specifically the varied and nuanced responses informed by broader experience, these
same features limit the findings of the study.

Organizational dynamics which lie beyond the scope of this study may also prove
a blind spot in the data, since assistant pastors function within the framework of an
established organization with unique features and facets, even within the same

denomination or system of governance. Furthermore, the emotional health and leadership capacity of the exiting senior pastor may also impact participants' experience.

Because participants are now serving, or have recently served, in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) or the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), this study is limited by its focus on the particular governmental structure and organizing polity—specifically in the rights and privileges of assistant and associate pastors as they pertain to authority and influence within the broader church—of these denominations.

Also, every participant is a pastor serving in the United States of America. While the literature addresses some facets of leadership expression as practiced in the United States, implications of these findings to the same polity as practiced in other cultures may not be applicable. Readers should test these findings against the nuances of the cultural context under consideration

Some of the findings of this study may be generalized to other similar situations involving assistant pastoral ministry specifically or pastoral ministry generally. Readers desiring to generalize particular facets of the conclusions of this study should test those unique aspects to their particular context. As noted, "It is the reader…who determines what can apply to his or her context."[402]

Methodology Summary

This section described the methodology employed in this interpretive qualitative research study on how associate pastors in their first ministry position navigate challenges of adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor. The design and limits of the study were explored, along with the criteria used for participant selection.

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[402] Ibid., 51.

Details on data collection and analysis show the methodology employed during the
interview process. Finally, factors potentially impacting the researcher's position were
described in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Report and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore how assistant pastors in their first or second ministry position navigate challenges of adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor. In order to understand the ways in which assistant pastors navigate these challenges, questions pertaining to the issues have been explored with leaders serving in these positions.

4. How do assistant pastors' areas of responsibility change when a church loses its senior pastor?

5. What leadership challenges do assistant pastors experience when a church loses its senior pastor?

6. How do assistant pastors navigate leadership challenges when an organization loses its senior pastor?

Changes in Assistant Pastor's Responsibilities in Interim Period

The first question focused on changes in responsibilities for the assistant pastor during the interim period. Several interview questions were asked of participants, encouraging them to reflect on and recall the specifics of their changing responsibilities. Participants were asked to describe what they were originally hired to do and how changes in those areas of responsibility impacted them personally, their families, and the churches they served.

Nature of Increased Responsibilities

Initially, participants had clear areas of responsibility. All the participants except for John were hired as assistant pastors who focused primarily on the development of a youth program. This included teaching youth, caring for youth, overseeing or directly managing the curriculum selection for youth Christian Education classes and, to varied extents, engaging with the parents of the youth. Each of the churches had established youth-gathering periods, including a Sunday activity and a midweek event or activity, that were under the direction of the study participants. The sizes of the youth groups ranged from 10 to 75 students.

The scope of oversight varied. Jimmy focused exclusively on ministry to the youth, while Herbert also had oversight of the children's ministry. Calvin was tasked in developing and expanding the youth ministry, which was almost nonexistent when he arrived. He also oversaw the music ministries of the church. George was hired to work with the youth and their families, but by the time he arrived, a staff vacancy caused his role to expand into "pastoral generalist, specifically working toward starting another site."

John was hired as the assistant pastor of Christian Education, which included oversight of the youth and children's ministries, but focused more on the selection and implementation of adult curriculum.

From the time the senior pastor exited, the workload and responsibilities of these pastors changed drastically. Prior to the transition, participants preached between 6 and 10 times a year; in the interim period, between thirty and one-hundred percent of the preaching fell to the assistant pastor. This did not always come with a sense of readiness.

Jimmy reflected:

> When the senior pastor left, he encouraged the session to have me do the weekly preaching. I was preaching maybe four or five times in that first year. It wasn't enough for me as a young pastor. The senior pastor really pushed to set up a time when I could count on preaching—not just when he was away—but the session was resistant because they felt like that was his job. They didn't want him pawning it off on me. There were a couple of guys on the session that had the mentality the pastor is the hired help.

Benjamin echoed, "I went from preaching once a month to twice a week, at the same time that I'm trying to shepherd the church…" And George remarked about the increase of preaching, "Half of my time is spent preaching, which is both a glorious thing and horrible thing at once."

On the topic of increased preaching, John—who shared the preaching load with two other staff members—noted the positive effects of having multiple internal staff participating in the preaching schedule:

> The church did really well during that period. We preached through Philippians, Colossians, and Joshua. We preached through the parables. In hindsight, that was one of many [congregants] favorite times at the church. People liked hearing from three of us. There were people who connected with me, but some who connected with each of the other two.

Ironically, after the new pastor was hired, John didn't preach again until his last Sunday at the church.

Martin also felt the burden of weekly sermon preparation, but he actually grew to enjoy the opportunity. He remarked, "I remember the Sunday—about 6 months into the [interim] process—when it clicked for me: I felt comfortable in the pulpit."

Beyond preaching, many of these pastors assumed added responsibilities in office management, session moderation, and even presbytery involvement. Calvin stated, "When the senior pastor left, I started running the session meetings." For George and

John, moderation of session preceded the interim period by a few months, driven in part by aspects of relational dysfunction or polity violation. George shared:

> When I started to attend session meetings, we had a guy who was a competent business leader running session. But he wasn't even a ruling elder. I thought, no, you can't do that. By October, I was moderating session meetings.

> John had a similar experience. A few months after joining the church, the session made John the clerk of session. John assumed the role willingly: "I was young and ready to be helpful. I thought responsibility would allow me to have an impact."

In the interim period, most of the participants assumed responsibility for office management, to a great degree, and staff oversight, though in varying degrees. For example, John said, "For want of leadership, I took over the office. I made many of the day-to-day administrative decisions. We had several full-time staff, and I served to give input or answer questions as they came up." Calvin also took over the management of the office. In that role, among other things, he stated, "I managed the pastoral benevolence fund for when people walked in looking for assistance." Martin credited his oversight of the office and support staff in part to the fact that the church wasn't "highly structured."

Most of the participants also saw substantial increase of responsibilities in the areas of counseling and pastoral care. John shared:

> One day, a man walks in off the street. This man wasn't related to our church, but drove by it every day on the way to work. This man confessed to sexual addiction. He had a habit of hiding all the bills from his wife so she wouldn't find out, but wasn't paying them. He was afraid she was going to find out. This wasn't some guy who just feels a little bit down. He had significant issues.

George saw an increase in pastoral care and counseling during the interim period, driven in part by the "lack of pastoral care and shepherding" the exiting senior pastor had provided. Herbert remembers, "My original job initially said I was to provide pastoral

care for families in time of emergencies. But because I wasn't preaching each week, more often than not, I was the first one to have a pastoral visit." During the interim period, Herbert assumed all pastoral care and counseling situations.

Surprisingly, several participants reported that pastoral care was not largely practiced in the church, due primarily to this not being a strength of the exiting senior pastor. Benjamin recalled, "There was no an expectation [from the congregation] for that. The senior pastor didn't do it. I did what [counseling] was done."

By necessity, the increase of responsibility in new areas meant a decrease of attention in the areas many of the pastors were hired to oversee. For Calvin, the increased responsibilities meant abandoning work on the youth program, remembering, "The youth program wasn't much, even when I was working to develop it, and many of the young families left," when the senior pastor left. Herbert worked with the session to redefine areas of responsibility: "Anything in the church going well, like community groups, we put in maintenance mode. Where previously I was at all youth meetings, I began to attend only half. Plus, we hired a youth intern" to take up the slack.

George, however, saw no reduction of his previous areas of responsibility, stating, "My role with the youth didn't change. I just added to that the general pastoral care of the church." Jimmy had a similar experience: "My duties with the youth group Sunday and Wednesday night didn't change. I just added preaching every Sunday and general pastoral care of the church."

Andrew also took on the duties of the senior pastor—in the office, with the session, and with congregational care—but without reducing other responsibilities. He

reflected, "I was trying to do everything I did before and add on the pastoral duties of the senior pastor…. It was a lot."

Despite increased areas of responsibility, participants across the board believed themselves unprepared and untrained for their new duties. Reflecting on his preaching capacity at the time he took over weekly preaching, Jimmy stated:

> My preaching was weak coming out of seminary due to lack of experience, I would have liked to preach more…before assuming the interim pastor role. I didn't even know how to write a sermon when the senior pastor left and I became the default interim. There was a 'gulp' moment, when I realized I was going to preach every week.

George experienced similar feelings when reflecting on the need to plan and prepare not just the weekly sermon, but also the liturgy. "We have a relatively high liturgy," he said. "I was anxious about writing that. The last pastor was a messy genius who could just pull stuff out of piles. I thought, 'What? How do I do this?'"

Study participants had similar reflections on their duties as clerk and moderator of session. John said:

> Putting me in the position of clerk was really difficult and that ended up being a constant source of frustration. I wish someone at the session level realized that isn't a position to put an assistant pastor right out of seminary. In retrospect, that was a terrible position to be put into.

Calvin noted, "I had never [moderated] it before. I wasn't trained to." And, up until the point the man walked in off the street for counseling, Calvin confessed, "I had never done counseling like that. It felt like crisis mode…."

Benjamin also recalled the challenges of moderating session as an assistant pastor. His greatest challenges were immediately preceding and following the departure of the senior pastor. He recounted one experience leading up to the senior pastor's exit:

> In my denomination, once you reach the age of 70, the session has to vote to extend the call of a pastor on a year-by-year basis. During one of these votes, I was moderating session. I thought it would be a formality, but after the senior pastor left the room and we started the discussion, it became apparent that it wasn't a formality. The vote was split…and it fell to me to share that information with the session and the pastor. In retrospect, I wish I had not been put in that position.

He concluded, "I don't think it's possible to be prepared for [what I experienced]. It is nobody's fault. It is hard to be prepared for that."

Andrew said, "Seminary prepares you for some of it, especially the added preaching. I think what I do well is preach. I was not prepared for leadership. I don't know how to do that. The challenges we faced were so unique, how do you prepare somebody to do that?"

For Jimmy, the compounding of duties extended beyond his immediate congregation. At the same time, he was taking on the added duties of preaching and session moderation, the presbytery lost their clerk. "They asked me to be the stated clerk," he said. "Stupidly…I became the stated clerk. I felt the added pressure from that."

Besides the increased managerial, pastoral care, counseling, and business responsibilities, many of the participants struggled to know how best to help the church emotionally process the transition, whether grief, anger, disappointment, or anxiety. Martin noted:

> I was not introduced to the concept of 'anxiety in the system' until a couple years after the fact. In hindsight, I can see it more clearly. We were navigating a session that had lost confidence in the last senior pastor…[but] some elders were angry that he was leaving. A lot of people in the church were surprised. Two people were significantly hurt [when they found out], because they didn't know and they didn't want him to leave. It was really, really hard.

He confessed he didn't know what it looked like to help the church stay together "and move forward while a lot of people were asking, 'What just happened?'"

Calvin said, "Even on the session, there was no emotional processing. I didn't understand those categories existed. None of that was on my radar. I was just trying to hold things together."

None of the participants cited failure on the part of their seminary training. Comments reflecting on seminary training were either absent or positive. Most articulately, Calvin noted on this point:

> I don't fault my seminary training. There are some things you just have to muddle through on your own. In seminary training, in curriculum you have to make a choice on what is the best. And since there is no standard way to prepare or train you for a church [transition], I'm not upset with my training at all. You can't hit everything at once.

