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ORCHESTRATING CHANGE

By

Mark A. Hutton

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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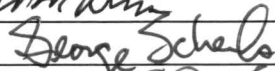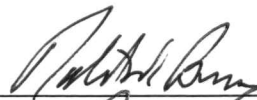

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. Significant or adaptive[1] changes, according to the literature related to leadership, are changes that pertain to established behaviors, long held beliefs, and habitual practices. The literature affirms these changes require the orchestration of conflict.

Many pastors report a strong tendency to avoid conflict. They prefer to comfort their congregations because they want to avoid both pain and the dangers inherent in orchestrating conflict.[2] Pastors also report a gap between their expectations, training, and experience, especially concerning pastoral leadership. Nevertheless, they recognize that both congregational systems and individuals need to change in order to grow spiritually, engage in the mission of shalom, and move from insularity to engaging people outside the congregation.

The study is significant in many ways. It may serve as a helpful resource to pastors who desire to lead significant change. It may provide a catalyst to seminaries to consider implementing course work that will bridge the gap between training and experience regarding leading change. This study may also provide necessary information concerning how to move a congregation toward the work of shalom.

Three research questions guided this study: 1) What informs a long-term pastor's understanding of leading change within the local church? 2) In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors experienced conflict as a result of leading change? 3) In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors orchestrated conflict in order to

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[1] Ronald A. Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 30.
[2] Ibid., 14-15.

lead significant change? The study utilized a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with eight pastors who have served at least ten years in fulltime ministry. The pastors represent three Presbyterian denominations, and serve churches that have been established for over ten years. The unit of analysis was the critical incident method, and the resultant data was analyzed using the constant comparative method.

The findings of this study confirmed that a gap exists between pastors' expectations, training, and practice of pastoral leadership. All of the pastors experienced conflict. All reported leading what they defined as significant change, but only three said they did so by strategically orchestrating conflict. All of the significant changes the pastors reported leading, with one exception, were inward focused.

The study provided three primary conclusions. First, pastors are generally unwilling to strategically orchestrate conflict in order to lead significant change within an established church. This means they are less inclined to lead adaptive change. Second, while all pastors report-experiencing conflict, the types of change they led within their churches were internal, i.e., issues related to staffing, governance, worship, and leadership styles. In other words, changes that transform a congregation's culture to be more missional and outward focused occurred through secondary means rather than through the pastor's strategic efforts. Third, all the pastors experienced conflict within the day-to-day operations of pastoral leadership. However, none felt prepared for it as a normal aspect of pastoral leadership until they had been in the pastorate for a few years. This suggests that pastors' expectations and training do not align with their experiences, which often creates serious personal and professional issues.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My wife deserves the greatest thanks and acknowledgement, and this work is dedicated to her. She gave up a lot to see this through. During the course of this Doctor of Ministry program we endured some ups and downs as a family. There were times that it would have been easier to just let it go—but Sherry would have none of that. In fact, she kept saying, "Write Mark, write."

Sherry, along with our three sons, Cooper, Baker, and Thatcher, sacrificed a lot to see this through. They gave me space, time, and encouragement, and they patiently endured my verbal processing. I am a blessed and fortunate man to be married to my greatest friend and constant encourager, and to be the father of such amazing young men. Thank you for allowing me to pursue this. I am indeed a very rich man.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In his book, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, Nicholas Wolterstorff asks, "Will the church, once it sees clearly that its calling is not to turn away from the social world but to work for its reformation, become an active agent of resistance to injustice and tyranny and deprivation?"[3] His question is born out of his understanding that humanity— and especially the Christian community—is an "ethical community."[4] For Wolterstorff, the concept of an ethical community is shaped, at least to some degree, by his robust understanding of biblical shalom.

Shalom, for Wolterstorff, means more than peace, more than "merely the absence of hostility,"[5] and "merely being in right relationships."[6] From Wolterstorff's perspective shalom incorporates human beings "dwelling at peace in all their relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature."[7] The concept is further expanded when Wolterstorff writes that shalom "is perfected when humanity acknowledges that in its service of God is true delight."[8] With these things in mind, Wolterstorff writes,

> Can the conclusion be avoided that not only is shalom God's cause in the world but that all who believe in Jesus will, along with him, engage in the works of shalom? Shalom is both God's cause in the world and our human calling. Even though the full incursion of shalom into our history will be divine gift and not merely human achievement, even though its episodic incursion into our lives now also has a dimension of divine gift, nonetheless it is shalom that we are to work

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[3] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace: The Kuyper Lectures for 1981 Delivered at the Free University of Amsterdam* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1983), 144.
[4] Ibid., 71.
[5] Ibid., 141.
[6] Ibid., 69.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 70.

and struggle for. We are not to stand around, hands folded, waiting for shalom to arrive. We are workers in God's cause, his peace-workers. The *missio Dei* is our mission."[9]

God's mission, according to Wolterstorff, is the mission of shalom and thus shalom is also the mission of those who profess to belong to Jesus. This mission, however, is larger than the notion of peace as it relates to dealing with conflict. Rather, the mission of God's people is to "work and struggle for"[10] the restoration of people in all aspects of life. It is in this service, this work, that human beings will find true delight.

This mission of shalom being the missio Dei and therefore also the mission of God's people is a compelling idea. It is well known, however, that "ideas do have consequences,"[11] something that Wolterstorff acknowledges. The suggestion that the church should be actively engaged in the work of shalom brings up two questions. First, what is the work of shalom that Wolterstorff is referring to?

A second question relates to the manner in which the mission of shalom is to be accomplished. Wolterstorff's statements imply the church of Jesus is not fulfilling or even adequately participating in the mission of shalom. That failure to fully engage in her primary mission suggests that the church needs to change. With that in mind, another question emerges: how do pastors lead their congregations through the sort of changes that will be required in order to embrace the missio Dei?

While the answer to the first question is crucial and necessary as a starting point, the focus of this study is on the second question. In other words, it is essential to have a basic understanding of shalom as well as a grasp of the effectual work it would entail. Only then can one effectively address the question of how pastors are able to lead their

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[9] Ibid., 72.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 141.

congregations to the significant changes in beliefs and practices required to fulfill the mission of shalom.

According to Wolterstorff, the Christian community should see her mission of shalom in the world as one that is concerned with the flourishing of other human beings. A basis for this idea is found within Jesus' admonition to his disciples in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."[12] Wolterstorff contends that the meaning of this text should not be limited to resolving conflicts. In fact, he suggests that Matthew 5:9 and texts within Isaiah and the minor prophets are concerned with human flourishing as a part of God's kingdom.[13] Further, Wolterstorff suggests that Jesus' words could be translated as "Blessed are those who struggle for shalom."[14]

James Hunter agrees with Wolterstorff. He suggests that part of conforming to the likeness of Christ means that Christians ought to be concerned and to work for the flourishing of others human beings. Hunter writes,

> And so until God brings forth the new heaven and the new earth, he calls believers, individuals and as a community, to conform to Christ and embody within every part of their lives, the shalom of God. Time and again, St. Paul calls Christians to "shalom" (1 Cor. 7:15), to "follow after the things which make for shalom" (Rom. 14:19), to "live in shalom and the God of love and shalom will be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11), for He is "the Lord of shalom" (2 Thess. 3:16). In this Christians are to live toward the well-being of others, not just to those within the community of faith, but to all.[15]

Perhaps one way to understand what Hunter means is to consider that the Christian ethical community extends beyond the Christian community and into love for

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[12] All scripture citations are from the *ESV Study Bible, English Standard Version,* unless otherwise indicated.

[13] Nicholas Wolterstorff, interview by Mark Hutton, Charlottesville, VA, 16 November 2009.

[14] Ibid.

[15] 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), 229-230.

neighbor. One pastor summed it well up when he said, "anything you want for yourself and for your children you want for your neighbors and their children. We have to be convinced that human flourishing is intrinsic to the love of neighbor."[16] In others words, if a Christian mother wants her children to be safe, free from hunger, fear, and harm; to be properly educated and clean; and not be subjected to discrimination due to race, gender, or special needs; it stands to reason that she would desire and work for the same things for other children in her community.

Certainly churches and Christians are concerned about their neighbors in some respects. Unfortunately, there are times when the concern for human flourishing may be obscured by personal desires. For example, while Christians may be generally concerned about the flourishing of others, their willingness to take action in a specific situation may be influenced by their political views just as much as their understanding of Jesus' teaching.

While this mindset can be true for people of all political persuasions, James Hunter focuses on the politically conservative Christian. He writes,

> Christians who are politically conservative want what all people want: namely, to have the world in which they live reflect their own likeness. The representation of social life they imagine and desire is not a reflection of the reality they live, but rather their highest ideals expressed as principles for ordering individual and collective passions and interests. It is a vision of human flourishing, but one obviously framed by the particularities of their distinct worldview.[17]

In other words, party identification and American political ideologies begin to shape the ways in which Christians understand human flourishing and thus the mission of shalom. In essence, the work of shalom may require Christians, especially those within the United

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[16] Jeff White, interview by Mark Hutton, New Song Community Church (Presbyterian Church in America), New York, 16 December 2009.
[17] Hunter, 111.

States, to examine their lives against a grid that in some respects cuts across their cultural, political and ecclesial influences. Before a church can become an "active agent of resistance to injustice and tyranny and deprivation,"[18] it will, in many respects, have to change its behaviors, beliefs, and practices.

Wolterstorff's interest in this matter is more than merely academic. He suggests that "one way to change practice is to persuade individuals that the practice is wrong. Moral discourse is sometimes effective in action, particularly if those to whom one speaks are persuaded that right and wrong are grounded in the will of God."[19] What this suggestion may not take into account, however, is the nature of the church and her people with regard to change—especially the sort of change required for the mission of shalom to be a fundamental practice within the church and the lives of her people.

The church is known to be an institution that is resistant to change. In fact it has been suggested by one study that the resistance to change is "more pronounced in churches"[20] than in businesses and other organizations.[21] Such strong resistance to change presents a huge challenge for those in leadership within the local church, particularly pastors. If pastors are interested in leading the church to change its behaviors, beliefs, and practices to align with the missio Dei that Wolterstorff and Hunter suggest, then they will have to know how to lead significant change in a system that is not only resistant to change, but is also unfamiliar with the robust meaning of shalom.

Most pastors are not prepared to lead their congregations through such a process. Author Kevin Ford underscores this reality when he writes, "Leading change in a change-

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[18] Wolterstorff, 144.
[19] Ibid., 142.
[20] Kevin Graham Ford, *Transforming Church: Bringing out the Good to Get to Great*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008), 29.
[21] Ibid.

resistant subculture is a tough gig. Leading change is made even tougher by the fact that

most pastors, by their own admission, lack change-leadership skills."[22] Leading change

within the church is made all the more challenging for pastors by the fact that churches

are the way they are to some degree by design, as noted by Harvard Kennedy School

professors Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky:

> The reality is that any social system (including an organization, country or family) is the way it is because the people in that system (at least those individuals and factions with the most leverage) want it that way…. As our colleague Jeff Lawrence poignantly says, "There is no such thing as a dysfunctional organization, because every organization is perfectly aligned to achieve the results it currently gets."[23]

Pastors have to be aware of the systemic aspects of their congregation in order to

lead any sort of significant change regarding behaviors, beliefs, and practices. Here is

where the second question, which is the focus of this research project, comes to the

forefront: How do pastors lead their congregations through significant change that

impacts behaviors, beliefs, and practices? This is the problem at hand.

In order for churches to change their behaviors, beliefs, and practices,

congregations will have to be led through a difficult process. As has been stated, churches

are the way they are because that is the way those within the church want to be, whether

they are cognizant of that fact or not.[24] This is not to suggest that everything within the

local church must be changed, nor to insinuate that everything is wrong. At the same

time, to assume that nothing needs to change about the ways in which churches engage

their local communities is equally false.

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 17.

[24] Ibid.

The work of those in pastoral ministry requires leading congregations through significant change. This work falls to pastors because it is what Christ has called them to do. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:11-13,

> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

It is not a stretch to see that this text requires leadership of those in pastoral ministry. However, leading people to change their concept of shalom—their behavior toward others, or their beliefs about themselves and their place in Christ, or their daily practices as His followers—creates an environment ripe for tension,[25] resistance,[26] and conflict.

What makes leading substantive change all the more problematic is that many pastors view tension, resistance, and conflict as something to be avoided (due to the danger it represents), or as a challenge that must be overcome quickly. Others view conflict as merely an opportunity to showcase the gospel through biblical reconciliation.[27]However, there is ample evidence that suggests that tension, resistance, and conflict are actually good indicators[28] and even allies[29] for the process of leading significant change.

It is true that the majority of the sources that advocate for leveraging conflict come from outside the ecclesial world.[30] Nonetheless, the theories and practical

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[25] James Harold Herrington, Jim Bonem, and Mike Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 100.

[26] James P. Osterhaus, Joseph M. Jurkowski, and Todd Hahn, *Thriving through Ministry Conflict By Understanding Your Red and Blue Zones* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 112-113.

[27] Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 22.

[28] Heifetz and Linsky, 110.

[29] Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn, 112-113.

[30] Examples include Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*; Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line:*

indicators of these studies are relevant to pastoral leadership and significant change. In fact, some Christian authors encourage pastors to consider strategically orchestrating[31] tension,[32] resistance,[33] and conflict in order to lead change.[34]

It needs to be said that the sort of tension, resistance, and conflict that is being advocated is "productive"[35] in that it is generated with great caution, concern, and wisdom. Despite the urging of proponents, the idea of orchestrating conflict is not something that is clearly seen in practice among clergy. Needless to say, the way that pastors view tension, resistance, and conflict will shape the ways in which they lead a congregation through significant changes.

It is a given that trying to lead people to change life-long behaviors, beliefs, and practices is difficult, if not downright dangerous; however, it is something that is required of pastoral leadership.[36]Though pastors play a critical role in leading significant change, many of them believe they lack the skills to navigate the sorts of strategies necessary to do so. If that is the case, how do pastors lead their congregations through significant change?

Problem and Purpose Statement

Part of the pastoral vocation is helping congregations, as institutions and as individuals, to change in significant ways. In particular, Ephesians 4:11-13 suggests that God has given the church "pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of

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Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading; and Dean Williams, *Real Leadership: Helping People and Organizations Face Their Toughest Challenges* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005).
[31] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 149.
[32] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 100.
[33] Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn, 112-113.
[34] Ford, Herrington, Bonem, Furr, Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn.
[35] Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 202.
[36] Heifetz and Linsky, 2.

ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." To be equipped in this way requires significant change in the life of a believer. A case in point is found within Jesus' new commandment to His disciples in John 13:34 to "love one another." At the same time, this new commandment does not replace Jesus' teaching that the highest call of His disciples is to love God and neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). To obey Jesus' teaching requires a degree of significant change, a fact made all more the clear by Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37.

Significant changes, which Heifetz and Linsky refer to as "adaptive,"[37] are those changes that pertain to established behaviors, long-held beliefs, and habitual practices. Leading this sort of change is difficult because many people are averse to the pain often associated with change, and therefore resist it. In fact, many pastors are averse to asking parishioners to change, because they want to bring comfort to their people. Pastors are also averse to the dangers of pushing against a system of established behaviors, long-held beliefs, and habitual practices.[38]

With those things in mind, it is easy to see why the church is perhaps one of the most change resistant institutions in the world.[39] Leading significant change within the church without a clear understanding of the system and the people within that system may prove to be unwise for the pastor and detrimental to the congregation. Nonetheless, pastors are still required to lead their congregations toward maturity in Christ, as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

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[37] Ibid., 30.
[38] Ibid., 14-15.
[39] Ford, 29.

While it is clear that pastors are called to lead their congregations in significant change, it is also clear that such efforts can create serious problems, including a decline in giving, a decline in membership, or even the loss of the pastor's job. What makes this problem all the more acute is that pastors, by their own admission, do not feel they have the necessary leadership skills (including strategic planning and conflict management) to lead change or to deal with the tension, resistance, and conflict that comes with it.[40] Many pastors also lack the crucial ability to diagnose the system in order to assess the sort of changes needed and the ways to go about leading those changes.[41] To compound the matter, there is a seeming contradiction between leading change by orchestrating conflict, and a common teaching within the Christian community that conflict is to be managed toward restoration and reconciliation rather than orchestrated to facilitate growth and change.

Despite these challenges, the need for change within some churches is critical. The needed change may have to do with the fact that the neighborhood around the church is changing and the church needs to change with it. It may be that the church needs to change its approach to missions or discipleship, or the way it moves in love toward one another. Whatever the reason and whatever the change, pastors and leaders need to lead congregations through the process.

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change.

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 7.

Primary Research Questions

The following research questions will be used to guide this study:

1. What informs a long-term pastor's understanding of leading change within an established church?

2. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors experienced conflict as a result of leading change?

3. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many ways. First of all, it may help to bridge the gap between two opposing views related to conflict. Second, it may serve as a helpful resource to pastors who desire to lead significant change within the local church. Third, it may provide a catalyst for seminaries to consider implementing coursework that is designed to help future ministry leaders understand the dynamics of leading significant change. Fourth, this study may provide a greater depth of understanding of how long-term pastors have maintained their personal wellbeing, along with the wellbeing of their congregations, in the midst of leading change. And finally, this study may provide necessary information to the researcher with regard to moving a congregation toward the work of shalom.

Definition of Terms

Significant change: Change that pertains to institutional or individual behaviors, beliefs, or practices. This type of change is referred to as "adaptive" in some literature.[42]

Long-term pastors: Pastors who have served full-time in ministry for ten years or more, though not necessarily with the same congregation. The researcher feels that some

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[42] Ford; Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky; Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn.

pastors may have learned a great deal from being in a congregation a short time, i.e., they may have been asked to leave due to their leadership or lack thereof.

Shalom or mission of shalom: Wolterstorff describes the experience of shalom as when a person is "dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature."[43] Furthermore, explains Wolterstorff, shalom will be "perfected when humanity acknowledges that in its service of God is true delight."[44] Shalom is an expression of love for one's neighbor that is manifested by active concern for the neighbor's flourishing that is akin to concern for one's own flourishing. Wolterstorff explains:

> Shalom in the first place incorporates right, harmonious relationships to God and delight in his service…. Secondly, shalom incorporates right harmonious relationships to other human beings and delights in human community. Shalom is absent when a society is a collection of individuals all out to make their own way in the world…. Thirdly, shalom incorporates right, harmonious relationships to nature and delight in our physical surroundings. Shalom comes when we, bodily creatures and not disembodied souls, shape our world with our labor and find fulfillment in so doing and delight in its results.[45]

Established church: A church that has been particularized for ten years or longer, according to the dictates of the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Book of Order of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Missio Dei: God's mission in the world.

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[43] Wolterstorff, 69.
[44] Ibid., 70.
[45] Ibid.

System: "A system" according to Richard Swartz, "can be defined as any entity whose parts relate to one another in a pattern… Human systems include everything from an individual's personality to a nation, and also include belief systems."[46]

Missional/ Outward-facing: Refers to the mindset of churches that actively pursue ways to love their neighbors. This mindset goes beyond having a "missions department" to developing strategies that focus the whole church on pursing God's mission together. Each component of the church is geared to figure out how to both disciple the congregation and reach the community. For example, the choir may be involved in community work related to the arts and music in addition to serving the church on Sunday mornings.

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[46] Richard C. Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy*, The Guilford Family Therapy Series (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 17.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated tension, resistance, and conflict in order to lead significant change. A pertinent body of literature was reviewed in an effort to understand what informs a long-term pastor's understanding of how to lead significant change through the orchestrated use of tension, resistance, and conflict. The literature related to this study has been arranged under two general headings: a) restoration and b) orchestration. These two headings are further categorized to provide more focused attention on specific areas of importance.

The first area to be reviewed is the general area of management towards restoration and the normative dynamics of conflict within a congregational system and its impact on pastors. This literature area refers to what seems to be the dominant approach to the subject of conflict within the local church. Two viewpoints are expressed within these resources. One viewpoint focuses on managing the conflict as it develops or exists within the church system for the purpose of restoration. The second viewpoint addresses conflict as a normative presence within congregational systems and discusses the ways in which conflict impacts pastors. The researcher recognizes the importance of the resources on management/restoration. However, the researcher's objective is to explore what informs a long-term pastor's understanding of how to lead significant change through the orchestrated use of conflict.

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Therefore, conflict orchestration literature is the second area to be reviewed. This area will focus on resources that provide insight into the orchestrated use of conflict. This area is subdivided into American History (specifically the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement), Leadership (both in the marketplace and pastoral contexts), and Gospel (specifically noting Christ's use of conflict).

Conflict: How Pastors Manage It, Experience It and Respond to It

The Pastor as Peacemaker

The first area of literature reviewed is categorized as management towards restoration. This body of literature examines the view that conflict is something to be managed and or worked through to reach a point of restoration. The significance of this body of literature is that it represents a great deal of the material on the subject of pastoral leadership as it relates to managing conflict. Thus, the researcher, while recognizing the contribution of this literature to the life of the church, can only provide a small sampling.

The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict, by Ken Sande, was the first book reviewed. This book is significant to the research because it is representative of the principles espoused by Peacemaker Ministries and their approach to managing church conflict. Sande, the president of Peacemaker Ministries, wrote this book with the "primary focus"[47] of helping individual Christians "throw off worldly ideas about resolving conflict and become a true peacemaker."[48]

Sande defines a peacemaker as a Christian who has learned to "turn conflict into an opportunity to strengthen relationships, preserve valuable resources, and make their

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[47] Sande, 15.
[48] Ibid.

lives a testimony to the love and power of Christ."[49] This premise is further supported by

Sande's conclusion that "Peacemaking can involve a wide variety of activities, all of

which may be summarized in four basic principles drawn directly from Scripture,"[50] and

which together form *The Peacemaker's Pledge*. The pledge states,

> As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we
> believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably
> different from the way the world deals with conflict. We also believe that conflict
> provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like
> Christ. Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we
> commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:
> Glorify God . . . Get the Log out of Your Eye . . . Gently Restore . . . Go and be
> reconciled.[51]

The approach, according to Sande, is effective in every type of conflict because it

is "based solidly on God's Word."[52] Thus the principles espoused in the book are

intended to "equip and assist Christians and their churches to respond to conflict

biblically" because, "God has provided a way for us to overcome our innate weakness as

peacemakers and learn to respond to conflict constructively." [53]

It is important to note that Sande defines conflict as "a difference in opinion or

purpose that frustrates someone's goal or desires."[54] Conflict "always begins with some

kind of desire," some of which may be "inherently wrong"[55] and others that are not

wrong at all. "We keep fighting to achieve our desire, dwelling on our disappointment,

and allowing our desire and disappointment to control our lives."[56] The result is generally

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[49] Ibid., 12.
[50] Ibid., 259.
[51] Ibid., 259-260.
[52] Ibid., 12.
[53] Ibid., 12-13.
[54] Ibid., 29.
[55] Ibid., 102.
[56] Ibid., 102-103.

"self-pity and bitterness toward those who stand in our way," or the destruction of

"important relationships," as well as being drawn "away from God."[57]

Unmet desires have the potential of becoming idols,[58] which are at the heart of

conflict.[59] Conflict of this nature has the potential to "rob us of immeasurable time,

energy, money, and opportunities in ministry or business. Worst of all, it can destroy our

Christian witness."[60] "Fortunately," Sande writes,

> God delights to deliver us from our slavery to idols and enables us to find true
> freedom, fulfillment, and security in his love and provision. And as we break free
> from the desires that have fueled our conflicts, we can resolve seemingly hopeless
> disputes and become more effective peacemakers.[61]

Sande, however, also sees the potential for good in that conflict is "an opportunity

to solve common problems in a way that honors God and offers benefits to those

involved."[62] The opportunity that Sande is referring to is related to "resolving conflict

constructively,"[63] as a "steward."[64] As Sande explains,

> Whenever you are involved in a conflict, God has given you a management
> opportunity. He has empowered you through the gospel and entrusted you with
> abilities and spiritual resources. His word clearly explains how he wants you to
> manage the situation. The more faithfully you draw on his grace and follow his
> instructions, the more likely you are to see a constructive solution and genuine
> reconciliation.[65]

Following the foundational principles developed by Ken Sande, Alfred Poirier

develops the idea of "stewarding"[66] conflict in his book entitled, *The Peacemaking*

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 104.

[59] Ibid., 115.

[60] Ibid., 12.

[61] Ibid., 115.

[62] Ibid., 22.

[63] Ibid., 20.

[64] Ibid., 38.

[65] Ibid., 39.

[66] Alfred Poirier, *The Peace Making Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 38.

Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict. While Sande focuses on

Christians in general, Poirier narrows his insights to pastors. Poirier submits, "Conflict is

everywhere."[67] However, many "young pastors enter their calling naively, believing that

orthodox preaching, well ordered worship, and a sufficient number of different venues for

discipleship will be all they need to grow their membership in faith and their church in

numbers." [68] However, these pastors soon find themselves in conflict, and discover they

do not posses the skills to deal with it in an effective and wise way.

Agreeing with and building on the principles of peacemaking offered by Sande,

Poirier suggests pastors "must understand that the conflicts people are in are conflicts in

people—conflicts in their hearts, conflicts of desires, demands, and idols."[69] As such,

Poirier contends that pastors should see conflict as part of ministry and not as a hindrance

or interruption:

> It is strange that we as pastors, called to preach the gospel of grace to sinners, balk
> at having to deal with real sinners with real sin in real and messy situations. If we
> are to apply the Word of God to every aspect of life—sin and all—we must
> change our attitude about conflict. Since it is God and his purposes we tend to
> forget in conflict, it would be best to start by asking: who is God, and what are his
> purposes with respect to conflict?[70]

Poirier, like Sande, points to peacemaking as the primary purpose of conflict. He

urges pastors to see reconciliation and peacemaking as the "embodiment of pastoral

ministry even as Christ is the embodiment (incarnation) of the God of peace."[71] Poirier

writes,

> Peacemaking is not one skill among many that pastors keep in their ministry
> toolbox . . . By word and by deed, every moment of a pastor's life is a moment

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67 Ibid., 72.
68 Ibid., 9.
69 Ibid., 66.
70 Ibid., 72.
71 Ibid., 87.

wherein we call others to be reconciled to God. And every word we preach or counsel ought to be the Word (John 1:1) that is full of grace and truth—the Word of peace.[72]

Both authors suggest that peacemaking is a primary purpose of conflict and both pinpoint desire as the source of conflict. While Sande argues that unmet desires[73] lead to conflict, Poirier utilizes the imagery of war, "My desires cause conflict. And my desire can break a marriage. They are set over against my wife's desires, so I wage war with her to get what I want. The source of conflict, then, is not something I lack or need but rather something I want— my desires."[74]

Poirer, like Sande,[75] sees tension, resistance, and conflict as something to manage. Poirier submits that pastors, and the church subsequently, are to be engaged as mediators. After stating this argument using Christ's commandments and various examples from scripture, he sums up his argument in the following way:

> I am emphasizing the central role of the church in mediation in order that we as pastors might be encouraged again to see that peacemaking is not a task reserved for lawyers or professional mediators. It is our calling. It is what it means to "rule" over a church. Christ has given us the church, with its duly appointed elders, as the specific context for resolving our disputes, for restoring peace and justice, and for bearing the sweet fruit of reconciliation.

Others within the Christian community share Sande and Poirier's views regarding conflict as something to be managed towards resolution. While other writers differ on the management principles and causes of conflict, they tend to share the view that conflicts are matters to be managed until a resolution is reached. Marlin Thomas, a pastor from the Mennonite tradition, is a case in point.

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Sande, 102.
[74] Poirier, 51.
[75] Sande, 39.

Thomas provides insight into managing conflict in the journal *Direction.* In his article, "The Pastors Role in Managing Conflict," Thomas suggests that "one in ten congregations" are dealing with stress brought on by interpersonal problems.[76] However, these congregations "have little understanding of the internal dynamics of the conflict."[77] In these congregations, according to Thomas, pastors should not view ministry as "business as usual," and the church should not be led the same way a healthy congregation is led.[78]

Like Sande and Poirier, Thomas suggests pastors "must think of themselves as specialists." A minister "must be more than just a pastor; he must be skilled in the taming of hearts," because "God desires to use sensitive, skilled human agents in that effort."[79] At the same time Thomas acknowledges that most pastors have trouble dealing with conflict.[80] Thus he points out that the "pastor's ministry can very quickly become undermined unless he can move from being a generalist to being a specialist, or is able to secure some sort of knowledgeable, specialized, outside help."[81]

Thomas goes on to suggest ways in which a pastor is able to "move from general ministry to specialization in conflict care."[82] He writes,

> Whatever role one plays in encountering conflict in the church, it must be undertaken with a great degree of sanctified professionalism and human dignity. One must know what he is about, and where the resolution project is to go before he starts. Once one is in the midst of the whirlwind there is no turning back.[83]

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[76] Marlin E. Thomas, "The Pastor's Role in Managing Church Conflict," *Direction* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 66.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 67.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 68.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 68-74.
[83] Ibid., 73.

Like Sande and Poirier, Thomas affirms the specialized understanding a pastor or leader must have in managing conflict. Charles Cosgrove and Dennis Hatfield agree, and contribute to the principles of managing conflict to restoration in their book, *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*. These authors utilize Family Systems Theory in an effort to "help church leaders deal with church family conflict in a way that furthers the journey of the church toward becoming the family God intends it to be."[84] The authors acknowledge they "value the insights and techniques that the more recent conflict management field has brought to pastoral leadership."[85] However, they suggest their approach "offers its own strategies for dealing with church conflicts" and "provides a framework of interpretation for practicing conflict management techniques more effectively."[86]

Hugh Halverstadt proposes "a Christian vision of shalom" as "the most fitting goal for an ethical process of conflict management" in his book, *Managing Church Conflict*.[87] Halverstadt agrees with Sande and Poirier that, "Managing conflicts is a ministry of reconciliation." He also notes that, "We do not do the reconciling. God does."[88] Like the previously mentioned authors, Halverstadt provides a multi-step conflict management model, effectively encouraging his readers to see themselves as managers of conflict.[89] "Managing conflicts," Halverstadt suggests, "is a process of intentionally intervening by proposing constructive processes by which to deal with differences."[90]

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[84] Charles H. Cosgrove and Dennis D. Hatfield, *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 18-19.
[85] Ibid., 21.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Hugh F. Halverstadt, *Managing Church Conflict* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 5.
[88] Ibid., 82.
[89] Ibid., 19.
[90] Ibid., 10.

The idea of proposing constructive processes[91] is something that Jerry Schmalenberger affirms in his article, "Pastoring Chloe's People: Pathology and Ministry Strategies for Conflicted Congregations." Writing from the perspective of an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Global Mission Volunteer and faculty member at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, Schmalenberger is concerned about the "pandemic already infecting congregations around the world: congregational conflict."[92] Utilizing a variety of sources, the author provides processes for dealing with antagonists,[93] recognizing the sources of conflicts,[94] and managing conflict to a resolution.[95] Schmalenberger suggests this method of managing conflict to resolution "will improve the habits that the congregation has drifted into in handling inevitable conflict."[96] In this way Schmalenberger aligns with Halverstadt, Sande, Poirier, Thomas and author George Bullard.

In his book *Every Congregation Needs a Little Conflict*, Bullard agrees with Schmalenberger's notion of improving how a congregation handles "inevitable conflict."[97] Bullard suggests, "Conflict is a necessary part of the Christian experience, as the old self comes in conflict with the new self. Daily we are in conflict to be more Christlike."[98]At the same time the author divides conflict into healthy and unhealthy, noting that healthy conflict is not necessarily undesirable: "Therefore, we should not be afraid of healthy conflict. Rather we should welcome it as an opportunity to bring forth

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[91] J. L. Schmalenberger, "Pastoring Chloe's People: Pathology and Ministry Strategies for Conflicted Congregations," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 34, no. 1 (2007): 44.

[92] Ibid., 38.

[93] Ibid., 37-38.

[94] Ibid., 41-42.

[95] Ibid., 42-44.

[96] Ibid., 44.

[97] Ibid.

[98] George Bullard, *Every Congregation Needs a Little Conflict*, Columbia Partnership Leadership Series (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 12.

positive spiritual and social change. We should meet unhealthy conflict as a challenge to the love of Christ, and the fellowship of the congregation."[99]

Bullard's "primary focus is to suggest that every congregation needs a little conflict so it can learn how to deal with healthy conflict and use it as an empowerment vehicle."[100] In this way Bullard joins with Sande and Poirier, who suggest Christians view conflict as an opportunity for the ministry of reconciliation.[101] Bullard provides seven intensity levels of conflict in order of severity. He wants to help churches learn how "to assess their congregations according to these intensities, how to educate their congregations through healthy processes of decision-making at lower intensities of conflict, how and when to bring in outside assistance, and how to confront dysfunctional and destructive conflict."[102] His hope is that congregations learn to deal with "unhealthy, high-intensity conflict" by developing the "skills and habits" at "lower intensities of conflict."[103]

The author defines conflict as "the struggle of two objects seeking to occupy the same space at the same time."[104] He believes that "conflict begins as a neutral value" and that it "is not an objective fact; it is a subjective experience."[105] Thus, according to Bullard, "People interpret conflict as positive or negative, healthy or unhealthy," and so the "value assigned to conflict will help determine whether the conflict can be resolved or must be managed."[106] Bullard writes, "Specifically, congregations need to learn how not

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 3.
[101] Poirier, 72; Sande, 22.
[102] Bullard, 3-4.
[103] Ibid., 3.
[104] Ibid., 11.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

to escalate conflict unnecessarily, but rather deal with issues of conflict when and where they occur. Those who are conflict illiterate need to become conflict literate."[107]

Dan Allender, like Schmalenberger, Sande, Poirier, Halverstadt, Cosgrove, Hatfiled and Bullard, affirms that, "Leaders inevitably face conflict."[108] However, in his book, *Leading with a Limp: Turning Your Struggles into Strengths*, Allender focuses on how leaders manage themselves, encouraging them to "name and face and deal with your failures as a leaders… in the open and in front of those you lead."[109] In the course of his book, Allender approaches the inevitability of conflict that a leader will face by highlighting the relationship conflict as crisis.