The training these individuals received was appreciated, and most saw value in what they had learned. Only Benjamin had this to add:

> In seminary all the classes, all the books, everything we talk about seems to be geared toward training people to become pastors which is good. But it is geared toward becoming a senior pastor or a solo pastor. The training is not so much toward an assistant pastor or an associate pastor. So, especially in terms of how to relate to a senior pastor, specifically when the person might have some differing viewpoints on things, how to work through issues—that would have been a helpful thing.

Feelings Associated with Changes in Responsibility

Participants reported a range of emotional reactions to the changes in responsibility. Most felt overwhelmed at the prospect of the new responsibilities, or as Jimmy put it, that "gulp moment." John expressed "disappointment" over not being able to make the changes in Christian Education he had hoped to make, as his responsibilities shifted. George expressed the range of emotions this way:

> There is growing frustration at the beginning of the process. Then fear and anxiety…am I going to be able to do this as the interim pastor? Then lots of tension and stress as I have to learn new skills. I wasn't practicing healthy rhythms of exercise, eating, and a peaceful spirit. Lots of long hours; lots of late

nights feeling like it was all on me to work through. There were moments I felt confident and grateful that God had gifted me to lead the church through this season. I felt oddly protected by the Spirit so I wasn't completely undone by anxiety. But I also felt pride, as I moved through the process. And all the time, I felt insecure.

However, participants had difficulty separating out their emotions about the change in responsibility from their emotions resulting from leadership transitions. Herbert shared, "When the previous pastor left, I felt uncertainty, even fear [about] the church wanting us to stay. My wife was immediately concerned." Herbert was specifically referring to the possibility that he would be urged to move on when the new pastor arrived.

Acknowledging the confusion this creates, Calvin said, "Guys who end up being the functional interim…are put in a position of running the place, but then have to deal with the possibility the search committee won't choose them. Then what? Will my temperament jive with the new guy? Is he going to have a corporate mentality that my signed resignation is on his desk the first day?"

The interim period is a period of uncertainty, perhaps no more so than for the assistant pastor and his family. Calvin, speaking about both of his interim periods, acknowledged, "It was disheartening for the family. It was tough to move: culturally different, environmentally different. We loved where we lived last. It was just more instability."

Benjamin also experienced the uncertainty. He said, "It was weird emotionally. I knew I wasn't the senior pastor. That was not my call and, yet, I was trying to figure out what it looked like to help the church move forward."

When his period of interim ministry was over, six months after the new pastor was called, John told his wife, "I'm done [with ministry]." He explained:

It was the cumulative effective of everything. I had not seen any good, normal church stuff. We were either plugging holes in the boat or bailing water. Anxious people drove me crazy. The church's philosophy of ministry was non-operational. Five years in, I was making slightly more than when I arrived. I had a third child. My children were older. I had struggled with depression through some of this. It had been a grind for five years.

Andrew echoed the fatigue of the interim period, stating simply, "I was tired."

In summary, most study participants saw substantial changes in duties and responsibilities in the interim period. While seminary had prepared them well for general pastoral duties, the focus of preparation toward a senior or solo position did not support these participants completely. Besides that, lack of experience and the inability to develop leadership capacities across a broad spectrum of ministry contexts left many feeling ill prepared for the interim period. This caused participants to feel at times overwhelmed, anxious, afraid, and uncertain.

Types of Leadership Challenges Experienced

Periods of uncertainty can provide various reactions, as indicated by the literature. The types of leadership challenges experienced during this period of transition fall into three categories: relational, organizational, and other.

Relational Leadership Challenges

Jimmy reported this relational conflict with an inactive elder—who was also a significant influence-holder in the church—during the interim period:

In terms of my relationship with folks in the church during that 18 months, his was the most interesting to me. It was the most full-bodied, running the range of where people go with one another. We went as far down the road of anger as two Jesus-following sinners could. I can't imagine being angrier with an elder at a church than him, nor he with me. We started out as friends, we played golf

together, had the same sense of humor. But when the search committee recommended a candidate…he found faults with several things: preaching, some of the things this candidate said. This inactive elder was determined to vote against this candidate. And those inside his circle of control picked up on his cues. I was convinced he was actively campaigning [against the candidate] and sent an email or letter telling people not to vote for him. There was one point I was over at his house. He and I ended up sitting in his living room after a session meeting for two hours yelling at each other. We were fighting about the whole process.

Sometimes the relational leadership challenges stemmed from the sin of the interim pastor. Herbert came face-to-face with his own sin in relation to one of the elders. While recognizing the need to delegate areas of responsibility, Herbert still had a strong sense that most decisions needed to be made through consensus. The church decided to expand the facilities. One elder was placed in charge of the process. Herbert explained:

I thought it would have been wiser for a committee to run [the process], and the session out-voted me and delegated one elder. He ran the process and he ran it well. He got the job done and done a lot faster than the committee would have done it. But in the process, there were questions where some voices were not heard. In my sin and weakness, in my fear of what would happen, I tried to get the elder to lead by building consensus. I was so attached to my own idea. I thought being in charge was building consensus. I said some inappropriate things to him on the phone.

Andrew and the session had to take disciplinary action against an elder in their church who decided to divorce his wife. The couple had experienced marital problems for some time. A development in the relationship eventually got the session involved. The couple went through some counseling, but at the end of the day the husband decided he wanted a divorce, despite having no biblical grounds. Andrew explained:

The husband said, 'I want a divorce. I know it's wrong. I don't care.' The couple has three children. That was hard, trying to explain what was happening to their oldest, who was twelve. The Sunday he signed the divorce papers, we ended up excommunicating him from the church. Today, he is married to the ex-wife of a deacon the church had excommunicated two years earlier. At the time, we asked, 'Is there another woman?" He said, 'no, no.' Looking back, I'm not so sure.

John's experience of relational conflict was more systemic. The week he arrived, the session was voting to terminate the relationship with another staff member. The conflict from that vote carried over into the next year, when "100 people left the church and the senior pastor fell into depression." The church was projecting a substantial budget shortfall. John recalled, "We weren't really sure which people were leaving and which were just taking a break."

The degree to which people could over-function in the interim period depended largely on the leadership capacity and relational health of the session. George recalled very little in the way of relational conflict during most of the interim period; by contrast, part of the greatest difficulty John experienced in the interim period was caused by a "highly anxious" elder, recounting:

> He did a lot of over functioning. He saw a vacuum and filled it, but he wasn't a healthy person. He was tremendously anxious. He was a difficult and a constant presence in the office. Nobody could mitigate his anxiety. I tried a little, but it didn't go well for me, so I stopped trying. He would walk up and down the halls saying things like, 'We just need to get rid of health insurance to save money.' Not helpful!

John believes part of the reason this individual was able to disrupt the system was because the church was already so anxious:

> The ethos of the church was non-relational. The prevailing desire was to please everyone, which meant anxious people wielded the most power. Those who were upset or complained the loudest were catered to. In session meetings, the angry elder would get his way.

By contrast, "The ones who were content, they were not listened to or cared for." He further explained, "One of the challenges we faced was that folks who were content and happy didn't have a voice at the table and weren't really cared for or considered when decisions were made."

Benjamin experienced the most dramatic relational challenges. When the senior pastor left, two-fifths of the congregation left as well. Together with the departing senior pastor, they started a new church. Most people were hurt in the relational cutoff that occurred. During the interim period, a long-time member of the church died. The family wanted the service at the church where Benjamin served, but wanted to invite the old pastor back to conduct the memorial service. Benjamin described the situation:

> What the session decided at the end of the day was that if they wanted to have the funeral here, they could, but we were not able to have the old senior pastor conduct any services, for the sake of the congregation that remained here. It would have been very difficult for a large segment of that congregation for him to come back and do a funeral or wedding. We were seen by some people as being unchristian, hateful even. I tried to be as conciliatory [as possible] in our relationships, but I believed if we could move on, it would be best for everyone.

In summary, study participants experienced a wide range of relational challenges during the interim period that included discipline cases, confusion about specific responsibilities, and even conflict with church members and leaders.

Organizational Leadership Challenges

Study participants also faced organizational leadership challenges. Some of these challenges preceded the interim period and either eased or exacerbated the transition.

The first challenge was in how the church functioned as an organization. George recounted:

> From my first month, I realized the church was not in a [healthy] place. The infrastructure for Sunday morning set-up was falling apart. I had lunch with the man responsible for setting up signage, and he told me, 'I'm super frustrated. I've been doing this for five years. I quit.'

Several other volunteer leaders would follow suit. George concluded, "The senior pastor was an entrepreneurial visionary, but he really struggled to build the organization necessary to structure the church."

For Herbert, the organizational challenges came up during the formation of the search committee:

> Just before the senior pastor left, I had several conversations with people. Through those, I began to see the senior pastor's shortcomings. I had experienced many of them personally and dismissed them. But other people had been affected and hurt by his weaknesses. Some were on the search committee. The senior pastor was a great pastor, a godly man. He is mature. Yet he had flaws, as everyone does. But this experience gave me a front-row seat on how important leadership is.

John experienced organizational challenges more directly. As the pastor prepared to return from a short leave, the session formulated a plan to make John—then 28 years old—the executive pastor. He shared:

> Everybody on staff was going to report to me, and I was going to report to the senior pastor. At that point, there were twelve full- and part-time staff members at the church. One of the challenges the senior pastor acknowledged was his deficit of staff and office management. He was a poor administrator. The idea was for me to mitigate the anxiety of the senior pastor.

The change in position was never implemented. Instead, the senior pastor resigned, and the church entered a second interim period. During this time, the people under John's care looked to him to explain changes being made by other staff. "More people began to complain to me about the music or the length of our missions' conference," he confessed. But because those decisions weren't made by him, he said, "I encouraged them to talk to the people making those decisions."

The role of the session in the interim period was another organizational challenge. Despite common elements of polity describing the role of elders, the session at each church functioned differently. Benjamin reported that his session "had been seen as an administrative body, a board of directors" and not a "board of shepherds." John had a similar situation, saying:

Ours was a church where the ease of pastoring was directly tied to how much cash was on hand. Things were good when we had cash; things were not good when we did not have cash. The session was a constant headache. Functionally they were not the session. Functionally decisions were made by one or two guys. The session went with the louder guys. There should have been more mutual accountability at the local level. The session needed a lot more mutual accountability, submission to the brothers, but that wasn't happening.

Several participants indicated their sessions were emotionally unhealthy and spiritually unhelpful. John's role as clerk of session put him in triangulated positions with many of the elders. He said:

As the clerk of session, I sent out communications to the elders: notices about meetings or other elders asking me to send something out. It ended up being perceived that I was making decisions to convene the session, or about typical committees reporting a specific month. I ended up in a lot of frustrating conversations because people would see the communication from me, and assume I generated it. The elders would not go to each other.

Martin's session was "fairly active in most of the pastoral care situations we encountered" and "usually one or two other guys were involved in them." But there was also a lot of anger within the session at the last pastor for his perceived deficiencies in the "broad category of leadership."

What is more, his session was fairly unversed in the governing polity of the denomination. At the onset of the interim period, Martin remembered, "I was the only one with any kind of familiarity with the *Book of Church Order* at that point."

Andrew's session, leading up to the interim period, was simply frustrated. They had an attitude of indignation, basically saying, "We're doing things the right way, but we have all these people complaining. We don't understand what's going on." Right practice of polity did not resolve the issues they were encountering. But after the senior pastor left, session members began to wrestle with each other. Andrew shared:

The session began to ask if there was a critical spirit in the church. And with God's grace, time and reflection, and the Holy Spirit, the session decided, 'Yes, we do have a critical spirit that is part of why the senior pastor resigned. We failed to challenge that critical spirit, and we have failed to lead people where we should have.'

He, like John, experienced triangulation, growing in part from the confusion of roles and responsibilities. Responsibility for the development and launch of a small-group ministry, started before the interim period, fell to Andrew in the absence of the senior pastor. One leader in the church emailed him, demanding he explain his actions, being that he was "hired to be the youth minister." Andrew ended up going to the session and said, "You need to sign off on my job description" in hopes of reducing further confusion in the congregation.

Jimmy, for his part, gave credit to his session for assuming more pastoral care responsibilities during the interim period. He said:

The session did pick up a bunch of pastoral work and stepped up to the plate. That was a huge help. It was all discussed. We got a game plan as a session and said, "This is how the division of labor is going to break down."

Even then, there were recognized deficiencies. He explained:

The way the session functioned may not have been as healthy as it could have been. It certainly was functional. But there were two groups: an active session and an inactive session, and the inactive session was inactive because they couldn't get along with the [last senior pastor].

In fact, when it came to providing spiritual oversight of the congregation, only Jimmy and Herbert indicated their sessions assumed responsibility for a substantial degree of spiritual shepherding. Even fewer sessions provided a non-anxious, emotional process to help the congregation grieve, heal, and then get excited about renewed vision and a new pastor. Herbert, for example, had this to say:

Having a session of godly, mature men, that loved each other, that loved their families, loved their wives, were leaders in their communities, pillars wherever they were, that's what made the year as good as it was. I was not a CEO. I was the interim pastor. I had authority and exercised that authority, but the session led the church.

Those sessions which functioned more as a shepherding body than just a governing body provided necessary support to the study participant during the interim period. George's session took the most active and helpful role in providing guidance to the congregation during the interim period. He recalled this about the session:

We did a ton of work [developing] a really good transition plan and the plan on how to call a pulpit committee. I am so thankful for the leaders who were part of that discussion. It allowed us to get our key influencers to understand and communicate the plan, to get feedback and lay out the next steps. It instilled confidence in the leaders. Up to that point, people had been frustrated with the leadership. In this transition, it went from people being frustrated to confident. I think it was a win of the leaders managing change and communication well in that difficult season. I think it was a mix of people realizing this was a tricky and hard thing, and how are they going to handle this, and doing it well. Instead of being an anxiety-producing time, it was a confidence-building time.

In summary, organizational challenges that study participants experienced included challenges that arose due to the structuring of the church, the way various leaders used or didn't use their authority, triangulation of relationships around the issue of power dynamics, and the spiritual maturity and leadership of the session.

Challenges to Organizational Togetherness

Participants recounted significant challenges to the church that were larger than individually relational or broadly organizational issues. These are issues that did not come as a result of the transition, but which impacted the emotional and relational cohesiveness of the congregation as a whole. How these churches reacted to these challenges gave insight into the overall health of the organization.

The congregation Herbert served was in the path of a major tropical storm, and the area was declared a national emergency during his interim period. Herbert remembered, "A number of our families were flooded in a disaster. One of our members had to be rescued from his house." If this weren't enough, Herbert and his wife experienced a tragic, personal loss at the beginning of the interim period:

> Part of what God allowed in our lives at that time… drawing the church together. My wife miscarried. My first two weeks as the interim pastor, I didn't work at all. I didn't go into the office. I just grieved with my wife. It was a public thing… It felt like we were drowning. It felt like that for a long time. My family was in crisis for months. It was a very dark time for us. Where these challenges could have driven the church apart, they actually drew the church closer together.

There were other trials, as well. Herbert said, "We were already relationally connected with the congregation, but the fact that God allowed that suffering to come into our lives brought the congregation even closer relationally." "We had about three months of very public crises," Herbert said, observing, "Looking back, I see how God used that time of trial to grow the church together. I was called to lead just when I felt least ready. People were called to help and serve."

Andrew and his wife also went through a miscarriage during the initial period as interim. He confessed:

> In the middle of that period, we had a miscarriage. All of a sudden, the guy who is supposed to pastor and care for us is across the world, and there is no one else. But I'm still supposed to do my job.

George described the challenges, affecting him personally and the church as well, as tragic. Several months after the interim period began, one of ruling elders was caught in marital infidelity:

> I thought, "How do we talk to the church about this?" Yes, there was marriage counseling and support for him and his wife. We removed him from office. This was a man that I still have tremendous respect for. He was humble and repentant.

He was shocked with himself and broken… A few months after that, one of the men on the search committee, a young guy with a wife and child, got liver cancer. He died three months later.

Like Herbert, George's congregation drew closer in the face of these challenges. "Our congregation responded to these issues with sadness and self-reflection."

Calvin was diagnosed with cancer shortly before the interim period. He was still recovering from treatment when his senior pastor resigned. When a state of emergency was declared for the region just after the senior pastor exited, it was the tipping point. "I was dealing with my cancer just as the pastor was leaving," Calvin stated, "At the same time, a regional disaster struck and the pastor left. All that raised up past dynamics in the congregation that had never been dealt with." The result was that people voted with their feet, exiting the organization in the time of transition. He confessed, "We lost everybody in our directory whose last name began with H."

Benjamin was the interim pastor in the church where the previous pastor split the church. A long-time member passed away, and her family wanted the old pastor to come back and conduct the funeral. That same week he was out of town. His father was dying. Benjamin had to handle the church details and decisions with the session by phone, from his father's hospital bedside.

In summary, the challenges to the cohesiveness of the organization involved a variety of personal difficulties, including natural disaster, personal loss, illness, and death.

Use of Influence

One of the struggles common to participants was confusion over how to use their influence to affect the outcome of challenges, whether with the church as a whole, in

leadership decisions, or even with the search committee. Participants' default position was not to influence decisions that were being made, especially when it came to the process of the search committee.

Calvin recounted discussions with the session where decisions about the formation of the search committee were outlined. He said, "When you get a search committee going, it puts the guy running things in a strange position. I wanted to make sure I wasn't influencing it unduly, but I also couldn't be completely hands-off because otherwise it might never get started."

Herbert also experienced uncertainty around exuding influence with regard to the search committee. He was not on the committee, but there were places where the team could have used some perspective on best practices for how to execute a search process. He reflected:

> I wish earlier I had recognized the need to put myself out there and have more of a pastoral voice as the search team was getting formed. In a sense, it took me a little time to spread my wings. I didn't realize until later that there are some places I need to lean in and provide leadership. If I had had a better pastoral presence from the time they were formed, it would have helped them later on in the process.

Benjamin simply stated, "I tried desperately to remain a neutral party in the midst of all things, which was obviously difficult especially as, in my opinion, I had a certain degree of responsibility."

Several of the participants did influence the formation of the search team. A highly anxious elder in John's church got himself nominated to the committee. John feared he would steamroll the rest of the members. He said:

> The composition of that committee was actually pretty good. That was one of the few times I did some wrangling. I knew there was a really good chance one particular elder would get on the search committee, so I tried to find someone

who could serve as a foil to him. I found that person, and he submitted his name. He was the final member brought onto the committee. The elder was really bad at process, but this other guy was great at it. He cared for nothing but process.

Those two men ended up serving as co-chairs to the search committee during the process.

Martin also influenced the formation of the search committee, but to quite different results. During the process of evaluating candidates, one individual admitted she didn't believe in infant baptism. Martin confessed, "I actually influenced [her getting nominated]. I didn't know. I didn't see that coming." He went on to say, "When the search committee was formed that's when the real anxiety hit."

About a year into his interim period, George also observed "a high anxiety" arising, specifically as it pertained to the pastoral search committee. Early in the process, he put his name in as a candidate. Despite advice to the contrary, the committee had not ruled on him. George shared:

> This was super tricky. I am an organizational leader and a builder. I am a good administrator. I like process. I think politically in the best of terms. In the pastoral search piece, I was very hands off in that first year. But I began to get concerned about what I was hearing about the progress they were making. I was not connected with the committee and the work they were doing.

In his effort not to influence the committee, George was essentially distanced from the work, at the time they needed it most. Recognizing this reality, he eventually decided to remove his name from the candidate pool, believing that would be best for the church. He explained:

> Thinking about the political nature of this: any senior pastor candidate who knows how churches work is not going to consider the position if there is a strong associate candidate who is also considering the job. They know that if they get on the ground, and I'm here, and we don't get along, that's a mess. But there was growing tension. I remember having a hard talk with my wife about it. I realized we weren't going to get any really qualified candidates so long as I remained a candidate. There was a real disconnect between the committee and the church. I

saw this political train wreck moving forward. I realized that to get the best senior pastor here, I needed to promote it. I speak as a pastor. I can tell them the good, bad and the ugly. I can make a good effort to recruit the best candidates, but the only way to do that is not be a candidate.

Having removed his name, George was able to influence the committee in the type of candidates it was considering.

George was not the only participant who initially put his name in the candidate pool. Four of the participants at one time or another put their name in as a potential candidate for the senior position. (One participant desired to be considered for the position, but was discouraged by the session.) Of the four, three were eventually nominated and elected as the new senior pastor. Even so, every candidate experienced some degree of urging toward the position, whether or not he desired it and whether or not he felt equipped to fill such a position.

Jimmy put his name into the candidate pool some months into the interim process. When asked why he put his name in so late, he had this to say:

I became a candidate for all the wrong reasons. There was a good deal of personal hubris. The exiting senior pastor along with many in the congregation encouraged me to throw my name in the hat. My wife and I prayed about it and decided, you know, let's see what happens.

His search committee also never voted on his application, and later he withdrew his name from consideration. He reflected:

I think I really wanted to be a senior pastor and stop being a youth pastor. And the process wore on. For almost a year, we never got eliminated. Finally, we decided that even if they gave me the job now, we wouldn't be as excited about it as we were. Besides, I would miss youth ministry. We never really felt called to the job.

Though there may be different reasons a committee doesn't vote on an internal candidate, there is at least an element of both power and fear. On the one hand, the committee has a great deal of power, and ruling on a well-liked internal candidate would

tip that power toward the congregation. George witnessed that. After receiving

encouragement to put his name back into the candidate pool, George explained:

> At that point, the committee kind of freaked out. The committee knew that as
> soon as the church knew I was in the running, the search was over. It was out of
> their hands. There were two people on the committee who didn't want me to be
> the senior pastor. They wanted a guy who was older, more experienced. There
> was a very intense political game going on with the committee not wanting to tell
> the congregation about me. They said, "We'll decide on you next: up or down."
> They didn't want to tell anybody.

The committee held a congregational meeting to update the church on the process. They

decided to withhold the information that George had put his name back in as a candidate.

During the meeting, someone asked the status of George as a candidate:

> The committee chair said, "Yes, he is a candidate." The congregation erupted in
> applause. At that point, the committee realized they were out of control of this
> process. They dragged their feet for three more months. They did lots of
> interviews with other candidates. They asked me to submit more information.
> Those two [dissenting] members on the committee tried to say I violated
> something by putting my name in and taking it out. They tried to invalidate me as
> a candidate. They tried to find something in our polity that would do that.

In the end, the church voted, almost unanimously, for George to assume the senior pastor

position. He confessed, "I had done so much work to increase the congregation's trust in

their leaders. This included transparency in our finances and decision making." But the

overly-controlling nature of the committee proved a threat to undermining the trust

George had worked fervently to develop.