Citing the etymology of the word crisis, Allender suggests that crises "stir things up and divide the wheat from the chaff."[110] At the same time he points to "seasons of death, divorce, lawsuits, negative press, harassment charges, financial downturns, and staff conflict" as "crises that threaten our viability and integrity."[111] Furthermore, Allender adds,

> Few crises—and even fewer of your routine decisions—will be simple…. Each decision you make is a jump into the unknown, creating challenges that cost your organization time, money, and possibly morale. Few leaders escape the second-guessing or, worse the adversaries that materialize in response to their decisions. Many times conflict escalates into assaults and betrayal—with the heartache that comes when confederates turn against you. No wonder leaders feel exhausted and alone. No wonder they suspect that other members of the team are withholding the very information they need to make better decisions. No wonder the intensity of the challenges causes so many to burn out or quit.[112]

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Dan B. Allender, *Leading with a Limp: Turning Your Struggles into Strengths* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2006), 37.

[109] Ibid., 2-3.

[110] Ibid., 64.

[111] Ibid., 65.

[112] Ibid., 4.

"Leaders," writes Allender, "can be in a room full of leaders, all of whom love the Lord… and still there can be terrible conflict between radically different views." [113] The problem from Allender's perspective is that crises, "can become an addiction, and when a period of relative peace and calm comes, the absence of intensity can lead to boredom and irritation."[114] Thus, he warns, "some leaders unwittingly create new crises and drama at the first hint of peace—which, in their minds, is evidence of complacency and compliance with the things of the world."[115]

The researcher recognizes that Allender's connection with the preceding authors is limited. However, Allender is a well-known author and speaker within the Christian community. He also serves as the President of Mars Hill Graduate School near Seattle. Thus the researcher believes that Allender's insights regarding the relationship of conflict and crises inform long-term pastors understanding of leading significant change in an established church.

In addition to understanding managing conflict toward restoration, the literature also examines the normative dynamic of conflict within congregational systems. Within this area of literature the researcher briefly examined literature that speaks of the presence of conflict within the church, churches as living systems, and how conflict impacts pastors. These are in actuality not three separate discussions, but one, due to the nature of literature reviewed.

Dean Hoge and Jacqueline Wenger agree with Allender, Poirer, and Sande when they write, "Conflict is part of life; psychologists consistently remind us that it should not

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[113] Ibid., 131.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

be seen as something inherently bad."[116] However, Hoge and Wenger's research was designed to understand why clergy leave parish ministry. In their book, *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*, these authors state that conflict within a church system is normative, and has a significant impact on a pastor's decision to leave ministry.

Hoge and Wenger interviewed more than 900 former pastors from five denominations. As a result they learned that the "stress of dealing with conflict"[117] is one of the top two reasons ministers leave parish ministry. The authors state, "Our research agrees with all earlier studies in finding that conflict distresses many Protestant ministers and ultimately drives some of them away."[118]

After assessing through their research, the authors concluded that conflict, "with parishioners, with other staff members, or with denominational officials"[119] was a driving reason for leaving parish ministry. According to the authors, "Many ministers felt blocked or frustrated in their efforts to bring new life to their congregations, and this led to disillusionment with their members and with their denominations."[120]

In addition, the research suggests that conflict also contributed to pastors leaving ministry because of "strain, weariness, burnout, and frustration."[121] In fact the authors saw that the "borderline" between these feelings and "pastors who left due to conflict"

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[116] Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*, Pulpit & Pew (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 76.
[117] Ibid., 29, 39, 76.
[118] Ibid., 76.
[119] Ibid., 29.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 115.

was "indistinct; indeed, the two often overlap."[122] Hoge and Wenger also noted that senior pastors and associate pastors experience conflict somewhat differently.

Senior pastors reported conflict within the congregation as one of the key reasons behind their leaving parish ministry. As a result of conflict with congregants, senior pastors reported feeling "loneliness," "self-doubt about their abilities, and more marital problems more often than did associates."[123] The conflicts senior pastors dealt with were more often related to "pastoral leadership style, finances, changes in worship style, conflict among staff or clergy, and new building or renovation issues."[124]

In contrast, associate pastors reported more "troublesome conflicts with staff or clergy,"[125] as opposed to conflicts with congregants or denominational leaders. The conflicts were generally over "pastoral leadership styles," and they reported "difficulties with their senior pastors"[126] as a reason for leaving ministry. They also reported a degree of disillusionment given the differences between what they expected to be doing, and the actual job responsibilities as a reason for leaving ministry. Some of the associates reported feeling powerless. Associate pastors reported "that their senior pastors were controlling or micromanaging." Some senior pastors were "unaccustomed to having an associate and did not welcome them; still others told of staff members whose personal issues affected all their colleagues. Associates told us they often felt unable to control their lives because they were too much subject to the whims of the senior pastor."[127]

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 47.
[124] Ibid., 78.
[125] Ibid., 80-81.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 81.

In addition, Hoge and Wenger also noted that pastors experience conflicts along the lines of their expectations. The researchers discovered that minsters "hoped to devote themselves to preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry."[128] Instead the "majority of their time" is spent "on institutional tasks, administration, and program planning."[129] Hoge and Wenger suggest,"The gap between what ministers would ideally like to do in their work and what they are actually required to do is a problem for seminary educators and denominational officials. It is a structural problem contributing significantly to burnout."[130]

With both senior and associate pastors, Hoge and Wenger point out the "everyday, prosaic nature"[131] of the conflicts they face. Generally, the conflicts were not "doctrinal differences or inflammatory issues such as the ordination of gay and lesbian ministers, but rather the day-to-day functioning of the congregation: the style of the pastor and of worship, the relationships among staff, and the handling of finances and building space. Congregations clash over small things."[132] The authors conclude that "the conflicts most often experienced by our participants are ones that could probably be resolved and in the process offer growth experiences for both pastor and congregation. Instead, they become catapults out of parish ministry."[133]

Hoge and Wenger note that "Conflicts arise in the lives of all pastors" and they will not "be going away." [134] Conflict is a normative part of ministry within a church system. This reality is something that Osterhaus, Jurkowski and Hahn also discuss in

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[128] Ibid., 119.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 84.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 97.

their work, *Thriving Through Ministry Conflict: A Parable of How Resistance Can Be Your Ally*. They contend that "Every church leader who has served in ministry for more than, say, six weeks has experienced conflict. Something about life in the church and in parachurch organizations seems to create a rich environment for conflict to bubble up and sometimes explode."[135] The authors' purpose is to help pastors understand that "conflict is our friend" and "ally"[136] in pastoral leadership.

Pastors get into trouble with conflict when they do not realize "conflict is inescapable . . . ; that the problem is not conflict but how people react to it . . . ; conflict is both good and necessary because it elicits different points of view, clears the air, and makes it possible to resolve extraordinary complex issues."[137] However, the pastors they consulted were "heartbroken, disillusioned leaders " due to "poorly handled conflict."[138] The authors reason this is due to the pastors "faulty assumptions about two things: pastoral expectations, and the nature of conflict itself."[139]

According to the authors "faulty pastoral expectations" around conflict lead pastors to "become exhausted, sometimes destroying their lives and those of their families."[140] Again, suggesting that conflict is a normative experience in any church system, the authors offer insights into the ways that technical and adaptive change are associated with conflict. They state, "Adaptive leadership for the pastor involves creating an environment in which the congregation can wrestle with the competing values and implications associated with this problem."[141] Agreeing with the work of Ron Heifetz and

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[135] Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn, 13.
[136] Ibid., 15.
[137] Ibid., 14.
[138] Ibid., 13-14.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 13.
[141] Ibid., 126.

Martin Linsky, whose work will be reviewed later, the authors write, "a leadership failure that afflicts too many organizations is the tendency to treat adaptive problems with technical solutions."[142]

Herrington, Creech and Taylor agree with Osterhaus, Jurkowski, Hahn, Hoge, and Wenger with regard to the normative presence of conflict within church systems and its impact on pastors. In their book, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*, the authors desired to help pastors understand "that as a leader you are part of a living human system of engagement and relationship."[143] Pastors and leaders should understand the role that emotions play in how people within the system relate to one another so that pastors can learn to "navigate [the systems] wisely."[144]

"Conflict," according to Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, "is perhaps the most obvious of the symptoms in a living system."[145] In fact, "conflict emerges during time of anxiety when togetherness forces combine with all-or-nothing thinking. People begin to insist on their way as the only way."[146] Again, Hoge and Wenger also recognized the certainty of conflict in churches. They suggested conflict

> is an inevitable part of any close relationship, especially relationships in which people have a strong personal investment . . . Church members and their pastors make a similar emotional commitment to their church, bringing sometimes radically different, unacknowledged ideas of just how the church should function and what its goals should be. In both cases, conflict is a strong indicator that people are invested—that they really care about . . . their church. Where conflict is present, apathy is not a problem.[147]

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[142] Ibid., 127.

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

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 58.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Hoge and Wenger, 76-77.

A congregational system is a living, relational system. Within that context, "Whenever you engage in a relationship that is long-term, intense, and significant, you become emotionally connected to one another in a living system."[148] Conflict is "one of the most obvious symptoms in a living system."[149] People who are part of a living system will be impacted by the "anxiety and behavior of others."[150]

Herrington, Creech, and Taylor agree with the observations of Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn and suggest, "systems theory predicts . . . if we eliminate the conflict without dealing with the anxiety that produces it, the symptom is sure to recycle itself and show up" in another form.[151] In fact, the authors note, "a congregation relatively free of conflict might simply be dealing with its anxiety in other ways."[152]

With that in mind the authors point to an understanding of systems theory as a means to understanding how conflict impacts the pastor as well as the system. The authors contend that the "two variables work in tandem in every emotional system, governing its function."[153] It is important for the leader to understand the "emotional maturity of the people in the system" along with how they themselves have been shaped to deal with anxiety and conflict. In other words, the leader must know the "level of anxiety and tension to which the system is subject."[154]

In his book, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*, Peter Steinke makes a similar point, but he also notes the importance of the ways in which leaders respond. He points out "A significant measure of the health of the congregation is not where it stands

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[148] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 29.
[149] Ibid., 58.
[150] Ibid., 29.
[151] Ibid., 58.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 33.
[154] Ibid.

in moments of comfort and ease, but rather, where it stands at times of challenge and crisis."[155] Within "healthy congregations," pastors and ministry leaders need to pay attention and "respond" to the anxiety within the system. They also need to "focus on their response to conditions." Leaders are "guided more by their own horizons than by the things they see on the horizon."[156]

Congregational leaders should be aware they are part of an emotional, relational system.[157] Steinke contends, "When we think of the congregation as a system or a whole, we also consider all of the interactions of the parts and the emotional environment in which those interactions take place."[158] Within a congregational system, everything is linked in "relationship to something." Nothing stands alone.[159] As a result, "change in one part produces change in another part… there is a ripple through the system."[160] Individuals impact the system and everyone in it, "For people an important part of any environment is other people. We affect them; they affect us."[161]

Steinke's chief concern is helping leaders, as the "key stewards," to promote "congregational health" within the system.[162] One component of a healthy or "whole" system is understood in relationship to shalom. He describes shalom as "balance among God, human beings, and all created things. All parts are interrelated. Each part participates in the whole. Thus, if one part is denied wholeness (shalom), every other part

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[155] Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*, 2nd ed. (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006), 111.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid., 4.
[158] Ibid., 8-9.
[159] Ibid., 3.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 8.
[162] Ibid., 28.

is diminished as well.[163] This is not to suggest that conflict or pain within the system is to be avoided.

Rather, according to Steinke, a healthy system uses its "resources and strengths to manage conflict."[164] Part of the management of conflict is recognizing the value of pain within a system. Just as pain is an important signal to the body, so it is for the health of a congregational system, and pain is often a way in which the system grows.[165] Steinke asserts that,

> If an organization is like an organism, it needs pain as a messenger . . . blocking the congregation's awareness of pain, the congregation is at risk . . .By escaping what is unpleasant, the instruction of pain is wasted. People learn little from their crises. They only risk greater danger in the future. Certainly people look to the congregation to be a place of safety and comfort . . . Healthy congregations can grow through the challenges of pain. They discover strength in managing it, and they head off many of its negative effects in the process.[166]

With the usefulness of organizational "pain" in mind, Steinke provides insights into the dangers of church leadership not helping the system to move toward change. In fact, he suggest a rigid stance can be "hazardous to an organization's health."[167] The change, akin to the notion of shalom, is one that has little connection if any to a numeric metric as a sign of health. Instead he points to a system existing for the sake of others, beyond itself. He asks,

> How many congregations believe they are in the "we exist for ourselves" business rather than the "we are in mission to the community, even the world" business? How many congregations confuse "the way we have done things for decades" with the "larger apostolic purpose"? How many congregations mistake the means for the ends?[168]

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[163] Ibid., 118.
[164] Ibid., 29.
[165] Ibid., 49.
[166] Ibid., 50-51.
[167] Ibid., 74.
[168] Ibid., 75.

In *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*, Charles Cosgrove and Dennis Hatfield provide additional insight into systems theory. The authors explain that "a family-like system . . . powerfully determines the way that church members relate to one another, do business together, care for one another, and fight with one another."[169] In light of that dynamic, Cosgrove and Hatfield recognize that conflict "is normal in family life and the emotions that go with it (anger, frustration, exasperation) are also normal."[170]

Cosgrove and Hatfield recognize that while a family systems approach helps congregational leaders see conflict as normative, it also "means viewing so-called problem people as likely signs of wider unhealth in the church family. It asks what there is about the congregational family system that encourages and sustains the problem person's objectionable behavior."[171] The authors also point out that people within the system will not "change unless change happens in the systems in which they live."[172]

These viewpoints—management to restoration and the normative dynamics of conflict within a church system,—overlap in many respects. However, the researcher is concerned with finding resources that advocate the orchestrated use of conflict in order to lead significant change. While the foregoing resources have provided insights into managing conflict to reach restoration, they provide little information regarding the orchestrated use conflict. The researcher now turns to the second area of literature and its subcategory of orchestration.

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[169] Cosgrove and Hatfield, 5.
[170] Ibid., 19.
[171] Ibid., 20.
[172] Ibid.

Orchestration in American History

The Lincoln Presidency: Changing Attitudes to Preserve the Union

The pages of American history inform the way leaders bring about change through orchestrating conflict. A case in point is the presidency of Abraham Lincoln. Three historians show how Lincoln orchestrated the use of conflict in order to change the attitudes and behavior of the northern states in an effort to preserve the Union.[173]

In his book *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief,* James McPherson notes, "From the moment of his election as president on November 6, 1860, Lincoln confronted issues of policy and strategy"[174] regarding the disunion of the once United States. Within weeks of Lincoln's election, southern states began to secede from the Union, forming militias and seizing "federal forts, arsenals, and other property"[175] as they formed.[176] "Even though he would not take office for almost four months,"[177] Lincoln worked to "explore his options"[178] for what he could legally do to maintain the union once officially commander-in-chief, though he was very mindful of "the abyss that could easily open beneath his feet."[179]

Doris Kearns Goodwin asserts that Lincoln understood his duty as President was to preserve the Union, even if it meant doing so by use of force. According to Goodwin's

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[173] Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative* (New York: Random House, 1958), 39.

[174] James M. McPherson, *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 9.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid., 10.

[179] Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 310.

book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, Lincoln's vision for

union sprang from "the sentiments embodied in the Declaration."[180] Goodwin writes,

> Two days later, speaking in Independence Hall in Philadelphia . . .he asserted . . .
> "something in that Declaration," that provided, "hope to the world for all future
> time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted
> from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance." If the
> Union could "be saved upon that basis," he would be among the "happiest men in
> the world"; but if it "cannot be saved without giving up that principle," he
> maintained, he "would rather be assassinated on this spot than to surrender it."[181]

James McPherson agrees with Goodwin. He points out that Lincoln, though

powerless until being sworn in as commander-in-chief, began planning and exploring his

options. McPherson writes,

> Without power to do anything before he took office, Lincoln nevertheless began
> to explore what his options would be when he legally became commander-in-
> chief on March 4, 1861. "Ours should be a government of fraternity," he
> acknowledged in conversations with his private secretary John Nicolay in
> November and December 1860. "The necessity of keeping the Government
> together by force" was an "ugly point." Still "the very existence of a general and
> national government implies the legal power, right, and duty of maintaining its
> own integrity." The president-elect insisted that "the right of a State to secede is
> not an open or debatable question . . . It is the duty of a President to execute the
> laws and maintain the existing Government. He cannot entertain any proposition
> for dissolution or dismemberment."[182]

In *The Civil War: A Narrative,* Shelby Foote is in union with McPherson and

Goodwin. He points to Lincoln's inaugural address in March of 1861 as a commitment to

the vision of union. Foote writes,

> Then followed sterner words. "I shall take care, as the Constitution itself
> expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all
> the states. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part; and I shall
> perform it, so far as practicable, unless my rightful masters, the American people,
> shall withhold the requisite means, or in some authoritative manner direct the
> contrary…"[183]

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[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] McPherson, 10.
[183] Foote, 39.

From the outset Lincoln had a clear vision; he was charged with keeping the union together. Although Lincoln "never deviated from these principles,"[184] he had to decide "how to carry them into practice"[185] given the fact that southern states were seceding and northern and western states were also talking of seceding.[186] Foote notes that, "Lincoln was confronted with division even among the states that had stayed loyal."[187] Some citizens, as Foote contends, were unconcerned with maintaining the Union. He notes that moderates were saying, "Let the erring sisters depart in peace,"[188] while extremists said, "No union with slaveholders! Away with this foul thing . . . The Union was not formed by force, nor can it be maintained by force."[189]

There was also a "growing rancor"[190] that existed among Lincoln's party. Goodwin points out that his party was split into two camps, each arguing their view on how to deal with the South.[191] The Conciliators "believed that with the proper compromises, the eight remaining slave states could be kept in the Union, hoping that without expansion, the secession movement would ultimately die out."[192] The Hard-liners "ranged from those who thought compromise would only embolden the South to extremists who believed that military force alone would bring the South back to the Union fold."[193] Goodwin notes that Lincoln "had to balance two emerging poles of the Republican Party."[194]

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[184] McPherson, 10.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 9.
[187] Foote, 43.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Goodwin, 296.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.