Fear is also a factor. An internal candidate who submits his or her name for the

position, if not selected, is not likely to be around long. Calvin said:

> If the search committee doesn't call me, I have to move on. You end up asking
> yourself, have I grown and developed so much in this pastoral role that I need to
> be the [lead] guy? One friend in a similar situation, while waiting on the
> committee to vote on him, said, 'I don't know what I'm going to do. I guess I'll
> move along, but I'd be happy to stay.'

That an internal candidate is recommended for the position should not be viewed as an indication that he is capable or experienced enough for the position. Five of the eight participants explored the possibility of filling the senior position, where only three knew from the onset it would not be a good situation; nevertheless, even these three were encouraged by some number of congregants to consider the possibility.

The interim period was awkward for all the participants. Participants were asked to what degree polity supported or failed them and their church in the process. None spoke about the Presbyterian form of polity in a despairing manner. Martin spoke positively about the structure provided by the polity:

> Ultimately, polity was something to look to. The fact that we had the BCO, and the fact that we had suggestions on how to navigate pastoral transition, gave us a structure. As frustrating as this process was at times, it wasn't because of the structure. I never felt like there was a ton of red tape. Denominationally and in terms of the BCO, polity is largely really helpful. I understand why we do the things we do and that was a good thing.

The practical outworking of the polity at the local and presbytery levels was often viewed more critically. John observed:

> One of my big takeaways is that thoughtlessness can do just as much harm as malice. The elders were good men. They loved people and wanted to do what was best. Very few were trying to lord power over people or take control. But as men and as a group, they were not thoughtful, and that hurt the staff and hurt the people at the church. Being thoughtful is part of what it means to be an elder.

George had the most well-developed and articulated view on the role of polity and its effect on the church, during the interim period, and the search process. He explained:

> Our polity does not spell out, or even create the pathway, for transitional senior leadership. In my experience, what has allowed this church to continue to grow and thrive and have potential for the future and not just start over again as an organization is consistent leadership over a long period of time. There is no way for the senior pastor and elders to lay a course for people who will take over when the senior is gone. Our polity doesn't have anything to guide a succession plan:

the idea of developing and shaping the person who will take over and lead in the years to come.

Also, the idea of a search committee. When we read the language, you have the congregation nominating people in the congregation, who aren't necessarily the existing leaders or shepherds of the church, making the biggest decision of the church. That seems wrong-headed. I agree with the principle that the people of the church call their officers and elders. I believe that is biblical and enshrined in our polity. But in my view, our elders and existing pastors are going to be more qualified to identify who is a good pastoral candidate than a random selection of the congregation. I think we're investing the wrong group of people with responsibility they are not ready to have or are not going to steward in a way that other people in the church are.

The degree to which polity is effective might be measured in the universal responses of all participants to the period of transition. They all used the specific term "unique" to describe their situation and experience, despite the recurrence of common circumstances that occurred across all the examples studied. On that note, every participant said some portion of his congregation or session, if not all, expressed shock, sadness, anger, surprise, and confusion upon discovering the senior pastor was leaving.

Navigating Leadership Challenges

Several common themes emerged from interviews with participants, describing practical and personal steps each took to navigate leadership challenges. These areas are the presence of mentorship, the practice of self-care, the role of active learning, the purposeful casting of a vision larger than the issues of the church, and—practically— hiring of additional staff. This section ends with a few final observations about the interim process from participants.

The Presence of Mentorship

One of the consistent themes across participants' experiences was the need for

and, in many cases, the presence of, mentors during the interim period. Where present,

mentors helped participants navigate leadership challenges.

George told about one member of his church and leader in his community who

sought him out to provide mentorship for him:

> One man realized what I needed. This fellow is a strong political leader in
> California. He was experienced and mature, a leader who was also outside
> [denominational] circles. He's not on the inside. He knew that I needed a
> leadership mentor. He initiated breakfast once a month.

When George was navigating the challenge of the stuck search committee, this mentor

proved a resource to him:

> He was an advocate for me to be the senior pastor. When we first started meeting,
> he told me he didn't think I was ready to be the senior pastor. But at one breakfast
> about 18 months into the interim period, he said, 'I do think you're ready and I do
> want you to be our senior pastor.' Then he asked me if I wanted it, really wanted
> it. He knew I took my name out. At first I was qualifying my answer, how I
> thought I could be a good pastor. But he cut me off. 'No, do you want this? Do
> you really want this?' I said I did. He emboldened me.

The mentor encouraged George to put his name back into the pool of candidates and "let

the chips fall."

Benjamin found mentorship from other pastors in his area, one of whom had

previous experience as a member of the staff of his church:

> I had two mentors in particular that helped me through that time. One of them was
> a man who used to be on session at [the church], but who had left the church to go
> pastor another congregation. He really served as a mentor to me, helping me work
> through the interim period. He was very familiar with the situation, knew all the
> players, and at the same time had a lot of pastoral experience. From that
> standpoint, he was very helpful.

The other mentor was a fellow pastor from his own denomination who was further

removed from the situation, but nevertheless brought helpful wisdom and perspective.

For several of the participants, the most meaningful mentorship they received

came from the exiting senior pastor. Jimmy had this to say about the exiting senior

pastor:

> He and I worked really well together. I consider him a mentor and a good close
> friend in ministry. The Lord really could not have picked a better dude for me to
> spend my first three or four years of ministry under. I was sad [when he took
> another call]. I consider him a surrogate father.

Even during the interim period, Jimmy benefited from the encouragement of "several

brothers in the presbytery [who] came alongside."

For Herbert, this mentorship with his senior pastor had a specific spiritual

component:

> The senior pastor and I had a great relationship, worked really well together. I
> honestly think the biggest reason for that is that the first order of the week, we
> prayed together. We began every week with about an hour of prayer, where we
> weren't doing strategic ministry: praying for each other's ministry, praying for the
> church. We prayed together, even when there were differences in philosophy of
> ministry.

Herbert and the senior pastor "were not best friends." In fact, they were fairly different,

but their mutual support as co-laborers had "a foundation of love and trust from that time

of prayer."

Furthermore, during the interim period, Herbert was "intentional about seeking

out the fellowship of other pastors in the area." About one pastor in particular, he shared:

> Even though I was super busy and he an associate as well, I needed it. I needed it
> more than he did. He had 10 years more ministry experience, but he gave me
> good answers to my questions.

Occasionally, mentorship came from within the broader presbytery, though often times it was initiated by the participant. Martin recalled:

> There were a couple guys close by who gave me their time, if I had questions. I felt alone in the immediate area, but one guy would call regularly, ask me, 'How are you holding up?'

A fellow pastor in the area served as a substantial encouragement to Andrew as well, especially following their miscarriage. He said, "That pastor and I become good friends while there. It was good to talk with him. It may be too much to say he was pastoring us, but he certainly walked with us…." Andrew also benefited from a prominent pastor in the same presbytery, reflecting:

> I love that man dearly. Whenever presbytery met, this man sought me out. That made a deep impression on me as a young pastor. Here is a guy everybody wanted to talk with, but he sought me out to ask about me: a twenty-something, right-out-of-seminary pastor. That meant a lot.

Even when the senior pastor acutely felt his own inadequacies, or believed himself a failure, his impact on the participant was positive so long as he stayed engaged in relationship. In the second church where Calvin experienced a season as interim, the departing senior pastor apologized to him for failing to prepare him better for ministry. Calvin recounted:

> He expressed sadness that he had not trained me, and helped me as much in my ministry as he could have. That is not the case at all! Every time I walked through the office, he always had as much time as I needed.

The Practice of Self-Care

The practice of self-care was another consistent theme as participants talked about navigating leadership challenges. Most participants were aware of the need of self-care, but all struggled with the reality of it. Andrew observed about the interim period, "One thing I learned is that I needed help."

Herbert recounted describing the interim period as a marathon:

> I had to pace myself. There was the constant temptation to overwork. I knew if I overworked I would end the year very unhealthily. I exercised three times a week. I did not work more than 55 hours a week, and usually only 55. I maintained regular times of prayer, even though it was a battle to have them, and I prayed regularly with other pastors. Those things nourished me. They weren't optional.

For George, self-care developed out of a season of self-neglect early in the interim period. After about seven months in the position, he "had to have back surgery because of a herniated disk." He expounded:

> Early on, I experienced a lot of fear and anxiety around whether I was going to be able to fill the position. There was the stress of having to learn some new skills. And besides that, I had developed some unhealthy rhythms of exercise and eating. There were lots of long hours and late nights. I felt like it was all on me to work through. I was overworking and driven by my own self-importance, pride, and lack of discipline. As a result, my family suffered, and so did I.

Later on, George would develop systems that undergirded patterns of self-care, not just for himself but for all those on staff at the church. He explained:

> I changed my schedule. I take two full days off from work: Friday and Saturday. And I don't let other demands creep in on that. I also accepted the reality that Sunday is a full workday. I limit evening meetings to one, maybe two a week, but that is something I negotiate with my wife. We wrote an employee manual and adopted the policy that if you work less than 40 hours, there is a problem. And if you consistently work more than 50 hours a week, there is a problem. We don't want anybody working 50 or 60 hours a week, realizing there is always more to do.

The Role of Active Learning

Self-care is usually defined in terms of the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational; yet, many of the participants saw areas of substantial growth tied to specific areas of active learning. These in turn gave way to direct changes in action and interaction that resulted in great personal, individual integrity and ministry effectiveness.

During Jimmy's interim experience, a division within the church grew up, arising out of old hurts and suspicion of the search committee. The session, attempting to show their support of the search committee's process, wrote a letter endorsing a candidate the committee had put forward. Jimmy explained:

> We made a huge blunder. We thought we were doing the right thing when we encouraged people to vote for him. We simply said we like this guy, and the committee has done a good job. Our attempt was to support the committee.

The letter, however, deepened the division. Many in the congregation felt bound, despite concerns about the candidate. Jimmy expounded:

> The session had inadvertently told the congregation how to vote. Folks who were inclined to vote against the candidate, they felt like if they voted their conscience they were voting against the session. We set up the conflict by that letter. We made what was already going to be a difficult decision even more difficult. It really took almost a whole year.

The issue could have split the church. Instead, Jimmy and the session acknowledged their mistake and brought in help from the outside. Because Jimmy had endorsed the letter, he felt it best to step back from some of the regular interim duties, and the session approved a motion to call an outside interim pastor. Jimmy recalled, "Because of my role in the conflict, the church really needed someone who could bring the Word to us and care for the church."

Reconciliation within the congregation involved a period of public confession and repentance. Jimmy considered this one of the most valuable periods of learning since entering pastoral ministry:

> [That situation] brought awareness of what I didn't have before: maturity. It really taught me how to apologize. That's an area the Lord has used in my ministry ever since: how to apologize, acknowledge how you hurt a person, how your words or actions affected that person, and give voice to your perception of how that made them feel. Learning how to apologize was huge. It's an eye opening thing to not see your role in the conflict but having it uncovered to you by listening to what

others say. When the Lord uses other people's pain to show you the sin that you didn't even know was there in your own heart, that has a huge impact. That makes you want to sit back and be more aware of your own inclination toward sin, particularly toward relational sin. It makes me want to be more conscious about how my words affect other people.

Martin, reflecting on his time as the interim pastor, had similar insights about his own areas of immaturity and the need to grow. He shared:

I'm fairly introverted by nature. That was part of the problem. I needed to communicate but I don't know how to initiate conflict. I'm a conflict-avoider so I didn't know how to navigate conflict and we had a fair amount of it. I didn't know how to communicate to the pastor or the session that I was as unhappy as I was. I had watched the session lead for seven years at that point, but mostly I was making it up as I went along. I didn't feel really equipped. I didn't know how to do the main things. I'm a people pleaser and I was put in a position where I was trying to make everybody happy and that doesn't work. I was scared of making people unhappy. I didn't know how to navigate the anxiety of the whole system in these years of transition.

Some of this fear of disappointing people and desiring to please ultimately impeded his willingness to seek another position during the interim process. While most of the candidates were encouraged to apply for the vacant senior position, Martin was discouraged from it. He explained:

Early on in this process, I expressed my desire that I wanted to lead. I don't know if I said I want to be the next senior pastor. And the session said, "We don't see that happening." So I never submitted my name. Because of the feedback I got from the session in those early days of the process, if anyone ever asked me, I simply said I didn't think I should put my name in. I still don't fully understand what deficiencies the session saw in me.

In retrospect, Martin realized, "I learned I should not have tried to stay around during the interim period. I should have probably put a resume together and started looking sooner."

Calvin's reflective nature allowed him to benefit from the lessons of the first interim period. He said, "The first time something happens to me, I draw back and try to take it all in, almost to a paralyzing extent. I'm not the 'get out in front of the crowd'

sort." During the second interim period, he interacted with the process differently, explaining, "Having been through it once, I had some categories for trying to help my family and the group of leaders try to think through the issues before us."

Herbert also shared how a failing on his part led to deeper insight into his own proclivities and the validity of differing opinions. The church took on a significant program during the interim period. Herbert wanted it to be committee-run, but, "The session out voted me and delegated one elder as the benevolent dictator over the process…. I thought being in charge was building consensus. I told him to build consensus, whereas the session told him to be in charge. "

At one point in the process, Herbert said some "inappropriate" things to the elder in charge of the process. Herbert admitted, "By the grace of God we were reconciled, but it could have become ugly and it would have been my fault." He came to see that "there are equally valid ways of doing things, and each has its strengths and weaknesses."

Purposeful Casting of a Broader Vision

Another common practice of the participants, to help themselves and their congregations survive and even thrive in the transitional period, was the casting of a broader vision. Participants sought to lift the eyes and minds of the people to the issues central to the kingdom of God.

Calvin reminded his congregation of the continued headship of Jesus Christ:

When I felt the instability in the congregation, I tried to say, "Let's not focus on the craziness, but let's focus on what is rock solid, which is Christ's love for his people. He is going to take care of things when nothing makes sense to us." At the end of the day, that's where stability comes from. I am convinced of that. I don't know what's going to happen, but the Lord Jesus does and he has a way of taking care of his people.

Lack of broader vision was one of the issues in Benjamin's church prior to the start of the interim period. The session had stated, "We need to develop a vision for the future." Observing the need for, and place of, a broader vision, especially in the interim period, Benjamin pointed his congregation back to grace and forgiveness:

> The first year, in my preaching and in my conversations with people, there was a heavy dose of our need to forgive others as we have been forgiven by Christ. If we are truly forgiven, we must be those who truly forgive. That was the message that I pounded on time after time after time, the hope that we were able to move on. We as a church largely have been able to do that.

As part of that broader vision, Benjamin changed the way elders were viewed by, and interacted with, the congregation:

> The congregation sees them more as spiritual leaders now, not as a board of directors. We divvied up the congregation into different groups, placing each elder over a group of members of the congregation, so they had direct responsibility for 15-20 members. We call them shepherding groups. They each had a responsibility to look over those people, care for them and minister to them at some level. That is more than what had happened before. The congregation needs to see our elders being involved and leading the congregation spiritually.

Herbert encouraged the congregation not to see the interim time simply as a period of maintenance, but actually a period of growth:

> One thing I constantly said to the session and the congregation is that a church can't be in maintenance mode. You are either moving upstream or downstream, moving against the current and making progress, or the current will take you downstream. We don't have the option of maintenance. And so in that interim year, we nominated, trained and elected deacons. We started a new compassion and mercy ministry that looked at issues of social justice, and we renovated our sanctuary.

Andrew added, "In the end, it was praying for wisdom and humility, and praying for God to show up. Looking back, God really did show up. He changed the church, and that is a cool thing to be able to see."

Hiring Additional Staff

On a very practical level, several of the participants indicated that another support in navigating leadership challenges was the intentional hiring of additional staff. George told about the ways this enabled him to fulfill the duties of, and thus navigate the challenges unique to, the interim period:

> Because we took enough time to plan the transition, the session and I both knew I was going to be a pastor by myself. Right away, we hired a part-time administrator for me. She supported me particularly, but other ministries as well. This allowed me to prepare sermons and write liturgies.

When George moved into the senior position permanently, he retained this administrator. He said, "She has been working for me now for 5 years, during which time she has continued to increase in her responsibility and role."

Martin also spoke about the benefits of hiring additional staff. By the time he moved into the interim period, the church had hired a part-time administrator. He attested:

> We brought on an administrative person who was extremely capable and a self-starter. I oversaw her work. She did a lot of the administrative duties I was doing when I was first called on.

Herbert's church brought on a youth intern to assume many of his previous responsibilities ministering to the youth of the church, thus allowing him to reduce his attention there by 50%. Andrew encouraged the session to hire a college student to take over the ministry to high school students, teaching weekly and meeting with students.

Among the churches that did not hire additional staff, but simply redistributed the senior pastor duties among existing staff, participants reported higher feelings of stress. John summarized, "Time management was a challenge because I had absorbed a third of the senior pastor's job."

Final Observations about the Interim Period

Several of the participants expounded on the interim process as a whole. Calvin

appealed to the differentiation of the interim pastor, saying:

> If you are going to be an interim pastor, you need to allow yourself to be able to tell the people what you really think about them without fear of jeopardizing your job. Perish the thought you go in being an interim intentionally hoping you'll be their long-term pastor. It's a conflict of interest. If I could, I would give every interim pastor a booster shot of vitamins that make them winsomely-harsh about the situation they are coming into.

Benjamin added these questions for anybody potentially put in a similar position

and considering the possibility of staying:

> Enduring something like this is something… I couldn't have done if I weren't incredibly confident God called me here at this time for this reason. If you aren't sure of that… That is more of a question to examine. I don't know how to counsel someone if the answer to that question is no. But it is certainly something the [internal] interim needs to get sure of.

Even those wanting to be the official interim saw the wisdom in having an

external candidate fill the interim position. Andrew said, "I wanted to be the interim. I

wanted to fill that role. In hindsight, we should have hired someone from the outside."

Data Report and Analysis Summary

This chapter summarized observations, behaviors, and responses of participants as they

navigated challenges of adaptive leadership after the church lost its senior pastor. In the

next chapter, conclusions derived from this research will be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how assistant pastors in their first or second ministry position navigate challenges of adaptive leadership when the church loses its senior pastor. In order to understand the ways in which assistant pastors navigate these challenges, questions pertaining to the issues have been explored with leaders serving in these positions.

7. How do assistant pastors' areas of responsibility change when a church loses its senior pastor?

8. What leadership challenges do assistant pastors experience when a church loses its senior pastor?

9. How do assistant pastors navigate leadership challenges when an organization loses its senior pastor?

Overview of Findings

The data shows that the interim period between senior leaders is a time of awkwardness and uncertainty. The entire interim period could be defined more or less as an adaptive challenge. There were fewer commonalities in the areas of organizational health, session activity, or assistant pastor training. During the interim period, assistant pastors are regularly put in positions that strain their relational equity, overwhelm their practices of self-care, and exceed their leadership capacities. Dependency on polity alone gives disappointing results. Few people know the polity well enough to depend upon it. Even then, anxious people within the system override the process. The emotional nature of the

transition is rarely acknowledged and more often neglected. Where sadness and surprise would be normal reactions, congregations experience frustration, anger, and shock. This emotional ego mass reveals some of the codependent nature of these organizations and their leaders. Senior pastors are viewed as hero-leaders or the hired help, but rarely in the healthy middle as first among servants and chief among sinners. Search committees muddle through a process that too often lacks the spiritual guidance and organizational knowledge necessary to make wise decisions. People leave. Sessions struggle to know their role and over- or under-function. Dependency upon process reduces awareness of the interactive and reactive components of systems. Systems become anxious, driving some people to find security in more objective measures of success: the budget, weekly attendance, or the ability to effect change.

The literature reveals a disconnect between the pervasive views of leadership and the actual practice of leadership. Complex systems leadership approaches to families and organizations rarely found its way into the behavior of churches and denominations. Leadership, benevolent or dictatorial, often becomes the function of one person. Thoughtlessness gives way to carelessness. Assistant pastors find themselves put in positions of triangulated power, being responsible but having no authority. They do well to remain differentiated, seek out mentors, divest themselves of areas of previous oversight, and urge the church to a greater vision than a pastoral search. Those who neglect self-care, give in to overworking, and allow themselves to function as mitigators of anxiety, are likely to experience depression, burnout, and possibly leave ministry altogether.

Modern Leadership Practices Unpacked

The model of leadership practiced today, within the church and beyond it, is stamped from the die of 20th century industry and comes down to the present day as our inheritance: hard, unbending, scientific, and rationalistic. Not by accident does it come down, nor by choice, but by way of association—as a caboose follows an engine turn by turn. Drucker wrote, after all, that management was an organ of institution, and "without institution, there would be no management." But consider what kind of institutions we have inherited. They are primarily political and economic; insofar as they are both, in exclusion, they tend to be worldly. By worldly, I mean concerned foremost with this physical world and its values, against a world that combines body and spirit, nature and grace. Winslow Taylor knew this, selecting men to lead on premises as artificial as Britain's selection of the light-colored African over the dark, as unfaithful to science as Darwin's progressive evolution is to the complexity of DNA.

Drucker proposed that industry is moral and social, but even these are secondary and tertiary to the primary economic expression. One may throw away Drucker's belief that management be morally driven and yet retain the mold. Economic industry leaves only one hole through which all leadership emerges: that of control, determination, self-conduct, and emotional detachment. The molten lead extruded through that leader-shaped hole produces one uniform expression: the inhuman, even alien, robot from *The Day the Earth Stood Still.*[403]

For such a leader, the value of humanity is as a resource of production. Everything else is tangential. The toleration of goodwill, encouraging relationships,

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[403] Harry Bates, *The Day the Earth Stood Still and Other SF Novellas*, Digital Edition (London: PageTurner, 2005).

training and development, voice, mobility, promotion, family, church, social good, environmental care, expressions of kindness, the development of patience, and the skill of good listening, will give way at the tipping point when the economic return on investment turns negative. Pensions are promised, but disappear under financial distress. Jobs are secure, until they are not. Participation is guaranteed, unless gender, and until age, render it impractical. Experience-shaped wisdom is welcome so long as mental, physical, and cognitive youthfulness come along with it. Industry produced only one kind of leader whose programming is unalterable: rationalistic, naturalistic, pragmatic.