Goodwin, McPherson, and Foote all point to the challenges Lincoln faced within his cabinet. Goodwin considered them a "team of rivals."[195] McPherson and Foote highlight the drama that was playing out as Lincoln made up his mind about Fort Sumter.[196] Regarding the approaching conflict, Foote noted that Seward

> …believed that if the pegs that held men's nerves screwed tight could somehow be loosened, or at any rate not screwed tighter, the crisis would pass; the neutral states would remain loyal, and in time even the seceded states would return to the fold, penitent and convinced by consideration. He did not believe that Sumter should be reinforced or resupplied, since this would be exactly the sort of incident likely to increase the tension to the snapping point . . . he was supported by most of his fellow cabinet members.[197]

However, Lincoln would need something in order to "unite the North before he could move to divide and conquer the South."[198] According to Foote, Goodwin, and McPherson, Lincoln needed something to exert enough pressure on the South to "provoke"[199] them to action and bring about the change of mind and attitude necessary to unify the North.[200] According to Foote, Lincoln found that catalyst in Fort Sumter.

> Walking the midnight corridors of the White House after the day-long din of office seekers and divided counsels, Lincoln knew that his first task was to unite all these discordant elements, and he knew, too, that the most effective way to do this was to await an act of aggression by the South, exerting in the interim just enough pressure to provoke such an action, without exerting enough to justify it . . . he saw Sumter as the answer to his need for uniting the North.[201]

According to Foote, McPherson,[202] and Goodwin,[203] Lincoln realized the powerful symbol that Fort Sumter represented to the federal government and friends of

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[195] Ibid., xvi.
[196] Foote, 44-45.
[197] Ibid., 45.
[198] Ibid., 43.
[199] Ibid., 44.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] McPherson, 16.
[203] Goodwin, 334.

the Union.[204] With this in mind, Lincoln ordered Sumter to be resupplied. Foote notes

that Lincoln sent a message to Governor Pickens of South Carolina to notify Pickens that

"an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only."[205] This action,

according to Foote, "maneuvered" the South, "into the position of having either to back

down on their threats or else to fire the first shot of the war. What was worse, in the eyes

of the world, that first shot would be fired for the immediate purpose of keeping food

from hungry men."[206]

McPherson points out "The nature of the Sumter expedition had changed in a

crucial way"[207] because Lincoln had "conceived a plan to separate the question of

reinforcements from that of provisions."[208] Just as Foote and Goodwin suggest,

McPherson notes, "If the Confederates fired on unarmed tugs carrying provisions, they

would stand convicted of attacking a 'mission of humanity' bringing 'food for hungry

men.'"[209] McPherson describes Lincoln's ploy as "a stroke of brilliance."[210]

> In effect Lincoln flipped a coin with Confederate president Jefferson Davis, saying; "Heads I win; tails you lose." If the Confederates allowed the supplies to be landed, the status quo at Charleston would continue, peace would be preserved for at least a while, no more states would secede, and Seward's cherished policy of "voluntary reconstruction," whereby a cooling of passions would bring the presumed legions of Southern closet Unionists out of the closet, might have a chance to go forward. But if Confederate guns opened fire, the responsibility for starting a war would rest on Jefferson Davis's shoulders.[211]

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[204] Ibid., 337; McPherson, 16.
[205] Foote, 47.
[206] Ibid.
[207] McPherson, 21.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid., 46.
[211] Ibid.

On April 12, 1861, confederate guns opened fire on Fort Sumter in response to Lincoln's attempts to provide provisions.[212] The following day the fort was surrendered. In their book *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War,* authors Hattaway and Jones suggest that "The Confederate capture of Fort Sumter required [them] to fire upon it, because Lincoln forced the issue to that point."[213] Foote and McPherson[214] point out the cumulative effect was to provide the spark necessary to unify the North.[215] Goodwin makes a similar observation, noting "The 'firing on the flag' produced a 'volcanic upheaval' in the North " which led to "an enthusiastic outburst of patriotic feeling," and "every Governor of a free State promptly" [216] promising his quota of soldiers.[217] In his diary, George Templeton Strong said, "We begin to look like a United North."[218]

The historians Foote, Goodwin, McPherson, Hattaway, and Jones concur that Lincoln's use of the tension surrounding Fort Sumter led to a significant change of belief and practice among people, specifically in the North. While not the main thrust of their books, these authors inform the reader of Lincoln's strategic use of conflict in an effort to preserve the union. It is important for the purpose of this study to turn from the Civil War to another somewhat related aspect of American history—the civil rights movement.

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[212] Foote, 48; Goodwin, 345; McPherson, 21.

[213] Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 26.

[214] McPherson, 22.

[215] Foote, 50; Goodwin, 346-348; McPherson, 22.

[216] Goodwin, 347.

[217] Ibid., 348-349.

[218] Ibid.

The Civil Rights Movement: A Child Shall Lead Them

Another area of literature within American history that informs the way conflict has been orchestrated to lead significant change deals with the civil rights movement. The researcher plans to explore insights from this movement and its leaders.

In their book *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading*, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky contend that "to lead is to live dangerously."[219] The authors suggest that "when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear—their daily habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking—with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility."[220] With this in mind, Heifetz and Linsky provide examples of how people lead what they term "adaptive change," i.e., change that "stimulates resistance because it challenges people's habits, beliefs, and values."[221] One example that Heifetz and Linsky point to is Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement.[222]

Heifetz and Linsky point to the gap between the "espoused values" and "actual behavior" that existed between the "traditional American values of freedom, fairness, and tolerance and the reality of life for African-Americans"[223] for much of America's history. The authors highlight King's work in forcing "many of us . . . to come face-to-face" with the gap. As a result, the "country changed."[224] In order to highlight that gap, King had to

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[219] Heifetz and Linsky, 2.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid., 30.
[222] Ibid., 159.
[223] Ibid., 93.
[224] Ibid.

help create situations that would lead to change.[225] He had to "challenge authorities across the nation."[226]

One situation of interest to the researcher was the Children's Crusade in Birmingham, Alabama, because it illustrates that King not only had to work to change the values, beliefs, and behaviors of political office holders, but also of the local church leaders. King and others considered Birmingham as "probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States." Segregation, according to Townsend Davis, "was in place everywhere."[227] In downtown shops where, as Davis notes, "Blacks were permitted to shop," but only as "long as they used separate parking lots, elevators, water fountains, and fitting rooms."[228] Segregation existed within the local church as well, where, as David Garrow notes, "almost every white church in Birmingham refused to admit black worshipers."[229]

Segregation was not the only reason King was drawn to Birmingham. He was concerned about the injustice and brutality that was visited on African-Americans. King noted that Birmingham had an "ugly record of police brutality . . . unjust treatment of Negroes," and "more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches . . . than any city in this nation."[230] In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King responded to an attack from liberal, white clergymen[231] published in the *Birmingham News.* King wrote,

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[225] Ibid., 159.

[226] Ibid., 152.

[227] Townsend Davis, *Weary Feet, Rested Souls: A Guided History of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 53.

[228] Ibid.

[229] David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: W. Morrow, 1986), 243.

[230] Roger S. Gottlieb, *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 178.

[231] Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 737-738.

> I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth-century prophets left their little villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns; and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to practically every hamlet and city of the Graeco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my particular hometown. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid . . . I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.[232]

Heifetz and Linsky contend that King, though in "constant fear for his life,"[233] "provides an example of the gambles of provocation"[234] because he "deliberately created"[235] a crisis that was intended to get "people's attention"[236] to "bring focus"[237] on the issue of "racial injustice."[238] King knew, the authors suggest, that "once he had people's attention,"[239] he would "not have to be so provocative."[240] Instead he would have "moral authority"[241] that could create change.

The *Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.,* bears Heifetz and Linsky out. King relates the use of children and students in what came to be called the Children's Crusade, which took place in Birmingham, Alabama in May of 1963.

According to King, despite the fact that his "people were demonstrating daily and going to jail in numbers,"[242] the movement in Birmingham was up against the "the city officials' stubborn resolve to maintain the status quo"[243] of racial injustice and

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[232] Gottlieb, 178.
[233] Heifetz and Linsky, 151.
[234] Ibid., 159.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid., 151.
[238] Ibid., 159.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Martin Luther King and Clayborne Carson, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books, 1998), 205-206.
[243] Ibid.

inequality. They needed, as he related it, the "dramatic new dimension"[244] of involving

the "students of our community."[245] King writes,

> I called my staff together and repeated a conviction I had been voicing ever since
> the campaign began. If our drive was to be successful, we must involve the
> students of our community . . . Our fight, if we won, would benefit people of all
> ages. But most of all we were inspired with the desire to give to our young a true
> sense of their own stake in freedom and justice.[246]

This "stake in freedom and justice"[247] would require children and students to be

subjected to the reality of violence as well as incarceration.[248] Yet, King saw the

involvement of children and students as an act that would be both a catalyst of change

and following in the footsteps of Christ.[249] At a meeting in Birmingham, addressing the

parents regarding their children being involved, King said,

> Don't worry about your children, they're gonna be all right. Don't hold them back
> if they want to go to jail. For they are doing a job not only for themselves but for
> all America and for all mankind. Somewhere we read, "A little child shall lead
> them." Remember there was another little child just twelve years old and he got
> involved in a discussion back in Jerusalem . . . He said, "I must be about my
> father's business." These young people are about their fathers' business. And they
> are carving a tunnel of hope through the great mountains of despair . . . We are
> going to see that they are treated right, don't worry about that . . . and go on and
> not only fill up the jails around here, but just fill up the jails all over the state of
> Alabama if necessary.[250]

In the end King affirmed the decision as "one of the wisest moves we made,"[251]

largely due to the fact that it "brought a new impact to the crusade, and the impetus that

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[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Garrow, 247-248; King and Carson, 211.
[249] King and Carson, 211.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid., 206.

we needed to win the struggle."[252] The impact and impetus came, according to King,

when "Bull Connor abandoned his posture of nonviolence."[253] King added,

> The result was an ugliness too well known to Americans and to people all over the world. The newspapers of May 4 carried pictures of prostrate women, and policemen bending over them with raised clubs; of children marching up to the bared fangs of police dogs; of the terrible force of pressure hoses sweeping bodies into the streets.[254]

This was the crisis that King wanted to create, a crisis which made "moral indignation" to

spread "throughout the land" and fostered widespread "sympathy created by the

children."[255]

King's use of conflict and tension in the Children's Crusade is noted by a number

of historians, including David Garrow, Taylor Branch, Townsend Davis, and Baynard

Rustin. All four writers show that King strategically used conflict and tension to bring

about change.

David Garrow, in his book *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the*

Southern Christian Leadership Conference, focused on King's argument: "To cure

injustices you must expose them before the light of human conscience and the bar of

public opinion, regardless of whatever tensions that exposure generates. Injustices to the

Negro must be brought out into the open where they cannot be evaded."[256] The moral

requirement, in short, was to "set out to precipitate a crisis situation that must open the

door to negotiation."[257]

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[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid., 208-209.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Garrow, 228.
[257] Ibid.

Garrow quotes King as saying, "'If you create enough tension you attract attention to your cause," and "get to the conscience of the white man."[258] According to Garrow, King, along with James Bevel and Wyatt Walker, made the decision to use children as a part of exposing the tension.[259] Taylor Branch,[260] author of *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*, highlights this strategy as well. James Bevel, as Branch points out, "was instrumental in helping King to come to the conclusion that children as young as six should be allowed to march against segregation."[261]

According to Branch, Bevel contended that "any child old enough to belong to a church should be eligible to march to jail."[262] Garrow noted this decision turned out to be "one of the wisest the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)."[263]

However, as Garrow, Branch and Davis point out, the decision to use children was not without controversy. People on both sides of the issue in Birmingham[264] "were upset by the decision to use high school children."[265] In fact, according to Branch, the level of discomfort rose as the age of those being "allowed to march against segregation"[266] swiftly fell.[267]

Branch points out, "Birmingham's white leaders scrambled to head off a swell of public sympathy for King by denouncing his use of children. Mayor Boutwell told the city that 'irresponsible and unthinking agitators' had made 'tools' of children to threaten

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[258] Ibid., 236.

[259] Ibid., 248.

[260] Branch, 764,774.

[261] Ibid., 755.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Garrow, 249.

[264] Branch, 754,761-762,764.

[265] Ibid., 754.

[266] Ibid., 754-755.

[267] Ibid.

lives and property."[268] Further, Davis points out, "Recruiting schoolchildren to face lines of armed police without protection was untested, and many people in the community were against it."[269]

However, "These attacks came too late to faze King,"[270] as Branch notes. King and his "fellow preachers noted that this tender solicitude for Negro children had never produced much concern over their consignment to miserable schools or other injuries of segregation." Bevel asked King some pointed questions: "How could he and King tell six-year-old church members that they were old enough to decide their eternal destiny but too young to march against segregation? How could they keep church members out of a nonviolent movement that embodied Christian teachings?"[271]

King ultimately agreed,[272] citing the need to keep the press interested, but more importantly, so that students could live out Christian teaching.[273] In fact, as Branch notes, King saw children going to jail in Birmingham as "suffering for what they believe . . . suffering to make this nation a better nation." King viewed the experience as "not only bearable for their children but a 'spiritual experience' to be welcomed, even longed for."[274] Noting the tension that the decision created, Branch suggested,

> For King, too, the moment brimmed with tension. Eight years after the bus boycott, he was on the brink of holding nothing back. Eight long months after the SCLC convention in Birmingham, he was contemplating an action of more drastic, lasting impact than jumping off the roof of city hall or assassinating Bull Connor. Having submitted his prestige and his body to jail, and having hurled his innermost passions against the aloof respectability of white American clergymen,

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[268] Ibid., 761-762.
[269] Davis, 63.
[270] Branch, 762.
[271] Ibid., 755.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid., 754-755.
[274] Ibid., 764.

all without noticeable effect, King committed his cause to the witness of schoolchildren.[275]

According to Branch and Garrow, the SCLC leadership "had calculated for the stupidity of a Bull Connor . . . We knew that the psyche of the white redneck was such that he would inevitably do something to help our cause.'"[276] Despite the dangers, hundreds of school children faced Bull Connor's violent use of dogs and water hoses to clear the streets.[277] Davis points out that the "sight of jets of water pushing the children around like rag dolls" not only "shocked the world,"[278] but also "began to soften . . . white negotiators, who had witnessed the protests firsthand during a lunch break"[279] to the point of reaching an agreement of terms.[280]Bull Conner's violent response—turning police dogs and high-powered water cannons on children—gained national attention due to the presence of the media.[281] It also caused the "atmosphere"[282] in Birmingham to be "even tenser,"[283] which ultimately led to negotiations. [284]

Garrow noted "King was hesitant about unleashing the untrained teenagers, especially when black adults were arguing that children should not be used as the shock troops of the movement."[285] At the same time both Bevel and Walker were "optimistic that the young masses, and the attendant interest of black adults, would be just what was needed to evoke segregationists brutality from the trigger-tempered Connor."[286] The use

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[275] Ibid., 755.
[276] Garrow, 250-251.
[277] Davis, 62-63.
[278] Ibid., 63.
[279] Ibid., 64.
[280] Ibid., 65.
[281] Garrow, 250.
[282] Ibid., 251.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid., 252.
[285] Ibid., 248.
[286] Ibid.

of children by King, Bevel and Walker was meant to "precipitate crises, crucial crises in order to expose what the black community was up against . . . There was premeditation and calculated design in that for which I don't think we ever made any apologies."[287]

Bayard Rustin, in *Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin*, affirms Branch, Davis, and Garrow. Rustin, an eccentric figure of the civil rights movement,[288] discussed the use of pressure to bring change in Birmingham. In a 1963 pamphlet, Rustin asserted,

> The Negro community is now fighting for total freedom. It took three million dollars and a year of struggle simply to convince the powers that be that one has the right to ride in the front of a bus. If it takes this kind of pressure to achieve a single thing, then one can just as well negotiate fully for more—for every economic, political, and social right that is presently denied . . . Birmingham has proved that no matter what you're up against if wave after wave of black people keep coming prepared to go to jail, sooner or later there is such confusion, such social dislocation, that white people in the South are faced with a choice: either integrated restaurants or no restaurants at all, integrated public facilities or none at all. And the South then must make its choice for integration, for it would rather have that than chaos."[289]

The study of American history provides insights into the ways that leaders such as Lincoln and King have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. Both Lincoln and King are illustrative for leadership theory. Those who study leadership have provided a wealth of insight into the orchestration of conflict in order to lead significant change, and their work will be reviewed in the following section.

Orchestration in Leadership

The following two subcategories inform the way orchestrating conflict leads to significant change: orchestration in leadership theory and orchestration in pastoral leadership. There are a number of resources within the category of leadership theory that

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[287] Ibid.
[288] Branch, 168, 170-171.
[289] Davis, 63.

provide insight into the practice of orchestration. However, there are relatively few resources within the genre of church or pastoral leadership that encourage the use of conflict.

Orchestration in the Leadership Theory and Practice Literature

The first resource reviewed was Ronald Heifetz's and Marty Linsky's *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading.* Both Heifetz and Linsky served as principals of Cambridge Leadership Associates and as faculty at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The book is built upon their combined experience of listening to people (including clergy) who enjoyed leadership success, but who also "carry wounds from the times they gave voice to a point of view that disturbed people."[290]

Heifetz and Linsky wrote their book to help leaders learn "how to survive and thrive amidst the dangers of leadership."[291] The authors contend adaptive leadership requires living "dangerously" because a leader must "challenge what people hold dear."[292] At times a leaders must do so with little "more to offer perhaps than possibility."[293]

Throughout this book the authors make a distinction between leadership that brings about technical versus adaptive change. An adaptive change,[294] according to Heifetz and Linsky, is one that "stimulates resistance because it challenges people's habits, beliefs, and values."[295] Leadership that brings about adaptive change asks people

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[290] Heifetz and Linsky, 5.
[291] Ibid., 2.
[292] Ibid., 3.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Ibid., 30.

to "take a loss, experience uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures." Adaptive change often "forces people to question and perhaps redefine aspects of their identity," while it also "challenges their sense of competence."[296] This kind of change requires leaders to help people, institutions, and families to "change their hearts as well as their behaviors," [297] and to "relinquish something—a belief, a value, a behavior—that they hold dear."[298]

As part of the process of meeting adaptive challenges, Heifetz and Linsky suggest that leaders will "rarely, if ever . . . escape people's anger when leading any kind of significant change."[299] Nevertheless, the authors contend that an adaptive change is something that is orchestrated[300] by leaders. The authors acknowledge that conflict can be dangerous and can "generate casualties."[301] However, Heifetz and Linsky suggest the importance of orchestrating the conflict in a way that does not allow the community to become "immobilized or spin out of control."[302] They further acknowledge that changing the "status quo generates tension and produces heat by surfacing hidden conflicts and challenging organizational culture."[303] While it is important for a leader to "reduce the heat,"[304] it is also important, according to the authors, to "raise the temperature and tension"[305] in order to lead significant change.

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[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid., 177.
[298] Ibid., 117.
[299] Ibid., 142.
[300] Ibid., 100.
[301] Ibid., 101.
[302] Ibid., 108.
[303] Ibid., 107.
[304] Ibid., 109.
[305] Ibid.

"Deep conflicts, at their root," from the authors' perspective, "are the engine of human progress."[306] This means that there are times within an institution that a leader needs to "create a crisis" [307] in order to lead a system forward. Thus tension and heat are necessary, "within a tolerable range,"[308] in order to cause "people to sit up, pay attention, and deal with real threats and challenges facing them."[309] In fact, Heifetz and Linsky suggest, "Without some distress, there is no incentive for them to change anything."[310]

The authors note, "When people come to you to describe the distress you are causing, it might be a sign that you have touched a nerve and are doing good work."[311] In the process of orchestrating conflict for leading adaptive change, Heifetz and Linsky suggest the leader "bring attention to the hard issues, and keep [attention] focused there."[312] Leaders should "let people feel the weight of responsibility for tackling those issues." The authors noted that "conflicts will surface within the relevant group as contrary points of view are heard."[313]

To orchestrate tension and conflict, Heifetz and Linsky provide four strategies: "create a holding environment for the work; second, control the temperature; third, set the pace; and fourth, show them the future."[314] While all four ideas are significant, it is important to note the fourth idea in particular as it relates to vision. Heifetz and Linsky suggest, "To sustain momentum through a period of difficult change, you have to find ways to remind people of the orienting value—the positive vision—that makes the

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[306] Ibid., 101.
[307] Ibid., 151.
[308] Ibid., 108.
[309] Ibid., 107-108.
[310] Ibid., 108.
[311] Ibid., 110.
[312] Ibid., 109.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid., 102.

current angst worthwhile."[315] Furthermore, the authors point out that "making the vision

more tangible" [316] will help the leader to avoid becoming the symbol of conflict and a

"target of resistance."[317]

Vision is an important aspect in the adaptive leadership framework and something

that ties *Leadership on the Line* together with Heifetz and Linsky's follow-up book, *The*

Practice of Adaptive Leadership: *Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and*

the World. "Effective visions have accuracy and not just imagination and appeal," write

co-authors Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky. "An incisive statement of the key issues that

underlie a messy, complexified discussion orients people and helps focus attention

productively."[318] Furthermore, the authors point out,

> Defining a shared purpose is often a challenging and painful exercise because
> some narrower interests will have to be sacrificed in the interests of the whole.
> But it is also a valuable corrective. When you face a tough decision, or when
> prospects for success look bleak, reminding one another what you are trying to do
> provides guidance, sustenance, and inspiration.[319]

This second Heifetz and Linsky book, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, adds

the insights of an additional author, Alexander Grashow. Grashow is the managing

director at Cambridge Leadership Associates, a global leadership development practice.

The purpose of this book dovetails with *Leadership on the Line* but seeks to provide

"practical application" [320] and resources to help leaders cultivate adaptive leadership in

their work. [321]

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[315] Ibid., 120.
[316] Ibid., 121-122.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 113.
[319] Ibid., 40.
[320] Ibid., 9.
[321] Ibid., 8.

In this second work the authors continue to assert that in order to bring about adaptive change, leaders need to orchestrate conflict. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky write, "Orchestrating conflict is a discipline," requiring different degrees of "courage;"[322] it "is not easy;" however, orchestrating conflict is "essential when an organization is falling short of its aspirations."[323] Again, the authors insist conflict and tension need not be destructive in essence, but rather constructive in the long run. Orchestrating conflict requires leaders to tolerate "a lot of hostility"[324] because "forward motion in organizations and communities is also a product of differences that generate creative tension and that, properly orchestrated, will resolve into a more integrated whole."[325]

As in *Leadership on the Line*, the authors equate orchestrating conflict with raising and lowing the temperature in a room.[326] In this way a leader can keep "the intensity of the disequilibrium" generated by the conflict "high enough to motivate people to arrive at creative next steps . . . but not so high that it drives them away or makes it impossible for them to function."[327] The authors go on to suggest that adaptive leadership requires a willingness to stir things up. They write,

> Exercising adaptive leadership requires that you be willing and competent at stepping into the unknown and stirring things up. Most people prefer stability to chaos, clarity to confusion, and orderliness to conflict. But to practice leadership, you need to accept that you are in the business of generating chaos, confusion, and conflict, for yourself and others around you.[328]

In both books the authors encourage leaders to be aware of the temperature in the system. At the same time they speak to the necessity of self-knowledge and well-being.

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[322] Ibid., 150-151.
[323] Ibid., 149-151.
[324] Ibid., 150.
[325] Ibid., 151.
[326] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky,160; Heifetz and Linsky, 107-116.
[327] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 160.
[328] Ibid., 206.

In fact, *Leadership on the Line* informs leaders, "we bring ourselves down by forgetting to pay attention to ourselves." The authors note that exercising leadership is not simply something outside of leaders, but a "personal activity" that challenges leaders "intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically."[329] In bolder terms, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* calls leaders to "Take care of yourself rather than work to exhaustion . . . not as an indulgence but to ensure the purposes you join have the best chance of being achieved."[330] The authors encourage leaders to engage their hearts[331] while doing the work to "connect with the values, beliefs, and anxieties of the people you are trying to move."[332]

Both works call for the orchestration of conflict in order to lead people to change values, beliefs, and behaviors, and thus change a system. At the same time Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky address the importance of vision, purpose, self-care, and the well-being of the leader. This is something that Dean Williams calls attention to in his book, *Real Leadership: Helping People and Organizations Face Their Toughest Challenges*.

As the title suggests, the purpose of *Real Leadership* is to help organizations, communities, and nations interested in "improving the human condition . . . face their toughest challenges."[333] To do so Williams focuses readers' attention on "real leadership," which, he asserts, "gets people to confront reality and change values, habits, practices, and priorities in order to deal with the real threat or opportunity the people

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[329] Heifetz and Linsky, 163.
[330] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 289.
[331] Ibid., 40.
[332] Ibid., 38.
[333] Williams, ix.

face."[334] To achieve this goal, Williams points out that leaders must first recognize the value of conflict and tension. Williams writes,

> Creative work by nature is intensely emotional, often turbulent, and riddled with conflict . . . A degree of tension, and even conflict, is necessary in a creative process; it should actually be encouraged, not avoided, because it can generate the sparks that allow for new ideas to develop. The challenge is to keep everyone in the room long enough to achieve a breakthrough and ensure they do not flee.[335]

Williams, a faculty member of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in the Center for Public Leadership, agrees in principle with Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky. He asserts that in order to deal with the real problem, real leadership "orchestrates social learning in regard to complex problems and demanding challenges"[336] even if the process is "painful or disturbing."[337] In his view, "It is easy to be self-righteous about one's values and goals, and fail to realize that the work of progress always resides with the people—in their values, habits, practices and priorities."[338]

Williams suggests, "The first challenge of leadership is to get people to wake up to the fact there is a problem."[339] Much like Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, Williams characterizes calling attention to the problem an activist challenge, that is, a challenge in which there "is an unwillingness to change . . . values or thinking to accommodate some aspect of reality . . . people are in denial, resistant, ignorant, or, for whatever reason,

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[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid., 182.
[336] Ibid., 5.
[337] Ibid., 11.
[338] Ibid., 26.
[339] Ibid., 59.

simply refuse to budge."[340] While these situations are dangerous for leaders who desire to

lead significant change,[341] Williams asserts that,

> Activist leadership is needed because things are not moving, problems are being
> ignored, and people are playing it too safe in the name of maintaining harmonious
> relations, keeping the peace, and appearing loyal. For the group or organization, if
> leadership is not exercised to get the people to confront reality, danger awaits.[342]

The leader, according to Williams, needs to utilize the power of provocation. He

suggests "the power to provoke metaphorically 'slaps them in the face' with an

infuriating and jarring challenge to their beliefs, their certainties, and their prevailing

assumptions."[343] An intentional provocation "stirs people to action by forcing them to

confront what they cannot see or refuse to see . . . Provocative intervention might throw

the people into a temporary state of disarray, but if properly orchestrated, it also generates

a tremendous opportunity for deep learning."[344]

Williams, like Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, recognizes the dynamics

provocation has on an organization. He asserts that leaders should be sensitive to the

organizational culture and not run roughshod over positive elements that should be

acknowledged and preserved.

> Often in their rush to change, leaders do not give adequate attention to what must
> be preserved, honored, and cherished. This is a vital aspect of leading a
> transition—to ensure that essential aspects of the culture are not discarded but
> kept to enrich the life of the group and to maintain continuity and well-being.[345]

Williams further suggests that in the process of getting people to face what they

do not want to face—through evocative and provocative interventions—the leader puts

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[340] Ibid., 62.

[341] Ibid., 63.

[342] Ibid., 64.

[343] Ibid., 72.

[344] Ibid.

[345] Ibid., 134.

him or herself in a vulnerable position, since a group can get defensive, even hostile. Therefore, the ability to read the dynamics of the setting and combine it with smart strategy is essential to success.[346]

Williams, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky are joined by Patrick Lencioni in asserting that essential aspects of conflict and tension in bringing about significant change. Lencioni is an expert in executive team development and organizational health; he is also the founder and president of the Table Group. His book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, is written to inform leaders, and clergy in particular, about behavioral pitfalls[347] that impact leaders and organizations. One of the pitfalls Lencioni highlights is the fear of conflict.

Lencioni suggests, "All great relationships, the ones that last over time, require productive conflict in order to grow."[348] Productive conflict, according to Lencioni, is conflict which is, "ideological . . . limited to concepts and ideas, and avoids personality-focused, mean-spirited attacks."[349] Both ideological and personality-driven conflict is filled with "passion, emotion, and frustration."[350] Lencioni agrees with the previous authors in asserting the importance of helping team members see that "conflict is productive,"[351] especially as it relates to building a cohesive organization. He points out that leaders may have to become "'miner[s] of conflict'—someone who extracts buried disagreements within the team and sheds the light of day on them. They must have the

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[346] Ibid., 74.
[347] Lencioni, viii.
[348] Ibid., 202.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Ibid., 203-204.

courage and confidence to call out sensitive issues and force team members to work through them."[352]

John Kotter, professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School, agrees with Lencioni, Williams, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. In his book, *Leading Change*, Kotter focuses his attention on helping leaders understand why transformative change efforts often fail. Kotter warns, "A good rule of thumb in a major change effort is: Never underestimate the magnitude of the forces that reinforce complacency and that help maintain the status quo."[353] To overcome complacency, Kotter recommends establishing a shared sense of urgency: "By far the biggest mistake people make when trying to change organizations is to plunge ahead without establishing a high enough sense of urgency. . . This error is fatal because transformations always fail to achieve their objectives when complacency levels are high."[354]

Kotter acknowledges that "Creating a strong sense of urgency usually demands bold or even risky actions" that "tend to increase conflict and to create anxiety, at least at first."[355] However, the risk is worthwhile because, as Kotter explains, "leaders have confidence that the forces unleashed can be directed to achieve important ends."[356]

Leaders, Kotter asserts, can create "artificial crises rather than waiting for something to happen"[357] in order to lead change. At the same time, Kotter agrees with Heifetz, Grashow, Linksky, and Williams concerning the importance of vision when using a crisis in order to lead change. Kotter writes,

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[352] Ibid., 204.
[353] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 42.
[354] Ibid., 4.
[355] Ibid., 43.
[356] Ibid., 42-43.
[357] Ibid., 46.

Of the remaining elements that are always found in successful transformations, none is more important than a sensible vision . . . Vision plays a key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people. Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve . . . people will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they think the potential benefits of change are attractive and unless they really believe that a transformation is possible.[358]

Mark Gerzon, president of Mediators Foundation, agrees with Kotter. In his book, *Leading through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities,* Gerzon is focused on providing the "skills of the mediator" for "every person who wants to deal more effectively and creatively with the conflict in his or her life."[359] The author has leaders in a variety of fields in mind, including those within churches, adding that they "will become more effective if . . . [they] have mediation skills."[360] At the same time, Gerzon admits, "No book, method, or training can 'fix' conflict . . . Like the sun or the tides, conflict is a powerful force that only a fool pretends to have mastered."[361]

While Gerzon's purpose is not the orchestrated use of conflict, he does agree with Heifetz and Kotter. He suggests that leadership requires "more than ordinary 'management skills,' or 'conflict resolution,' 'problem solving,' or basic 'management skills.'" Leadership requires "an integral vision of where the organization is going and a strategy for getting there." Without vision, "conflicts would eat away at the vitality and energy" of an organization; however, with vision, "conflicts could become a vital and catalytic part of the organization's strategy for achieving its goals."[362]

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[358] Ibid., 7, 9.

[359] Mark Gerzon, *Leading through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities*, Leadership for the Common Good (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006), 11.

[360] Ibid.

[361] Ibid., 13.

[362] Ibid., 67-68.

A clearly articulated vision, the assertion of tension and resistance, and recognition of conflict's importance in leading change all tie the contributions of the authors in this subsection together. To some degree these elements are found in the orchestration in American history subcategory as well. While the literature categories examined thus far may inform a long-term pastors understanding of leading change, the authors examined in the following section specifically address ecclesiastical leaders.

Orchestration & Pastoral Leadership

In his book, *Transforming Church: Bringing Out the Good to Get to Great*, Kevin Ford affirms the orchestrated use of conflict in order to lead change within the local church. Ford, a managing partner with TAG Consulting, believes churches that do not go through "transformational change"[363] that is focused on their mission will "die."[364] Thus, the book is about "churches that have the courage to embrace change and to confront adaptive issues head-on."[365] The work of Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky clearly influenced Ford.

The challenge, according to Ford, is that the attitude most churches have toward conflict is based on the "lie that change can occur without conflict."[366] This tendency is further exacerbated, Ford claims, when pastors make the "mistake of believing that part of their job is to protect people from pain—most often by minimizing conflict."[367]

However, in order to lead what Ford terms transformational change, a leader must be able to control the pace of the change process. Ford suggests, "There are times when a leader must slow down the change process to regain authority. And there are times when

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[363] Ford, 19.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid., 135.
[367] Ibid., 175-176.

a leader must orchestrate conflict to begin challenging expectations."[368] Like Heifetz,

Grashow, Linsky, and Lencioni, Ford affirms, "Change cannot occur without healthy

conflict . . . your task is to raise conflict."[369]

Ford is focused on church leaders and affirms that most pastors, "by their own

admission, lack change-leadership skills."[370] The change-resistant atmosphere present

within most churches further complicates the process of leading constructive change,[371]

because it is an environment that is "committed to love and peace," where "it seems

disagreeable to disagree."[372] Ford maintains, however, "when a church discourages

conflict, it fails to make the kinds of changes necessary for ongoing health and

relevance."[373]

> An effective leader may have to orchestrate conflict, introduce competing values,
> or close down a 'good thing' in order to raise the temperature. If the resistance is
> too great because people fear loss, the leaders will narrow the dialogue to a
> specific issue so the pace of change is more realistic . . . Transformation, then, in
> a fundamental sense, means conflict . . . Change follows conflict and conflict
> follows change . . . Resistance and change go hand in hand.[374]

While the previous subcategories promote orchestration of conflict as key for

significant change within social, political, and corporate arenas, Ford contends conflict

orchestration is necessary for pastoral leaders too. He encourages ecclesial leaders to

"Embrace conflict and ambiguity," because, "change only occurs near the edge of

chaos."[375] Ford is not alone in his view; Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Harold

Furr join him.