Later, James MacGregor Burns *et al* would tack once-neglected organs of humanity—heart, will, and emotions—onto the cold form. Psychology was the new façade. It changed how leaders appeared, perhaps even how they performed, but not more than that. Beneath the slapped-on skin and freed-up emotions, economic industry was still at work. Burns leaned on Freud and Jung. Taylor leaned on Darwin. Freud and Jung leaned on Darwin, so that eventually Burns and Taylor lean on one another. Two men do not begin the same journey from the same place and, by way of the same map, end up at terribly different places. The tin man has got his heart, but he is still a tin man; or worse, the flesh-induced machine is cybernetic: *The Terminator.*[404]

Drucker's model for leadership stands in juxtaposition. Yes, he says, leaders are active and accountable, but also moral, social, ethical, even spiritual. But the shape that arises is an out-of-focus phantasm: abstract, ethereal, distorted, and ambiguous. Nor should we expect any other form derived from the existential. If faith is not rational, it is at least spiritual. If it is not solid, it is as least perceivable. Once faith became the

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[404] Randall Frakes and William Wisher, *The Terminator*, A Bantam Book (Toronto; New York: Bantam Books, 1985).

antithesis of reason, it lost the ability to be an actual thing: practical and concrete. This *Druckerian* phantasm moves about in the realm of leadership, influences it, even guides it at times between options; but it is always secondary to production. Taking Drucker's view, the spiritual only influences the purity of the molten lead, but industry retains control of the die and the form it produces.

Taylor presumed that because his approach was scientific, it was not at all religious. T.N Whitehead at least was consistent, looking for humanistic industry to replace what he saw as archaic social systems: the family and the church. Drucker did not believe that these needed to be replaced, but renewed.

Then, throwing off the old vestiges of moral absolutes, the machine came apart. The robot was empirically scientific. Its claim to be unbiased rendered it antiquated. The cyborg also was too much absolute, scientific mythology applied to psychology and sociology as the previous generation applied it to observation and experimentation. The thing went to pieces.

Subsequently, post-modern writers take up bits of human reality here, and bits of scientific machinery there, to build for themselves new models. "Whatever else, the leader must have trust," says one. Another advocates for good habits,[405] and another for truthfulness.[406] One calls on cultural relevance[407] while others appeal to differentiated emotional intelligence.[408] Now, the image is more a monster than a machine—

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[405] Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*.

[406] Covey, Covey, Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*.

[407] David A Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

[408] Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004).

Frankenstein's monster cobbled together from a host of cast-off ideals about what it means to be an enlightened man, born of evolution, sensitive to emotion, relevant to society. All about, the spirit of Drucker's phantasm tries to give meaning to life beyond economic production. The cast has been broken. The metal has no form, and so it has no meaning but what is given it by the individual.

This has given continued support, at least in Western civilization, to the hero-leader. Whatever mantra, form, or philosophy it takes, the hero-leader becomes more central to the organization than the vision. Better said, the organizational vision and the hero-leader become synonymous, inseparable. In the church, the inseparable becomes insipid. Large churches are led by dynamic, energetic, charismatic, and articulate people. Success is measured by organizational size and influence. Naturally, the ability to speak publically—what is normally meant when a church says they are seeking a gifted "preacher"—is a top value for such a person. Small churches, buying the idea that a charismatic person will make them bigger and better, limit their search to the same criteria. In the eyes of congregations, the traits which differentiate pastors become fewer, while the differences between large churches and small churches become more pronounced. One produces the hero, the other settles for "the hired help."

Almost universally, the modern church has chosen to accept this model of leadership, borrowing from ideas of production, organs of efficiency, and structures of profitability. These systems give rise to leaders who eventually burn out of or quit ministry—depressed, discouraged, fatigued, embittered. The organizations thrive for a season but, like the seed along the rocky path, wither under the heat. Even beyond the specific congregation, this hero-led boom-bust cycle serves to damage the integrity of the

broader church, sometimes creating splinter congregations, sometimes driving people out of the church all together.

Few, if any, of the churches in the study were truly cognizant of the reality that their pastor would eventually leave. The congregations were emotionally unprepared. Most of the time, sessions were in confusion as much as 80 percent of the time. And substantial turnover in the congregation was the result.

Assistant pastors were urged into ministry roles for which they were unprepared. Presumably, one may look at continuing education for pastors and conclude the church does little worse than other industries: education, medicine, mechanics, or engineering. That is the point! The church is not an industry. It is an organism of interconnected parts, the whole of which is at war, though her weapons of warfare are not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities.[409] By this comparison, the equipping of fellow soldiers remains a chief endeavor. No surviving army adapts the subpar as a standard of military preparation. The church isn't a school, hospital, non-government organization, social service, day care, counseling clinic, food pantry, or political advocacy group. Drucker knew this. He believed the church should absolutely be an agency of social reform; but when only that, it would ultimately fail. The church has the unique job of formulating "the new constructive concept of society."[410]

The church has become unequally yoked to the world. Our organizations look like their organizations. Our solo-hero leadership looks like their leadership. Our structures look like their structures. In turn, our values are defined by their values. Our nature is

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[409] Ephesians 6:12.

[410] Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, 100.

shaped by the form of their belief. Our apologetic is governed by their presuppositions. At times, our most inspirational speakers have more in common with politicians than penitents. At what point do we abandon the models that we've inherited in order to bring forth something older?

If one begins with the assumption that the model is mostly sound, the prognosis simplifies: moderate and adjust. From such a perspective, the post-modern additives of personal development, individualized traits, and external behaviors appear sound. But here the historic study serves to show the extent of the fallacy. Industrial leadership produces individualized leaders. Individualization is contrary to the gospel. There is nothing wrong with trust or credibility or authority. Paul talked spoke about all of these to the Corinthian church. The problem is how these have been tacked on to an irreparably flawed system.

The model of leadership practiced in the church today is more or less the same model of leadership the western world has practiced for at least the last 120 years. Premise: the modern church is a managed faith body with ingrained habits of seeing the organization hierarchically (Raschke). Premise: church leaders represent the hierarchical and controlling view of leadership (Long). Conclusion: the church is a modern organization that demands a modern definition of leadership. Only a change in one will result in a change in the other.

I conclude that western models of leadership are at times in tension with, and at times in contrast to, the gospel. The model of biblical leadership is shared. Glory, equality, and power are shared among the Godhead. Adam shared leadership with Eve and, in a world without sin, this shared leadership would have given rise to models

unimaginable in—and likely incompatible with—a fallen world. The examples of leadership in Scripture are consistent on this theme; from Genesis to Revelation—Abraham to David, and Solomon to Peter, when a leader acts independently, events do not go well, and usually end worse.

Church leadership is not economic, nor driven by measures of production. But here we must be clear: those who helped to shape and craft the prevailing models practiced in the church today did so with a commitment to economic productivity first. The church, in her right, is to be marked not by revenue but by generosity (i.e., a loss of revenue for the sake of the Kingdom), not by retained earnings but multiplied thanksgiving.[411] The church motivates not by compulsion or coercion, but by entreaty.[412] Church leaders are called to speak, and even write, with boldness tempered with gentleness. Rebuke must always have as the ultimate objective restoration. The church is first spiritual, then restorative; and, in economic terms, productive last of all. And the church believes weakness and suffering are intrinsic to the very fabric of the organization.

A look at the practices of leadership in every sphere of modern, Western culture reveals the demise. Influence becomes inflexibility, contrary to biblical humility. Self-reflection becomes self-preoccupation, contrary to biblical self-examination. Giving back the work becomes abdication, contrary to faithful labor. Self-care becomes self-indulgence, against self-control. Boldness becomes bullying, in the absence of Christian gentleness. Power is abused, abandoning peace. Protecting the heart becomes

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[411] 2 Corinthians 9:10

[412] 2 Corinthians 10:1

entrenchment, leading to the dismissal and belittlement of others. Correction becomes blame, ignoring the goal of restoration. Certainty becomes rigidity, displacing kindness. Motivation becomes manipulation. Agreement becomes capitulation. Dynamism becomes domineering. Authority becomes absolutism. Confidence becomes aggression. Expectations become accusations. Knowledge becomes pride.

To the rise and fall of large, complex, corporate entities—economic and productive—we may shrug. To the rise and fall of large churches and their failed pastors, we should shudder. To what do we attribute that regular pattern? If these failings were rare, we could attribute them to the frailty of one man or the untenable expectations of one system. One is an anomaly, two are unfortunate, but a half-dozen is tragic, but the failures and collapses of dozens are a travesty. The flaw runs deeper than one individual, back to the original die inherited from naturalistic humanism. Until that die is replaced, every model it produces will retain the flaw. One may cover it up, another may have it filled; but all leaders and organizations, under sufficient stress, will crack along that seam. Arthur W. Jones, as quoted by Stephen M.R. Covey and others, is credited as saying, "All organizations are perfectly aligned to get the results they get."[413]

Renewing the Old Model of Church Leadership

The church needs to renew an even older model of leadership. That older model prioritized the divestment of influence on the part of senior leaders. It emphasizes shared, proclamational leadership by multiplying the voices that proclaim the vision; in turn, congregations grow in their loyalty to the vision, not to the voice which pronounced it. That older model sought the health and resilience of existing congregations by reducing

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[413] Covey, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*, 238.

dependency upon a single pastor, and it did (and will) impact way the way large and small churches tend to develop, like nodes in a complex system.

That older model included true mentorship in spiritual, emotional, and relational areas of ministry. It included substantial investment in younger pastors, locally and denominationally. That older model increased opportunities for younger pastors to gain experience in observed ministry practice. It emphasized active learning over process dependency. This model invested time and money to the training necessary to equip younger leaders. And model prioritized continued training for elders. The renewed model will function with adaptations of Shepard's taxonomy, with:

> (1) wide participation in decision-making rather than centralized decision-making; (2) the face-to-face group rather than the individual as the basic unit of organization; (3) mutual confidence rather than authority as the integrative force in organization; (4) the supervisor as the agent for maintaining intragroup and intergroup communication rather than as the agent of higher authority; and (5) growth of members of the organization to greater responsibility rather than external control of the members' performance of their tasks.[414]

But it cannot be simply going back. There is no going back. Redemptive history only moves forward. Humanity was driven from the garden to the wilderness, and then—not back to the garden—to a land. And from the land, the people were driven into exile, and not back to the land; instead to the city on a hill. And in the end, humanity will rush not to a city on a hill, but to the garden in the city on the hill. As C.S. Lewis wrote, the pattern grows: "nothing is ever repeated."[415] To appeal to an older model is to see it changed—not just Drucker's workable society, but a transformed society; not an

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[414] Shepard, "Superiors and Subordinates in Research," 261–67.

[415] C. S Lewis, *Perelandra: A Novel*, 126.

emotionally managed organization, but Bowen's emotionally healthy organizations; not just Raschke's small, cell churches, but Hayek's networked churches.

The goal would not be a Gaussian distribution by size or influence of congregations. Large churches are not the problem. Influence is going to settle unevenly around some people naturally. Emphasis on the complex network approach, in contrast to a cell model, does not preclude the possibility of large churches. Some geographic, political, socioeconomic, and cultural preferences are going to give rise to larger organizations, and vice versa. But, large and influential churches would grow and shrink at slower rates. They would remain actively connected with smaller congregations, believing that smaller congregations have insight and information to share, and lessons to teach the larger congregations. There would be a reduction in hero-leader-dependent systems and the boom-bust cycle of these organizations. And there would be a greater resiliency throughout the entire church.

Role of the Existing Senior Pastor

Senior pastors have a key role in developing this new model of church leadership. Senior pastors will have some degree of influence within their congregation. The greater this influence, the more likely the leader will find himself pushed into the role of hero-leader. Deliberate divestiture of influence by senior leaders will serve to decrease congregant dependency upon them.