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[368] Ibid., 139.
[369] Ibid., 161.
[370] Ibid., 29.
[371] Ibid., 30.
[372] Ibid., 208.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Ibid., 214-215.
[375] Ibid., 234.

The authors of *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey,* contend with Ford that, "Church leaders must acknowledge that tension is a necessary part of the process . . . it is clear that creative tension generates some level of discomfort that drives the change process. Leaders must embrace that reality."[376] Herrington, et al., suggest two aspects of creative tension: generating tension and sustaining it. Leaders are responsible for both. "Creative tension," according to the authors, "is generated when the gap between reality and vision is made clear. Without this sharp contrast, tension will not occur."[377] The generation of this tension "is the assignment of leaders" both "in their own lives and in the life of the congregation."[378]

At the same time, "it is the role of leaders to guide the process of developing and communicating a clear picture of current reality and a clear vision of God's preferred future."[379] Agreeing with Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, the authors assert that creative tension "occurs when a compelling vision of the future and a clear picture of current reality are held in continuous juxtaposition."[380] This juxtaposition will lead to change because the desire to change,

> …is driven when a significant gap exists between a vision of the future that people sincerely desire to achieve and a clear sense that they are not achieving that vision. As this recognition grows, so does their willingness to change their perspective and to try new approaches. This is the point at which they are experiencing creative tension. [381]

Leaders must sustain this creative tension while, as Heifetz, Ford, and Bullard also suggest, distinguishing between crisis or destructive tension,[382] and keeping things

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[376] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 208.
[377] Ibid., 101.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Ibid., 100.
[382] Ibid., 101.

"strong enough to motivate change, but not so intense that it becomes destructive."[383] The authors suggest that "The discipline to generate and sustain this driving force is indispensable for change leaders."[384]

However, Herrington and his co-authors recognize that "Human nature moves individuals to reduce creative tension." It is important for leaders to realize that "Change efforts fail, in part because the leaders are unable or unwilling to sustain creative tension long enough to allow learning and change to occur."[385]

This observation is something that is shared by Peter Steinke, whose insights regarding organizational systems were highlighted earlier. While not necessarily advocating conflict orchestration as a tool for change, Steinke, regarded as a congregational systems expert, does suggest, "A conflict free congregation is incongruent not only with reality but even more with biblical theology."[386]

The central focus of Steinke's book is to be a resource for congregational leaders during "anxious times." As such, the author asserts, "The last people we would expect to create a general disturbance are the congregational leaders themselves. However, a time may come when you, the leader, will have to challenge the congregation, upsetting its balance."[387] Steinke observes that congregational leaders should ask if a disturbance taught the congregation anything, and whether anything changed; if not, then the "suffering will have yielded no benefit."[388]

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[383] Ibid.
[384] Ibid., 100.
[385] Ibid., 107.
[386] Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006), 107.
[387] Ibid., 119.
[388] Ibid., 101.

Steinke, like Heifetz, Grashow, Linsky, and Ford, suggests that leaders will at times need to "rock the emotional boat."[389] Using the language of adaptive leadership, Steinke writes,

> To recognize and treat a problem as an adaptive challenge will rock the emotional boat. Leaders cannot expect members to change without objection. People expect their leaders to offer certainty, not to disturb them with unknowns . . . without the willingness to challenge people's expectations of quick and easy solutions, a leader will be subservient to those expectations . . . if no behavior pattern or viewpoint has significantly changed and deep problems have not been addressed, the problems will persist and the boat must be rocked . . . Self-management is critical, even more so in the boat-rocking times.[390]

James Hunter, author of *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, agrees with Steinke. Hunter is concerned about fostering a theology of faithful presence which "calls Christians to enact the shalom of God in the circumstances in which God has placed them and to actively seek it on behalf of others. This is a vision for the entire church."[391] The author begins with the premise that "Christians share a world with others and that they must contribute to its overall flourishing."[392] Hunter's practice of faithful presence suggests that the mission of the church is the mission of shalom. He asserts this "burden of shalom falls to church leaders" and the "obligations of shalom fall to all of us to the extent that we wield any influence at all."[393] Hunter recognizes that the practice of faithful presence is one that will be contested, by both the church and society. "Many Christians would undoubtedly object to this broader understanding of faith, hope, and love and even more, object to creating common space in which those outside the Christian community can also

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[389] Ibid., 128.
[390] Ibid., 128,134.
[391] Hunter, 278.
[392] Ibid., 279.
[393] Ibid., 269.

appropriate meaning, purpose, beauty, and belonging."[394] Furthermore, asserts Hunter,

"Christians cannot demand for themselves what they would deny others. A right for one

is a right for another and a responsibility for all."[395]In addition, Hunter argues,

> To enact a vision of human flourishing based in the qualities of life that Jesus modeled will invariably challenge the given structures of social order. In this light, there is no true leadership without putting at risk one's time, wealth, reputation, and position. In a related way, the practice of leadership is selfless in character.[396]

Aware of the risks and the objections, Hunter affirms the role of conflict and

resistance. He writes, "culture itself represents a terrain in which boundaries are contested

and in which ideals, interests, and power struggle . . . a realm in which institutions and

their agents seek to defend one understanding of the world against alternatives."[397] At the

same time conflict is a "permanent fixture"[398] when it comes to bringing about cultural

change.

Critical resistance is both creative and constructive for the church, because it

allows the church to resist "late modernity and its dominant institutions and carriers," in

order "to retrieve the good to which modern institutions and ideas implicitly or explicitly

aspire."[399] It is important, according to Hunter, for the church to purposefully resist in

order to "oppose those ideals and structures that undermine human flourishing, and to

offer constructive alternatives for the realization of a better way."[400]

The need for critical resistance applies to leadership within the church as well. He writes,

> Nowhere is the task of critical resistance more urgent than in the church itself for the ways that it too has accommodated to the spirit of the late modern age. St.

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[394] Ibid., 264-265.
[395] Ibid., 263.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ibid., 43.
[398] Ibid., 44.
[399] Ibid., 235.
[400] Ibid.

> Peter is right to say, "judgment begins with the household of God" (I Pet. 4:17). Antithesis, then, means that the church's structures and its own engagement with the world must be continually scrutinized. Here especially, critical resistance must always be creative and constructive, guided by devotion to the beloved community.[401]

Hunter's view of critical resistance is unique in its application. Nevertheless, the previous area of review consisted of works that focused both on church leadership and leadership in general. The researcher now turns to a final area of review, the Bible. Within this area of literature the researcher will be examining selected texts in order to understand how the Bible reflects an orchestrated use of conflict in order to lead significant change.

The Bible and the Orchestration of Conflict

The final area of literature to be reviewed is the Bible. This area presented a challenge to the researcher given that the majority of texts written related to conflict and the Bible are focused on management toward restoration. The researcher wanted to understand how the Bible shaped each pastor's understanding of conflict, especially as it relates to the strategically orchestrated use of conflict to lead significant change.

Several texts were examined from the Old and New Testament. First, the researcher wanted to see if the Bible provided insights into conflict as a normative experience for various men and women. Second, the researcher examined texts, using insights from Heifetz and Linsky, to see if there were occasions within the Bible where conflict was orchestrated to bring about significant change. The researcher then selected representative texts that highlight an orchestrated use of conflict to lead significant change.

It is important to note the majority of the texts are from the gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. Given that Jesus' disciples are called to look "to Jesus, the

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[401] Ibid., 236.

founder and perfecter of our faith," (Hebrews 12:2 ESV) it seemed appropriate to

examine how Christ encountered and used conflict to lead significant change. In addition,

a brief table is provided that presents texts from the New Testament. The summaries

provide brief insights into how Jesus used conflict to bring about significant change in the

lives of those within a system. In order to highlight the specific area of change, the

researcher has utilized the definition of adaptive change from Ron Heifetz and Marty

Linsky.

> To lead is to live dangerously because when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear—their daily habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking—with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility . . . Adaptive change stimulates resistance because it challenges people's habits, beliefs, and values. It asks them to take a loss, experience uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures. Because adaptive change forces people to question and perhaps redefine aspects of their identity, it also challenges their sense of competence.[402]

This definition is also used to examine the ways that Jesus orchestrated and used conflict.

Jesus, Conflict and Change

Peter Steinke, although not specifically advocating conflict orchestration, stated

that Jesus "upset people emotionally."[403] In fact, he states that the life of Jesus and thus

Christianity "takes place against a backdrop of suspicion, opposition, and crucifixion"

and is "underlined with conflict."[404] There is so much conflict in the story of Christ and

his interaction with religious leaders that "Tension leads to crucifixion."[405]

Steinke is not alone in this observation of Jesus. Herrington, et al., also suggest

that Jesus "was the master at generating and sustaining creative tension."[406] These

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[402] Heifetz and Linsky, 2, 30.
[403] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* 107.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 101.

authors point out the ways in which Jesus countered the idea of "the righteousness of the Pharisees" with the "righteousness of the Kingdom (Matt 5:20)."[407] In addition Jesus purposefully challenged the "image of a leader" and "their notions of what was most important in life (Luke 12:16-21)."[408] At the same time, Jesus "sustained this tension in the face of opposition on all sides."[409]

These authors seem to suggest that Jesus was strategic in orchestrating the use of conflict and tension in order to lead significant change. However, it is important to examine the biblical accounts to gain a more complete perspective. The following section will review a number of texts that record Jesus' approach to working towards adaptive change in the hearts and minds of his listeners.

Jesus & Circle-Making: Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

In the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus challenges the ways in which people think about relationships and working for peace/ shalom. In his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Frederick Dale Bruner connects the word peacemaker with the idea of making a circle. The notion of peace that Jesus is referring to is not "inner tranquility" or "an absence of war," but rather "biblical shalom."[410] The way to understand biblical shalom is to think of a circle in which every relationship is in order. "It means communal well being in every direction and in every relation. The

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[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, revised and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2007), 1:176.

person in the center of the circle is related justly to every point on the circumference of the circle."[411]

Nicholas Wolterstorff contends biblical shalom means that "each person enjoys justice," and dwells "at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature."[412] He asks, "Can the conclusion be avoided that not only is shalom God's cause in the world but all who believe in Jesus will, along with him, engage in the works of shalom?"[413]

Bruner highlights the conflictual nature of Jesus' ministry. Even as Jesus affirms the work of "shalom making," his life was not especially peaceful. He "had to pass through a spiritual war with [his] family, the devout, and Bible teachers."[414] With this in mind, Bruner suggests, "Peacemaking for Christians . . . is defined by the life and death of Jesus. The way Jesus does peace shapes the way we do it. This way is rough."[415]

Jesus and Racism: Luke 10:25-37

> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take

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[411] Ibid., 177.
[412] Wolterstorff, 69.
[413] Ibid., 72.
[414] Bruner, 178.
[415] Ibid.

care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'
Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell
among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said
to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Jesus challenged their beliefs and ways of thinking regarding another race. He did

so creatively, by illustrating what it looks like to obey God's command to love one's

neighbor. Jesus turned up the heat in the situation by first making the hero a man from a

despised people group. He also turned up the heat when he asked the lawyer to answer

the question, "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man

who fell among the robbers?"

Jesus Confronts Grumbling Scribes: Mark 3:1-6

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And
they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they
might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here."
And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to
save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with
anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your
hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and
immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.
(See also Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-1)

Jesus challenged the behavior, values, and practice of the scribes. The text

highlights the fact that they wanted "to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so

that they might accuse him." It is also stated in the text that Jesus called to the man,

intending to heal him. Jesus asked the scribes directly, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do

good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" This could be seen as a provocative question.

It is apparent from the text that Christ wanted to impact the hearts of the scribes and that

he was both angry and grieved at their "hardness of heart." It is also clear from the text

that Jesus knew what the scribes wanted to accuse him and purposefully confronted them.

Jesus confronts grumbling Pharisees: Matthew 9:1-8

> And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"— he then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. (See also Mark 2:1-12)

This text highlights Jesus' use of conflict in exposing "evil" in the hearts of scribes. On the one hand Jesus could have ignored what the scribes were thinking and saying to one another. However, Jesus spoke directly to them, addressing the issue head-on. He took the opportunity to push against their way of thinking, their behavior, and their beliefs regarding his authority to "forgive sins." The result was that many in the crowd "glorified God."

Jesus Allows A Rich Man to Sit in Tension: Luke 18:18-24

> And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. (See also Matt 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22).

In this text Jesus allows a wealthy man to sit in tension. Apparently the man had done well at keeping the law, especially as it regarded relationships to others. However, the list that Jesus provides does not include the first four commandments related to his relationship with God. Jesus exposed the man's issue, out of love for him, but he did not soothe or ease it. Rather he left the man to deal with what he had said. In this way Jesus

challenged the man's values, loyalties, habits, and way of thinking with regard to wealth and his relationship with God.

Jesus and a Woman Caught in Adultery: John 8:1-11

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

In this text the scribes come to Jesus with a woman they have caught in the act of adultery, an offense punishable by death. The text makes it clear that they were interested in catching Jesus in order to bring a charge against him. However, the text seems to support the notion that Christ used this situation as an opportunity to challenge their way of thinking of others and self. He presented them with an option of "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Jesus challenged their view of sin and sinners, giving them a glimpse into their hearts; he also forced them to examine their practice of stoning out of judgment as if they are without sin.

Jesus and the Boldness to Confront an Erring Brother: Matthew 18:15-20

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

> Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

This text highlights the fact that Jesus intends his people to be marked by a willingness to speak into the lives of erring brother. That is, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone." This text seems to support a change related to behavior, habit, and way of thinking. It also seems to support the notion that Jesus intends for his people to be willing to confront one another, and in a sense, be willing to orchestrate conflict in order to promote significant change in the life of another believer.[416]

Moses, the Exodus and Turning up the Heat: Exodus 5:1-2

> Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."

God called Moses to return to Egypt with the intention of using him to lead his people out of slavery and out of Egypt. To do so God sent Moses and Aaron to ask Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. Each time Moses and Aaron went Pharaoh, he rejected their request. Each time God seemingly turned up the heat with various plagues. God himself seems to orchestrate conflict in order to lead to significant changes for Israel. The significant changes seem to include a change of behavior, practice, loyalty, and way of thinking for both the Egyptians and Israel.

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[416] Ibid., 221-223.

Introduction of Table

The following table is provided to highlight additional texts. In the following sample conflict is both normative and used to bring about significant change to specific systems. The same criteria are utilized to define adaptive or significant change.

Text	Adaptive Change
Mark 10:1-12 Jesus confronts divorce practices And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment . . .What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."	Challenged practice, beliefs, behavior regarding marriage and divorce. Note that in traditional wedding service the text "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" is often used.
Luke 10:25-38 The Good Samaritan And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."	Challenged views regarding racial and religious practices, values, and beliefs toward Samaritans.
Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus and the Command to Forgive from the Heart Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times . . . So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."	After the command in Matt 18:15-20 regarding speaking to a brother who has sinned against you, Peter asks how often a person is required to forgive. Jesus challenges the view that there is a limit to forgiveness and says forgiveness is to be from the heart.

Matthew 12:22-37 Jesus and a Brood of Vipers Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." Knowing their thoughts, he said to them . . . "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."	Belief, behavior, way of thinking, values, and habits. Clearly Jesus stirs things up with these Pharisees. He speaks hard words into their lives, exposing their attitudes toward him and toward something good that God has done.

In an effort to understand what informs a long-term pastor's understanding of how to lead significant change, the subject of conflict has been briefly reviewed. The previous section attempted to show the ways in which the literature contributes to the understanding of this topic. In the next section, the methodology used to study this topic will be presented.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated tension, resistance, and conflict in order to lead significant change. The assumption of this study is that learning takes place in the context of ministry, particularly during critical incidents that shape a pastor's understanding. Therefore, a study was conducted utilizing qualitative research to allow the researcher to get pastors' viewpoints regarding their experiences and what they learned from those experiences.

In order to obtain the information needed for this study, methods consistent with qualitative analysis were utilized. This chapter explores this methodology and provides details regarding the study's design and how data was collected and analyzed.

Design of Study

Qualitative analysis assumes that "meaning is embedded in people's experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions."[417] The "key concern" of qualitative analysis is to investigate the research questions from the participant's perspectives, rather the researcher's perspectives.[418] Nonetheless, the researcher is the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis,"[419] and must modify her approach in order to be "responsive to the context."[420] This posture of

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[417] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 6.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Ibid., 7.
[420] Ibid.

flexibility and responsiveness enables the researcher to better derive meaning and understanding from the participants' experiences and to consider the "total context" of a particular incident.[421]

It is this human aspect, or the allowance for "everyday-world situations"[422] of qualitative research, that makes this methodology so appropriate for looking into the question of how long-term pastors have orchestrated tension, resistance, and conflict in leading significant change. Qualitative research allows a researcher to examine experiences relevant to the research questions person-by-person and case-by-case. This methodology allows the researcher to better understand each research participant's context by allowing them to give full responses to research questions and visiting them where they work and live when possible.[423]

A qualitative approach allows the researcher to access insights from each participant. It also allows for greater flexibility as the researcher spends time listening in order to gain an understanding of the research subject's insights and experiences. The meaning that each subject ties to their experiences provides the data that helps the researcher gain an appreciation and understanding regarding the item of interest, in this case the ways in which the pastor understands the orchestration of tension, resistance, and conflict. Sharan B. Merriam helps to clarify this aspect of qualitative research.

> The philosophical assumption, as I noted earlier, upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.[424]

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[421] Ibid.

[422] Ibid., 17.

[423] Ibid., 7.

[424] Ibid., 6.

By listening to a pastor share from her experience, the researcher is able to collect data that takes the pastor's ministry context into account. At the same time, the researcher serves as the "primary instrument" for both data collection and analysis.[425] The researcher takes an "inductive stance," and is then able to "derive meaning from the data"[426] in an effort to develop a theory. Again, Merriam is helpful, explaining, "Qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gained in the field. In contrast to deductive researchers who "hope to find data to match a theory, inductive researchers hope to find a theory that explains their data."[427] Various mechanisms are used in order to facilitate gathering data for inductive research. However, for this study, the use of a singular experience called a critical incident was utilized.

Broadly speaking, the critical incident method involves asking each participant to speak about an event that has helped to shape their understanding of the world. Zeroing in on a specific critical incident is designed to allow pastors to focus their attention on one area while providing insights about their understanding of the event itself. For this study, eight pastors were interviewed separately and asked to speak about an incident in which they led significant change.

Participant Sample Selection

The eight pastors were chosen using purposive or criterion-based sampling. This sampling method was chosen because it allowed the researcher to use essential attributes to locate appropriate research subjects.[428] The first criterion was that the pastors share

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[425] Ibid., 7.
[426] Ibid., 17.
[427] Ibid., 7.
[428] Ibid., 61.

some common characteristics. The first element is that all eight pastors serve within the Presbyterian, and thus Reformed, tradition. This factor was of interest to the researcher given that it represents his own tradition.

Additionally, the pastors selected were "long-term" pastors who have served in full-time ministry for a minimum of seven years, though not necessarily at the same church or in the same position. This element allowed the researcher to gather data from pastors who have a broad scope of critical incidents on which to draw from.

It was also important that pastors were currently serving or had previously served in an established church rather than in a church plant. The researcher defined an established church as a congregation of any size that has been in continual existence as a church for a minimum of three years. Limiting the research pool to pastors who have served in established churches is significant because established churches, even those that are relatively young, have established beliefs, values, behaviors, and practices. The purpose of this study is to learn how long-term pastors have led significant change, defined as a change in beliefs, behaviors, values and practices. Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky provide helpful insight, "Leadership addresses emotional as well as conceptual work. When you lead people through difficult change, you take them on an emotional roller coaster because you are asking them to relinquish something—a belief, a value, a behavior—that they hold dear."[429]

The second criterion for selecting the participants is a counter-point to the first. While it was important for the pastors to share come common elements, such as being Presbyterian, it was equally important that they have a range of experiences. Thus while all eight pastors are Presbyterians, they represent three denominations: Presbyterian

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[429] Heifetz and Linsky, 117.

Church in America (PCA), Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), and Presbyterian Church United States of America (PCUSA). The pastors were all seminary-trained, but they represent various seminaries and have different levels of training beyond a Masters of Divinity degree. Though all are from the United States, they are from different regions of the country. The selected participants have held various pastoral roles and have served congregations of varying sizes.

These factors were important because they provided the researcher insight from varied perspectives. The diversity of backgrounds was, however, balanced by the narrow constraint of the first criterion. Combined, these elements provided data regarding leadership and the way it is practiced across educational, denominational, demographic, and geographic lines.

The eight pastors selected for this study were recruited through networking. The researcher consulted pastors, seminary faculty, church administrators, elders, and members in order to produce a list of potential research subjects. The researcher also utilized his own relational networks. Once the list was complete, the researcher contacted the pastors and arranged for an interview.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol. This less structured arrangement allowed the pastors to provide meaning from their own experience rather than having the researcher define terms and experience. This approach closely follows the spirit of qualitative research. A semi-structured interview protocol allows the "individual respondents [to] define the world in unique ways," which helps the

researcher to be open to new ideas he had not considered before conducting his research.[430]

The pastors were interviewed based on a schedule, with sufficient time spaced between each interview. This meant that the researcher made initial contact with the pastor to offer a choice of dates and times. The convenience of the interviewee was the principle concern of the researcher. The researcher also attempted to conduct the interviews in person. However, given the geographic element, several of the interviews were conducted over the telephone or via Skype. The schedule was based upon the general availability of the interviewee.

The research questions (RQs) represent three areas of interest to the researcher. During the first interview the researcher made notes as to how to improve the questions to provide clarity, without leading or defining terms. The spacing of the interviews allowed the researcher to make necessary adjustments between each interview. The pastors were not asked the RQs, but rather a series of questions that were based on the RQs. Following is a brief sample of the questions that were asked, each under the heading of an RQ.

1. What informs a long-term pastor's understanding of leading change within the local church?
   a. If you were designing a seminary course on leadership, what would you want to teach your students specifically about how to lead change?
   b. How would you define significant change?
   c. How would you rank yourself as a strategic leader, specifically as it relates to how you understand significant change?
   d. Why do you think some efforts to lead change fail?
      i. What part does conflict avoidance play in failed leadership?
   e. How do you assess what "things need to change" within your church?
   f. What role does vision play in leading change?

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[430] Merriam, 74.

2. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors experienced conflict as a result of leading change?
   a. As you think on your life in ministry, can you think of a time (an incident) when you led change where you experienced resistance, tension, or conflict?
   b. Why do you think there was resistance, tension, or conflict?
   c. Did you expect it?
   d. How did you react to it?
   e. How prepared were you for tension, resistance, and conflict with regard to pastoral leadership?
   f. Are tension, resistance, and conflict a sign of leadership failure?

3. In what ways, and to what extent have long-term pastors orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change?
   a. When you think about the work of Christ, do you see him using resistance, tension, and conflict to bring about significant change in the lives of people?
   b. How does your understanding of Christ's use of resistance, tension, and conflict shape your understanding of your role as pastor?
   c. Have you intentionally "stirred things up" as a part of leading change? Can you think of a time in your ministry when you have "orchestrated" tension, resistance and conflict in order to lead change?
   d. Do you think it is a good idea for pastors to orchestrate/use/manage/leverage conflict in order to bring about change? Why? Why not?

The interviews were conducted under the promise of confidentiality. Each participant signed a research subject consent form, and was given a copy to keep for his records. The researcher kept a copy as well. In an effort to further protect the identities of each of the participants, their real names and the names of the institution they serve will not be given. Each participant has been given an alias for purposes of this report. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed to a Microsoft Word document using the software program Express Scribe. Once the interviews were transcribed, the data was analyzed. At the end of the research, the interview recordings will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

The data from these interviews was collected using the constant comparative method of analysis. Merriam is helpful in understanding this method. She defines the constant comparative method as a process of "comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences . . . the overall object of this analysis is to seek patterns in the data. These patterns are arranged in relationship to each other in the building of a grounded theory."[431]

Each interview was listened to, transcribed, and reviewed. The researcher looked for key words, ideas, and word images that linked insights together by agreement or disagreement. In essence the researcher worked to compare each interview. As Merriam explains, these comparisons "lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. Comparisons are constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization until a theory can be formulated."[432] Categories were arranged in a Microsoft Word document table and coded. This allowed the researcher to arrange data in order to see an emerging pattern in an effort to make sense of the data.[433]

Researcher Position

As Merriam points out, the researcher is the "primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and as such, can respond to the situation"[434] that arises during the interviewing process. At the same time, the researcher is also limited in some respects simply because people are given to mistakes and biases.[435] In this case, the researcher is coming from the position of a pastor within the Presbyterian tradition. As such, he has a

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[431] Ibid., 18.
[432] Ibid., 159.
[433] Ibid., 178.
[434] Ibid., 20.
[435] Ibid.

vested interest in the insights of long-term pastors who have led significant change, particularly the ways in which they have orchestrated tension, resistance, and conflict to do so. It is the position of the researcher that the mission of the church is bound up in Christ's commandments to love God,[436] each other,[437] and one's neighbor.[438] The researcher believes this mission is best understood from the perspective of shalom, or as Nicholas Wolterstorff contends, the *missio Dei,* and thus the mission of the church.[439] The researcher, while holding a highly conservative view—biblically, socially, theologically and politically—believes that the mission of shalom entails the church being concerned and actively working for the flourishing for those in the church and those outside.

Study Limitations

Due to limited resources and time, only eight pastors have been interviewed. The researcher met personally with five of the eight pastors for a face-to-face interview. However, due to the costs associated with travel, the researcher utilized a telephone and Skype to conduct interviews with three of the pastors.

The eight pastors are from within the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. All live within the United States. The pastors attended a number of different seminaries. Limiting the diversity of theological positions of the participants strengthened the research focus by providing insight into how a particular tradition leads change, especially in relationship to tension, resistance, and conflict. By focusing on the pastors from this tradition, the researcher has been able to gather data and knowledge of best

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[436] Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:27.
[437] Lev. 19:18; Ps. 85:10; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:10, 13:8; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 1 John 3:11, 23.
[438] Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8.
[439] Wolterstorff, 72.

practices through an existing network. The focus of this study is limited to gathering data on how these pastors have strategically orchestrated tension, resistance, and conflict in order to lead significant change. Many of these pastors are well-known throughout their respective denominations.

The study included an attempt to present a reasonable review of the pertinent literature. However, the literature review is in no way be exhaustive. It is important to note that the conclusions of this study will be limited to the data gathered from the experiences of the pastors being interviewed. This data will be collated with data gathered from selected readings. The conclusions made from the interviews and their analysis are not necessarily universally applicable to all times and situations. It may be possible to apply some of the results of the study's findings to other parts of the United States and to other denominations. However, those who choose to generalize the study's findings and apply them to their own setting should do so with their own context in mind. It is important for those who read this study to understand that the nature of a qualitative study requires conclusions to be applied to the context of the reader and not universally.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated conflict within an established church in an effort to lead significant change. Eight reformed Presbyterian pastors from the United States were interviewed. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What informs a long-term pastor's understanding of leading change within an established church?

2. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors experienced conflict as a result of leading change?

3. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change?

Introduction to Research Participants

As outlined in the methodology section of this study, pastors were asked to speak confidentially, thus their names and the names of their churches have been changed in order to protect their identities. In addition, the specific denomination and the city where each pastor serves has not been included. The following table is provided for the reader to reference for biographical and ministerial background. In addition to the table, each participant will be briefly introduced in order to highlight the ministerial context of each pastor.

Table 1

Alias	Current Position And Previous Experience	Geographical Location of church, type of community	Seminary & Degrees	Age of Church	Size of Church	Years in Ministry	Years at church
D. Jeter 1st Pres	1) Senior 2) Associate 3) Planter	South East / Town	Covenant – MDiv DMin	120	1000	15	12
B. Ruth Bayside Pres.	1) Associate 2) Assistant	Mid-West / Large City	Covenant - MDiv	170	2000	14	11
M. Mantle Lee Memorial Pres.	1) Co-Pastor 2) Site Pastor 3) Associate	South / Large City	Princeton – MDiv European Univ - PhD	150	1500	13	11
Y. Berra Brookville Pres.	1) Senior/Solo 2) Associate 3) Para-Church	South / Large City	Fuller – MDiv Fuller - DMin	20	400	40 plus	12
L. Gehrig Redeemer Pres.	1) Senior 2) Planter	Mid-West / Town	Reformed – MDiv RTS - DMin	20	500	35 plus	22
J. DiMaggio Cornerstone	1) Senior 2) Planter	Mid-West / Large City	Covenant - MDiv	20	250	20 plus	7
R. Maris Western Heights Pres.	1) Senior 2) Planter Assistant Para-Church	South University/ Town	Covenant – MDiv	11	300	14	12
P. Rizzuto Holy Cross Pres.	1) Senior 2) Solo 3) Associate	South / Large City	Princeton – MDiv Westminster – DMin	12	250	21	8

Biographical Data

D. Jeter is the senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church, a one-thousand-member church in a midsize town (two hundred forty-five thousand people) in the southern part of the United States. First Presbyterian is a historic church, just on the edge of the city center, where it has been located for nearly all of its 120 years. It is also on the same picturesque city block as a thriving liberal arts college. The congregation consists of many community leaders, faculty, students, professionals, executives, homemakers, children, and teenagers.

Prior to becoming the senior pastor of First Presbyterian, Jeter, who attended Covenant Theological Seminary, held various pastoral positions. He was an associate pastor at another historic church located in a large city. Before taking that call Jeter served as a church planter. In total, Jeter has been serving in ministry for over seventeen years. Jeter is married and is the father of two children.

B. Ruth, like Jeter, also attended Covenant Theological Seminary. He serves as associate pastor of a large, over one-hundred-year-old church called Bayside Presbyterian. Like First Presbyterian, Bayside is a large congregation with over two thousand congregants. Bayside's congregants, much like First Presbyterian's, are predominately well-educated, professional men and women who represent various white-collar fields. Many of them are lifelong members and can point to their family being a part of the church for several generations. Bayside is also a very strong church for families and thus draws a number of parents with young children. Bayside is located near a number of large universities and graduate programs and thus draws a number of students and faculty.

Unlike Jeter, Ruth has served only as an associate pastor. In fact, Ruth is not looking to move into a senior pastor role. Having started in ministry fourteen years ago in college ministry, he feels he is headed toward the academy in the future. Ruth has been married for twelve years and has three children.

M. Mantle has been in ministry for a little more than thirteen years. He is married with four children. He obtained his MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary and is a doctoral candidate. He is currently serving at Lee Memorial Presbyterian Church in a large southern city. This historic congregation of over fifteen hundred members is, like First Presbyterian and Bayside, made up of professional and highly educated men and women, as well as parents with young children. However, Mantle's position with Lee Memorial is in a state of transition. Mantle, under the oversight and cooperation of Lee Memorial, is co-leading a site church in the heart of the poorest communities within the city.

Unlike Jeter, Ruth, and Mantle, Y. Berra serves an established, though relatively young church. Brookville Presbyterian Church has been established for a little more than twenty years. It is a community church, located in the suburbs of a large southern city. Like First Presbyterian, Bayside, and Lee Memorial, Brookville's four hundred congregants are predominately highly educated, professional men and women. The church also has a strong ministry to families and students. Brookville takes its role in moving beyond their neighborhood into the broken places of their city very seriously.

Rev. Dr. Berra (MDiv and DMin from Fuller Theological Seminary) has been in ministry for over forty years. During the early days of his ministry, Berra served a large para-church ministry known as Young Life. Berra left the Young Life staff after serving

for over twenty years, when he took his first call as an executive pastor of a large non-denominational community church. He left after serving there for five years and ultimately became the pastor of Brookville. He is the only full-time staff person and has served at Brookville a little more than ten years. He is married, has two daughters and multiple grandchildren.

Rev. Dr. L. Gehrig (MDiv and DMin), like Berra, has been in ministry over thirty-five years. Twenty years ago, Gehrig, along with his wife and children, left a very large church in the South where he had served as an associate for twelve years in order to plant a church in the Midwest. Redeemer Presbyterian Church has grown from a few people to an average Sunday attendance of over five hundred.

Redeemer's congregation resembles its community, in that it is a family-based church. Under Gehrig's leadership, Redeemer has gone from meeting in borrowed facilities to purchasing property and building a large facility. At the same time, Redeemer has not lost sight of establishing new churches, and they have planted a number of churches within the community.

While Berra and Gehrig have thirty and forty years of pastoral experience, DiMaggio has been serving in ministry for a little more than twenty years. After completing his MDiv at Covenant Theological Seminary, DiMaggio began his ministry working with middle school and high school students. After serving in a para-church ministry, he served for a number of years as an associate pastor at a west coast church plant. Eventually he left to plant an urban church in the Midwest called Cornerstone Presbyterian Church.

Cornerstone is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic congregation in the heart of a working-class community. The area is also home to refugees from Africa, Asia, Latin America and parts of the Middle East. Thus there are multiple languages and cultures represented in the congregation, and this diversity impacts every dimension of the church community. Economically, the majority of the two hundred and fifty congregants live well below the poverty line; many receive some form of government assistance. DiMaggio, along with his wife and three children, have served this congregation for over six years.

Like DiMaggio, R. Maris attended Covenant Theological Seminary. After seminary, Maris began his ministry serving with Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), a college ministry related to the Presbyterian Church in America. Maris served for four years with RUF at a large university in the southern part of the United States. It was during that time that he began to discern a call to church planting.

An opportunity developed for Maris to plant a church in a large university community in the southwestern part of the United States. For the past eleven years Maris, along with his wife and four children, have labored to establish a church. The Lord has blessed their efforts and now each Sunday, Maris and three hundred men and women gather for worship at Western Heights Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Dr. P. Rizzuto (DMin Westminster) has spent the last six years of his twenty years in ministry working to rebuild Holy Cross, a church in a large city in the South. Rizzuto, after attending Princeton Theological Seminary, began serving as an associate at an affluent thirty-year-old congregation. Ultimately he became the solo/senior pastor of that church before moving with his wife and two children to serve an urban church plant.

Holy Cross is an ever-changing congregation. While there are usually three hundred in attendance for worship, there is a consistent rate of turnover among congregants due to the transient nature of the community. This is due primarily to the number of people who move into the community to attend graduate school and to the transitory nature of postgraduates in their first jobs after university. The congregation is mostly young men and women in their late twenties and early thirties who are highly educated and interested in social issues. A principle concern for Rizzuto and his congregation is to bring the hope of Christ to bear upon the city through renewal.