Preaching will remain one of the main expressions of power. It sets the congregational tempo, frames the congregational narrative, and nurtures congregational loyalty. A key indication that a pastor is functioning in one of the various Heroic

Leadership[416] styles is the indivisibility of proclamation from power, inexorably embodied in the leader, the pulpit existing as the vehicle for the exercise thereof. The litmus test is shared power. Heroic leadership weds organizational power to key positions. Within the church, power is proclamational, usually tied directly to the pulpit.

Churches should continue to seek a gifted preacher as one of the key qualities of their pastor, but lead pastors can shift congregational dependency away from their teaching style and presentation by incrementally increasing the opportunities of assistant pastors to preach. Study participants indicated they preached 6-8 times in their first few years, but would have benefitted from more opportunities. There is room to grow assistant pastors in this area of ministry development.

Lead pastors may fear that the loss of influence through reduced preaching opportunities will have the effect of shifting congregational loyalty to the assistant pastor. The fact is, if assistant pastors are doing their jobs well, some portion of the congregation will be more committed and loyal to them than to the church's senior pastor. Every one of the study participants was encouraged to apply for the vacant senior position by at least some, and often many, people in the congregation who saw them as ready and able to assume that position.

Mentoring is another way senior leaders can divest themselves of influence. Mentorship is a self-denying process. Mentorship requires willing submission on the part of the mentored. If mentorship fails, this reflects in part on the mentor. But even if it succeeds, the mentor cannot take credit. Mentorship is non-proprietary. In order for mentoring to work, mentors must be willing to give up the best of who they are, their best

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[416] Joiner, and Josephs, *Leadership Agility: Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change*.

approaches, and their best ideas. There must be a model of vulnerability which requires

dependency. Mentoring will provide opportunities for growth and development.

Study participants best prepared for the interim period were mentored by the

departing senior pastor. Mentorship is multifaceted; some study participants were

mentored spiritually, while others were mentored in management of the church during the

transitional period. Those were the churches which best weathered the interim period;

fewer congregants left, more new members came, and there was greater stability between

the three phases of the cycle (e.g., when the senior pastor left, during the interim period,

and when the new senior pastor began).

The need for mentoring will become an undue burden on senior pastors, and

repeat the hero-leader cycle, if they do not view it as a shared responsibility. Elders

should be trained to expect involvement in mentoring new assistant pastors. One practical

expression of this could be to have a new assistant pastor meet with one elder each week,

in her respective workplace, to learn what insights into ministry her business experience

provides. Mentorship, like the pulpit, should be shared. As with the minting of a coin, the

best way to eradicate the repetition of flaws in subsequent models is to increase the

number of strikes from different engravings. The multiplication of mentors removes the

burden from the shoulders of the senior pastor, held accountable for the performance of

his direct reports. Mentorship has different components, the scope of which this study

was not intended to measure; however, it should not be assumed that one person has the

ability to mentor another in every area of necessary growth.

This investment of time must come from the departing senior leader. Senior

pastors should expect to spend a substantial time engaging with, modeling for,

shepherding through, and listening and talking about the nuances of a spiritual ministry that is both relational- and results-oriented. They should prioritize this commitment of time, safeguarding it against the unending demands of ministry. They should see an investment in a young pastor as an investment in the overall health of the congregation he serves.

The overall benefits of mentoring showed in the research. Senior leaders who mentored their associates gave them responsibility and authority. This resulted in a shared-leadership model, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the particular participant. Shared-leadership models can develop only in situations of trust, where non-anxious senior leaders do not fear the capacities of those under their authority. In other words, you cannot mentor someone you fear is "gunning for your job," as one participant put it. Trust involved honesty, and those senior leaders who practiced that best also set aside regular and deliberate time to talk and pray with the assistant pastor.

Unfortunately, study participants' experiences demonstrated the preponderance of the "figure it out as you go" model. In the absence of mentorship, knowledge becomes proprietary. Patterns repeat: *I figured it out on my own. You can too.* This reinforces Hayek's complex network theory where large nodes become larger and small nodes eventually disappear until some factor drives the regular flow of information and loyalty away from existing large nodes. Practically speaking, the proprietary knowledge of the hero-leader drives more members towards the larger church at the expense of smaller churches. The factors which ultimately drive membership away, the literature and study participants revealed, are the reduction of input (i.e., diminishment of voice) at the expense of influence (i.e., loyalty).

The differentiated pastor adopts a "let me train you" model. Mentorship intentionally reproduces knowledge. Weak links in the complex system become reinforced, not bypassing the large node, but by intentional redirection through the large node. Invariably, the reduction of the senior pastor's influence—John the Baptist saying, "I am not the Christ,"—will put increasing pressure on the congregation to deepen loyalty to the core institutional vision, or else exit the organization completely. This further strengthens the overall health and resiliency of the organization. Senior leaders unsure of where to begin such mentored practice should look to the requirements put in place by networks and denominations. For example, in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), ministry candidates are required to complete a presbytery internship. Senior leaders could look to the internship requirements to identify areas of continued growth and experience for assistant pastors.

Because leading and managing support staff is not greatly emphasized in most seminary degree tracks, denominations should play an active role in offering training to pastors preparing to hire their first assistant pastor. For example, the PCA General Assembly offers seminars dedicated to ministry topics. One ministry track should be developed for solo pastors in order to instruct in common themes of growth, development, and maturation of the young pastors they are hiring. As well, the issue of differentiation of self from role and organization would be other helpful topics. Thus, senior pastors would develop the capacity to function more freely from the ego mass of their emotional systems.

In the collection of data for this study, there arose four categories in which writers, researchers, and study participants fell. In the category of study participant, this

may apply to the participant himself or it may apply to his senior pastor or members of the session. In the area of leadership, there were those who abdicated leadership (didn't lead); those who tried to lead and had general failure; those who led and had general success; those who led and, regardless of success or failure, were reflective to the point of understanding the reason for the success or failure. Those in the last category were able to reflect upon patterns and processes, providing insights into best practices. Those in the next to the last category were less able to name and to label effective principles of leadership, but this did not diminish their leadership abilities. Rather, it changed the way data was collected. Instead of a series of interrogative, data-based questions, these individuals shared what they knew through narrative.

Through this level of intentional mentoring, younger pastors become prepared to assume senior pastor positions in time. They will have participated in the full messiness of the organized church, trying to balance proclamation with penitence, restoration with rebuke, discipleship with discipline, and relationships with results. But they will have gained such experience under the tutelage of those above them: first, senior pastors and, second, church officers and, finally, members of the congregation. Younger pastors will not be judged based upon the sole criteria of preaching ability, worship-leading skill, and vision capacity. Character will be as much a focus as competency. Kindness will be as sought after as knowledge. Emotional and relational wisdom will be as desirable as orthodoxy. Knowledge of self will correspond with knowledge of God, and vice versa.

More research is needed on the topic of pastoral conflation—between the individual and the role—and the loss of identity when influence is diminished. Also, more research is needed to identify the markers of those who minister effectively and

those who study effective ministry, those who lead well and those who know why they lead well.

Role of the Session (Elder Board)

Study participants identified areas where sessions were unprepared for and, therefore, unhelpful in the interim period. Many of the assistant pastors were put in awkward positions where formal and information lines of power and responsibility were confused. While there was diversity in how the sessions of each church functioned, there remained common areas where growth was needed. Many of the sessions gave too much responsibility to the assistant pastors, often without oversight or assistance. Presumably, they believed the assistant pastor was ready; conversely, assistant pastors were certainly willing, but all confessed they were unprepared for the workload, responsibilities, and increased oversight that came with the interim period. Whether out of willful complacency, misinformation or thoughtlessness, as one participant put it, sessions were ill-prepared to guide assistant pastors through the interim process.

As such, sessions played a substantial role in the interim period, for good or for ill.

Study participants indicated only half their sessions were involved in shepherding. A majority viewed their role as primarily business management: a board of directors. And all but one of the study participants indicated their sessions had a substantial degree of ignorance regarding the polity of their respective denomination. Beyond the initial criteria set forth in the *Book of Church Order*, half the churches were at least confused, if not indifferent, about the role of the session in the life of the church; and 25 percent of the congregations actually expressed opposition to their sessional leadership. Thus, in practice, sessions did not view their role as active in preaching, practicing the presence of

people, or polity, perpetuating the myth that the church is just another business and the session another board of directors.

Elder training should extend beyond confirmation of criteria set forward in Scripture and the denominations' governing laws, whether through formalized curriculum or less formalized continuing education. The temptation to provide these via one source again reinforces the hero-leader approach. Lead pastors would benefit from having external voices speak into the elder training process. This would have the added benefit of removing the lead pastor from the position of power. Criticism of the model presented would not be equated to criticism of the senior leader, allowing for more honest engagement amongst session members.

Elder training may also be conducted denominationally. Regarding the seminars offered by the PCA GA, a specific track could be crafted and offered to focus specifically on the roles and responsibilities of elders. In other denominations, networked approaches to continued training would produce similar results.

Finally, because the *Book of Church Order*, at least in the PCA, is ambiguous about the actual function, interaction, and candidate-evaluation process of the search committee, elder training would have the added benefit of ensuring some level of spiritual support and leadership advice to the lay members serving in that capacity. Every study participant indicated their search committee would have benefited from greater leadership.

Role of the Seminary

The investment in young pastors begins at the seminary level. Further research is needed to study the different skill-sets, of senior versus associate positions in order to

affect changes in pedagogy and content. This was one area where study participants either observed or demonstrated deficiency in how they were prepared for what they experienced. One study participant said it best when he stated, "…there is no standard way to prepare or train you for a church" transition. However, many seminaries incorporate group learning projects into their curriculum. One suggestion is to build on these group projects, anonymously assigning roles to each member in a group. Members are then expected to effect change within the group without revealing their designated role. This allows members to experience the ambiguity of power dynamics, what Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson called "the line of responsibility."[417]

Also, there is the opportunity for seminaries to increase the degree to which students are aware of a systems-approach to the organized church. This could begin by including these texts among required reading: *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (Murray Bowen), *The Leader's Journey* (Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor), and *A Failure of Nerve* (Edwin Freidman).

The Role of Assistant Pastors

One of the determining factors of success for the associate-turned-interim lay with the exiting senior pastor. All participants indicated that the degree to which they were prepared to function as the interim or not was in direct correlation to the degree to which the exiting senior pastor mentored them or not. Mentorship assumes the opportunity to practice areas of leadership: experiment, succeed, and even fail. Such opportunities remain merely simulations until their authority accompanies responsibility. In situations where the senior pastor held all the authority, the assistant was viewed as acting at the

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[417] Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair,* 43.

senior pastor's discretion. Oddly, in the absence of the senior pastor, the assistant pastor's actions were sometimes viewed as an attempt to usurp authority. Yet, by and large, assistant pastors had to seek out the help they required during the interim period.

Young pastors should prioritize early ministry contexts where mentoring is both stated and practiced. The emphasis here is on the broader practice of mentorship within the church under consideration, and not just the senior leader as an individual. Focusing on the senior leader as the sole source of mentorship and training repeats the hero-leader dependent cycle. Mentorship should be valued and practiced by senior leadership, while the art of mentoring should be shared across existing church leaders in formal and informal positions. Young pastors can gain insight into the mentoring practices of a church by talking with as many current and previous staff as possible.

What about those already in ministry positions where mentorship isn't practiced? The first step would be to identify what areas of mentorship a senior pastor is capable of providing. Even bad examples can provide insights into good practices. (I am assuming the senior pastor has a degree of emotional health, spiritual maturity, and theological orthodoxy.) Behavioral interviewing methods applied to ministry case studies can provide substantial insight, even from non-reflective and introverted pastors, into the guiding motivations and beliefs behind decisions that lack obvious explanation.

The next step is to find trusted ministry partners outside of the local congregation to serve as a sounding board, provide insight, and give feedback. Wise ministry partners will avoid regularly coming to judgment on the particulars of a situation and, instead, serve the assistant pastor by expanding perspective of the factors involved in ministry decisions: spiritual, theological, political, emotional, relational, and cultural. The

temptation to find ministry partners who agree completely with one's theological distinctives may limit the scope of necessary learning. George, one of the study participants, benefited immensely from a mentor with limited church leadership experience, but vast experience in the political realm. The main point is that leadership and mentorship alike are a team endeavor.

Assistant pastors who are placed in the role of senior pastor during the interim period need to be aware of their own proclivities. What can seem like the opportunity finally to use those key ministry skills developed in seminary—preaching, teaching, and leading—can quickly become more than a young pastor is prepared for. For the sake of assistant pastors and families, there is great wisdom in having other ministers from outside the church help share the preaching load early in the interim period. This allows the assistant pastor time to get up to speed with new expectations and responsibilities. At the same time, congregations benefit from the plurality of gospel communicators, where congregants are likely to shift their commitment from the exiting senior pastor either wholly to or fully against the interim pastor.

The interim period is going to be awkward. There is no script to govern the process. Assistant pastors who view the transition only pragmatically will miss the wider implications of the emotional system. While the response of the system to the loss of a senior leader cannot fully be anticipated, the best step an assistant pastor can take is toward greater differentiation. Differentiation will enable young pastors to gauge how they are responding to influence gained through ministry practice. Young pastors should not be afraid of gaining influence in their respective systems; however, poor responses to that influence can damage the church and relationships with senior leadership.

Many of the participants indicated a hesitancy to exert influence. This hesitancy usually grew out of a place of humility and the honest recognition on the part of the pastor of his own limited experience. However, in retrospect, many participants expressed regret at not exercising more influence during the interim period. While the assistant pastor was clear about his own inexperience, he became more aware of the inexperience and unpreparedness of the congregation for the period of transition.

In the interim period, differentiation will enable the assistant pastor to discern wisdom amid urgings to apply for the senior pastor position. Those voices can be loud, encouraging—as Jimmy put it—"to become a candidate for all the wrong reasons." All the participants indicated that some segment of the congregation urged them to apply for the senior pastor position. In three situations, the support was broad, crossing multiple segments of the congregation. In two situations, the assistant pastor was encouraged mainly by congregants closest to areas of his responsibility; that is, these congregants had spent the most time under and observing the assistant pastor's ministry capacities. However, in these cases, the assistant did not desire the position and made his views known quickly, "quelling any uprising before it began," as one participant put it.

The encouragement to promote the assistant minister should not be regarded as confirmation of capacity or maturity to that end. As often as not, the encouragement from congregants to see the assistant minister promoted was more about the desire for members in the congregation to find stability through the elimination of anxiety-producing instability. Usually this encouragement came from those who knew the assistant minister, but who simultaneously lacked a real sense of the political dynamics or leadership needs of the broader church.

Despite universal urging to apply for the senior position, five of them believed they were ready for the position and desired it. Two ended up in the position. Even counting Calvin's second interim period, only three interim pastors out of six—or 50 percent—were called as the next senior pastor. All others have moved into positions that require less organizational oversight and leadership, though often more preaching opportunities and usually in a completely different area of responsibility from the previous position and church. This raises the question of whether service in the interim period actually prepared the candidate. Clearly, service as an interim pastor may equally prepare a candidate for senior leadership as weary him of it. In fact, one participant had begun the process of leaving vocational ministry because of the conflict and fatigue of the interim period.

This should cause assistant pastors to pause and consider the extent to which their desire for a senior position and their readiness for it line up. Bowen's wisdom is sound. When pastors find themselves "inwardly cheering the hero, or hating the villain in the family drama, or pulling for the family victim to assert himself," that is an indication it is time to start working on their own differentiation.[418]

Assistant pastors should also seek help. This can include hiring part- or full-time support staff to assist in areas of church management and administration where a theological degree is not essential. In most cases, the loss of the senior pastor freed up resources that could be applied to support staff, even if only for the interim period. Some study participant churches hired youth interns and administrators, but other types of support staff could include a worship intern, facilitator of buildings and grounds, a

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[418] Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, 83.

secretary, and someone to oversee internal and external communication. Study participants who divested themselves of non-essential areas of ministry were better able to assume the increased burden and responsibilities involved in the interim period.

Finally, anybody assuming the interim position does well to point the congregation to a vision larger and more lasting than the temporary issues of a leadership transition. Participants who actively directed church members to broader Kingdom issues—mercy, congregational care, recovery from tragedy, leadership development, a building campaign, and new member classes—saw their churches stabilize and even grow, whereas others lost substantial membership, upwards of 50 percent. The Apostle Paul knew, when people saw the mission and scope of gospel reality loom large against the issues of a fallen world—even famine—challenges to the local organization seemed almost insignificant.

Point believers to their Savior! Point them to the mission of the church. Point them to the redemptive-historic needs of the community around them. Point them to the opportunities for mercy, evangelism, advocacy, and mission. Show them the impact of prayer, fasting, generosity, worship, and even suffering. The issues of the church in transition will not suddenly go away, but they will consume fewer of the resources of the church when the congregation is directed toward a vision bigger than themselves.

Role of the Congregation

Congregations should desire to be more resilient in the face of crises that threaten their commitment to the vision of the organization. Releasing their senior pastor to share the pulpit with other assistant pastors weans dependency upon one expression or articulation of the vision. This is not to suggest a co-pastorate scenario; however, the

literature and at least one participant conveyed the positive results when influence was demonstrably shared between three or more people, all of whom were active in its expression and articulation. No longer is one person's unique expression, proclivity, and articulation of the vision the only one a congregation hears.

Reduced dependency on one pastor shifts organizational commitment away from the senior pastor and onto other aspects of the organization: small-groups, involvement in existing ministries, excitement about future opportunities, congregational care, evangelism, prayer, and the gifts of varied pastoral staff. This increases the number of areas where members can develop loyalty. Hirschman showed that this increases loyalty to an organization. Thus, the organization becomes more resilient to leadership transitions, diminishing the ease of exit. Every participant but one spoke of congregation turnover leading up to and during the interim period, and the literature revealed that pastor-dependent churches are more likely to face substantial loss during a period of leadership turnover.

The data shows the benefits of resiliency within the church, specifically, how churches responded to the crises that rose during the interim period, but not as a direct result of the interim period. More often than not, the result of these crises was greater unity in the congregation around vision and purpose. In several cases, physical health, emotional struggles, and tragedy struck the church soon after the interim period began. The effect was to crystalize the sense of unity, buttressing the congregation against the "splintering" tendency, what Paul calls "devouring one another." On the other hand, in congregations where there was already low loyalty or community disconnection, the

departure of the exiting pastor led to congregant turnover. Crises drove healthier churches closer together and unhealthier churches further apart.

Congregations in turn must also become more differentiated. The static belief in a universal expression of worship and organizational style prevents any congregation from seeing its uniqueness. This does not imply variety in the message of Christian orthodoxy, but it allows for expression to vary. Awareness of such differences allows for different spiritual gifts to gain prominence. The current model produces flagship churches featuring the best preachers who are also expected to write, evangelize, administrate, shepherd, and counsel. It also produces pastors who burn out, commit suicide, are terminated, or quit among accusations of immorality, unethical practices, or a lack of the biblical qualifications of elder. The elevation of other gifts, abilities, and skills would enrich true spirituality.

For example, the PCA's Ministerial Data Form (MDF) would need to be changed, both in order of prioritization and in the criteria upon which candidates are to be judged. One church will still need the best expositional preacher. But other churches will value gifted pastors of prayer, teachers of truth, patient disciplers, practical nurturers, thoughtful writers, and faithful shepherds. The presumption that the best preacher is necessary in every context fades. Paul had no qualms being a second-tier preacher, because he was confident in his union with Christ, rejoicing in the gifts of evangelism, church-planting, and his commitment to advance the gospel.

Congregations in transition should be aware of the emotional nature of their transition. Emotions will range from extremely positive to extremely negative—anxiety, fear, discouragement, anger, a desire to quit, sorrow, grief, hope, expectation, delight,

excitement, and renewed energy. Unnamed and unaddressed, these emotions can be toxic to the congregation at a time togetherness forces are already strained. Congregations would do well to bring in a consultant to speak about the transition process, to help name governing emotions, and to help identify anxious propensities at work in the congregation. One of the Apostle Paul's main reasons for writing so much about grief and suffering was his realization that people need to be taught how to grieve.

Role of Incoming New Pastor

Study participants revealed that one challenge, after the hiring of the new pastor, was the loss of ministry opportunities. This was specifically true in the area of preaching, where participants missed the opportunity to preach. Those participants who were not hired for the senior position returned to previous areas of ministry responsibilities. In their attempt to make room for the new pastor, they either willingly gave up, or were required to give up, those interim areas of responsibility. More than one expressed remorse that he lost the opportunity to preach after the hiring of the new pastor. John recounted, "People liked hearing from three" pastors, as different congregants connected with the preaching of different pastors.

New senior pastors will desire to establish themselves in their new role, but wisdom reminds us that the transfer of influence is slower than the transfer of responsibility. Cutting a congregation off from the pastors who have shepherded them through the interim process can feel like whiplash. Instead, new pastors are encouraged to retain assistant pastors as regular contributors to pulpit ministry. This further reduces the potential of the congregation to become dependent upon only one voice. Allowing the

assistant pastor to retain some regularity of preaching may also discourage congregational turnover subsequent to the new pastor's arrival.

Conclusion

Models of leadership in every age reflect core assumptions about the nature of individuals and corporate entities into which they cluster. These models are not simply adaptations of one another, nor can they be strung along some evolutionary line of progressive complexity and nuance. Generation by generation, prevailing models sharply contradict one another more often than they agree. It is the belief of this author that chronologically proximate models are, more often than not—as in the arts, politics, and many other disciplines—reactive opposites than moderate improvements. To that end, the church awaits a renewed model of leadership that will look very un-modern.

This qualitative research study confirms that the interim period of ministry in the life of a church, and its impact on the assistant pastor serving as the senior pastor, produces adaptive challenges to both. The types of challenges involved increased responsibility and emotions connected to that change; relational challenges, organizational challenges, and challenges to organizational togetherness. Participants indicated they usually received little or no training to deal with the types of challenges that arose in the interim period.

The literature reveals a model of leadership inherited from a naturalistic and economic view of the world. This expresses itself in the centrality of the hero-leader, the fragility of organizations dependent upon the hero-leader, and the neglect of younger leaders in areas of mentorship and training. The research revealed a gap in what team leadership looks like, in the context of the post-modern church, that maintains authority while also accounting for complex systems that are organizational, relational, and

emotional. Further research of successful ministry endeavors would reveal elements of a

renewed vision for the organized church, impacting the practice of leadership.

Jesus deliberately did not leave one steward to lead the universal, visible church

in His absence; indeed, he rarely left any individual to lead in any context for any

substantial period of time. Shared leadership is always more complex, more dynamic,

more intricate and, at the same time, more delicate, and usually healthier than the

leadership of one. A pursuit of shared leadership should be a central commitment of

everyone called Leader.

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