In summary, all eight pastors have at least fourteen years in ministry and serve in Presbyterian churches. All of the pastors hold at least a Masters of Divinity, two hold Doctor of Ministry degrees, two are pursuing a Doctor of Ministry, and two are pursuing a PhD. The participants represent four seminaries: Covenant Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. They represent three denominations within American Presbyterianism: Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church, USA.

The churches are a cross section of the United States, with churches from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, southeastern and southwestern regions, and the Midwest. While they differ in size, all the churches have been established for at least ten years with four churches being in existence for over one hundred years. The churches also represent demographic and geographical diversity (urban, rural, suburban, and university towns).

There is some diversity regarding education and socioeconomic status within the sample. Cornerstone Presbyterian Church has a large refugee population and thus has a

wide range of ethnic, cultural, and educational dimensions. While Lee Memorial

Presbyterian Church is predominately highly educated and Caucasian, the associated site

church is racially and educationally diverse, with over half of the congregation being

African-American. The remaining congregations are predominately middle-to-upper-

income, highly educated Caucasians. The researcher believed a select diversity would

provide a fuller understanding of how pastors lead significant change.

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Shaping a Long-Term Pastor's Understanding of
Leading Significant Change

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Eight pastors were interviewed in an attempt to understand how long-term pastors

lead significant change in an established church. The first area of questions relates to

understanding what informed each long-term pastor's understanding of leading

significant change. The researcher asked each pastor a series of questions related to this

area of interest. First, participants were asked to define pastoral leadership and to provide

insight into what shaped their understanding of pastoral leadership. Second, the

researcher asked the participants to define significant change. A number of themes

emerged from each area of research.

Defining Pastoral Leadership

Two themes emerged from asking the participants to define pastoral leadership.

First, participants tended to emphasize one side of pastoral leadership over another.

Generally, the participants who focused on leadership did so by talking about the

importance of vision/mission and a pastor's ability to lead the church in that direction.

Those who focused on the pastoral elements of pastoral leadership tended to talk about

spiritual nourishment and the implications of the preached word.

A second theme is bound up in the first, in that participants defined pastoral leadership more by what it is not more than by what it is. Generally these pastors provided anecdotal examples of "bad" pastoral leadership gleaned from their experiences in an effort to define "good" pastoral leadership. They mentioned a spectrum of pastoral approaches using the terms "hero leader" or "chaplain" to describe pastors.

Emphasizing Pastoral Leadership

Gehrig defined pastoral leadership as "the ability to take a church in a particular direction." That direction, according to Gehrig, is based upon what the senior or solo pastor believes God wants for the church. He said, "I believe that the role of the pastor is to discern from the Lord what kind of church he wants us to be." In his view, pastoral leadership focuses on communicating a particular vision and mission to the congregation, staff, and leadership.

Gehrig suggested pastoral leadership is when a pastor can "demonstrate his own sense of passion, interest, and zeal for the particular direction he believes the Lord wants him to go. Then he finds a few people who are on board with that and builds those dreams and directions into them." These men and women become the pastor's advocates and help change the system by persuading others. This approach allows the pastor to make proposals but prevents him from doing anything too radical, because he must have enough support to "make it go."

Maris provided a different perspective, a sort of middle ground, in that he described pastoral leadership as a balance between pastoral care and leadership. He suggested that pastoral leadership is first and foremost having a "strong interior identity in the gospel," which "needs to be continually nourished and developed." Self-care is an

important part of maintaining a strong gospel identity, according to Maris. He also

suggested that pastoral leadership consists of "faithful proclamation of the implications of

God's word and the kingdom for a given congregation to equip them to make visible the

kingdom of Christ." The pastor then, from this perspective, is "the leader of that

proclamation and the making visible of that work." In many respects Maris'

understanding of pastoral leadership reflected an emphasis on the mission of shalom.

Maris also brought attention to the need for "navigating relationships" as a part of

pastoral leadership. He stated that leadership often means gathering the courage to work

through the resistance and competing opinions brought out by advancing significant

change. He suggested that pastoral leadership requires "building consensus for a direction

while staying connected with those who dissent from it."

Berra also emphasized the pastoral side of pastoral leadership, but did so based on

personality. He suggested that while the leader "sets the agenda, values and priorities,"

pastoral leadership style ultimately "depends on who the person is." People have

"different temperaments," as reflected in personality type frameworks such as Myers

Briggs, he said, and they bring those personality traits to their pastoral work. Some

people are "teachers and preachers, some are change agents, some are big on fellowship

and pastoral care." According to Berra, "there are many different ways to define pastoral

leadership," because there are so many different kinds of people. At the same time he

pointed out that "over half the churches in the United States are under one hundred

people. You don't need to be much of a leader in the church of under a hundred."

Berra concluded that pastoral leadership should be about "faithfully teaching the

scriptures and shoring up the foundation of people's lives" rather than "stirring things

up." Pastoral leadership, according to Berra, is working to discern where the people want to go and then helping them to get there. He also described himself as "pastoral by nature" as opposed to a "you need to get over it" sort of pastor. In other words, according to Berra, a pastor's role is much like a doctor, in that they should seek to "do no harm and ensure the congregation experiences as little discomfort as possible so as to avoid harm or a split."

Pastoral Leadership: What It Is Not Versus What It Is

A number of the participants defined pastoral leadership more by what it is not than by what it is. In doing so they used terms such as "hero leader" and "chaplain" to describe behaviors that do not reflect true pastoral leadership. Pastor Jeter, for instance, spent a number of years serving in assistant and associate roles in large, established churches prior to becoming a senior pastor. During that time he observed the way that two high profile pastors in two different denominations led. Both pastors shared traits that he felt were not the best model for pastoral leadership. He described them as "classic hero leaders."

Jeter described a hero leader as an "unflappable, relentless, don't let 'em see you sweat sort of man," who "keeps his chin up and shows no chinks in his armor." According to Jeter, a pastor who is a hero leader will utilize the power of language to shape direction more than "doing or being." Rather than providing hands-on leadership built on trust and relationships, the hero leads with words and by marginalizing those in opposition. Generally, according to Jeter, conflict and anything related to anxiety or "turning up the heat" in the system is avoided.

Jeter described situations where a distance existed between pastors and those they were called to shepherd. Interestingly, he noted that those pastors seemed to be unaware of the distance that existed between themselves, their staff, and the congregation. These experiences led Jeter to realize a "disconnect" between a pastor who serves as chief speaker and one who is focused on pastoring a congregation.

Jeter further described the hero model of pastoral leadership as lonely. In many ways the hero leader was out of touch with how people within the church system actually felt or experienced him. In some cases the staff had to work around the pastor rather than with him. Unfortunately, Jeter observed, "most churches want a hero leader" rather than a catalyst for significant change, or someone who is going to lead them toward cultural or community engagement. Simply stated, they prefer a pastor's "presence and ability in the pulpit" rather than someone who will model fleshing out the gospel beyond the church; nonetheless, congregations still say they want someone who is "pastoral."

Pastor Ruth also served in an associate role under what he described as a "classic hero leader." From his perspective, pastoral leadership should be more of a "basketball team rather than a wrestling team." Rather than functioning in singular roles, pastoral leadership requires a collaborative effort that builds up the ministry of the whole rather than "the one." That includes everything from day-to-day operations to defining vision. Collaboration was not what he experienced. Ruth said he learned "what not to be" from working "for" rather than "with" a hero leader pastor.

Several participants spoke of another sort of pastoral leader. This model followed what Jeter described as a chaplain and Mantle described as a "care-taker." This sort of pastoral leadership focuses primarily pastoral care rather than leadership. A caregiver

model, participants suggested, works well in smaller, perhaps aging congregations. Jeter and Mantle observed that while this leadership model may be helpful in some ways, it does little to shepherd people toward significant change.

The Shape of Pastoral Leadership

The researcher also asked participants to reflect on what had given shape to their expectations and understanding of pastoral leadership. Two themes emerged from this area of research. First, the participants felt that seminary did not and perhaps could not have fully prepared them for the demands of pastoral leadership. In fact, a number of the participants reported that their seminary training prepared them for pastoral roles that are actually inconsistent with their experience and the demands of the office. Second, all eight participants felt that experience and self-guided learning had helped them to understand pastoral leadership. These informal learning methods tended to help them understand themselves as pastors and shape their understanding of their role and ability.

The first theme that emerged from this area of research is how seminary had given shape to their expectations versus what they had experienced. All of the participants felt that seminary prepared them well for what was referred to as the "contemplative pastorate." In other words, seminary provided excellent training in theology, exegesis, hermeneutics, preaching, teaching, and to some extent, counseling and shepherding.

As a result, participants shared that seminary shaped their expectation of the pastoral life as one of study, teaching, prayer, and spending time with people. Several of the participants said that they expected to deal with administrative tasks to some extent, but they did not see those tasks as the bulk of their calling. However, in the first few

years of ministry they spent more time in meetings and doing administrative tasks than in study, particularly if they were not in lead preaching or teaching roles.

Participants felt they had been well-prepared with regard to study, preaching, and teaching, but were not prepared for the day-to-day operational side of leading the church. Even participants who said their seminaries tried to provide an element of preparation in the areas of leadership and organizational management felt ill-prepared for the reality of their vocation. Mantle was one pastor who felt the weight of this burden in his first few years of ministry.

Mantle commented that while seminary opened up his understanding of "missional theology," in particular the mission of shalom, he came away with an idealistic vision of the church. While he was prepared to think theologically about sin, he was not, as he said, "prepared to deal with the way people sin against one another and against their pastors within the church." "Seminary," he said, "prepared me to spend part of my day in my study, preparing and writing sermons, and the rest of my day on horseback, riding through my parish visiting my congregants."

Mantle said he was not prepared to lead committees, not prepared to deal with the harsh realities of church politics, and not prepared for the role of an assistant pastor in a large, established, historic congregation. Mantle said, "I had no idea what I was getting into. The first few years of ministry were challenging and at times depressing. A bunch of times I wanted to quit. I was not trained or prepared for the reality of what ministry is like day-to-day. It knocked the wind out of me."

Ruth said that at his seminary "everything was geared toward applying things to pastoral leadership," but some professors were more successful in making those

applications than others. Part of the reason is that a number of the professors, while having served as pastors, did so in small churches many years prior to teaching his class. Many were more academic in temperament. One professor suggested all he needed to do to "survive" a large, established church was simply to "get in there and love the people and serve them."

A number of the participants felt the need to develop in the area of leadership within their first few years of ministry. Berra, Jeter, Ruth, Mantle, and Maris all read books on leadership by authors Lencioni, Heifetz and Linsky. Pastors Gehrig, Dimaggio, Mantle, and Jeter said they asked more experienced pastors for advice, with varying degrees of success. Most of the pastors cited attending conferences or seminars hosted by their denominations and seminaries in an attempt to develop leadership capacity. Berra, Jeter, Mantle, Gehrig, and Rizzuto felt their Doctor of Ministry studies were invaluable in helping them improve in leadership.

All of the pastors suggested that their seminary education could not have fully prepared them for "real life within the church" no matter how thorough the curriculum. As a result, they turned to other sources. Consistent with the emerging theme, most of the resources on leadership they found were from a business leadership perspective rather than a pastoral leadership perspective.

Defining Significant Change

In addition to understanding what had given shape to a pastor's understanding of pastoral leadership, the researcher wanted to find out how pastors defined significant change. Two themes emerged from this area of research. First, the same leadership experts had influenced a number of the participants. In fact, the participants used nearly

the same language to define significant change. The second theme that emerged

suggested that the direction of significant change tended to be focused inward, whether

on an individual basis or on an operational dynamic. In other words, a significant change

is reflected within a particular person within the church (change of behavior), and/or it is

a change in the way the system operates (change of practice). In either case, the

significant changes in their churches related by the pastors were "inward facing" rather

than "missional" or "outward facing."

The first theme emerged in the process of asking pastors to define significant

change. All eight of the pastors were familiar with the same leadership experts. In fact,

Jeter, Maris, Dimaggio, Gehrig, Mantle, and Ruth used nearly identical language that

came from the work of Ronald Heifetz, Martin Linsky, Alexander Grashow, and Dean

Williams. In fact, the pastors were familiar enough with *Leadership on the Line: Staying*

Alive Through the Perils of Leadership and *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* to

describe significant change as "adaptive." In doing so, these participants pointed out that

a significant change is related to an "adaptive versus technical change." Generally they

pointed out that a significant change would require a change of behavior, practice, belief

or tradition,[440] a concept that can be tied to the previously mentioned leadership experts.

When asked about these sources the participants pointed to self-guided learning as well

as DMin programs. They also noted that these changes are very often, in their experience,

connected to conflict.

Mantle also provided a sociological perspective regarding significant change. He

said that significant change is required "where there is cultural movement, and

suppositions are challenged, and there are a new set of assumptions that govern people's

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[440] Heifetz and Linsky, 30, 177.

behaviors." Mantle suggested that significant change is not "just adding new things into one's repertoire—but a fundamental rethinking of assumptions," which then leads to a new set of behaviors and patterns.

The second theme that emerged from six of the eight participants reflected an inward focus. While the participants recognized significant change as change of behavior, practice, belief, or tradition,[441] the focus of the definition was related to something within a particular person or within the operational elements of the church system.

While not directly citing Heifetz, Linsky, Grashow and Williams, Berra suggested that a significant change happens when pastors provide opportunities to be "agents of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). He said, "There are certain people who choose to identify a need. They choose to lead in that direction and the situation tends to find the person." From his perspective, providing his congregants opportunities to pour themselves into something positive allows them to change. That has been a helpful approach for him given the issues that his denomination has been experiencing in recent years.

DiMaggio, while aware of the ways in which Heifetz and Linsky define "adaptive change," suggested significant change is "moving people, not institutions, toward sanctification." He believes that as people change the system will change organically. Rizzuto suggested significant change is more about a particular person rather than the whole of the local church.

The researcher would like to note that Maris, DiMaggio and Rizzuto serve congregations that have a missional or outward focus as their primary purpose. They have had a missional perspective from the start. Gehrig also serves a congregation that had an

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[441] Ibid., 30.

outward focus at its inception, given that it was a church plant oriented towards evangelism and outreach. DiMaggio, Maris, and Rizzuto serve congregations that consider themselves to be "agents of shalom." In fact, the vision for each of these churches is quite similar, especially with regard to reaching broken people within their communities and working toward their flourishing.

Mantle, unlike Maris, serves congregations where language such as "mission of shalom" is seldom used; however, the concept is very much on his mind. The researcher noted that neither pastor used the term "mission of shalom" during the interview, but both made the connection between leading significant change and the mission of shalom. These pastors defined significant change as moving their congregation to change behaviors, practices, beliefs or traditions to be more outward-facing in terms of working for "the flourishing of others." The remaining pastors focused exclusively on significant internal change that impacts the functions and governance of the local church.

Gehrig defined significant change as a "change from a classroom, knowledge-based, Christian education programs to a life-on-life discipleship emphasis." This kind of change moves beyond the "walls of a classroom" to being invested in each other's lives. Gehrig noted that this movement can be a "pretty big change if you're in a traditional classroom-based Christian education church." However, as noted, Gehrig's church began as a missional church whose congregation desired to reach the unchurched and non-Christians within their community.

Pastors and Conflict

The second research question focused on the ways and extent to which long-term pastors have experienced conflict as a result of leading what they described as significant

change. The participants were asked to reflect on a critical incident in which they had experienced conflict while leading change.

The following section outlines critical incidents from selected pastors. Six of the participants expressed concern that the incidents they shared could lead back to them. Five consented to have their incident referenced, but asked the researcher to take care so as not to cause damage to them or their churches. The researcher has endeavored to provide as much detail as possible without jeopardizing the confidentiality of the participants. All eight participants had experienced conflict and three themes emerged.

The first theme that emerged is that conflict is something "that happens to a pastor." Four pastors said conflict arose as a result of their leadership. In other words, they were the "recipients of conflict;" it just "sort of happened." As Rizzuto said, "Most conflict comes to me, I don't need to stir things up. I do not have to go out looking for conflict because it comes looking for me." Gehrig said that he learned that conflict is "simply something that arises" as a part of pastoral leadership.

Ruth realized in the early days of his ministry that he "didn't handle the conflict that arose as wisely as I could have, or do things that would have minimized it in the long run." Though he described himself as being "hard-wired" for conflict, he was not prepared for the lack of support he received in his efforts to bring vision and clarity to his ministry team and staff. One important factor was that Ruth's boss, the senior pastor, felt that his leadership was being questioned.

In an effort to bring about some clarity, Ruth met with some of the senior leadership. In the beginning, they were on board with his suggested changes for bringing about greater unity around the vision and mission of the church. However, it soon came

to light that the senior pastor felt Ruth had neglected to include him. The senior pastor said that Ruth had not asked enough questions or provided enough information. There were a number of large "blow-ups" among the staff that arose while Ruth was attempting to bring about unity of vision.

Berra also experienced conflict. He said that he "didn't really parse conflict well" in his first church context. After serving for twenty years in the leadership of a para-church ministry, Berra was called to serve as the executive pastor of a large church on the east coast. Berra had been acquainted with the well-known senior pastor at this church for a number of years and had a great deal of respect for him. However, Berra realized in the first few months of joining the staff that the senior pastor's expectations and his were not aligned. Berra had expected to be engaged in "pastoral work." Instead, he found that he was expected to "advance the ministry of the senior pastor." This difference in expectations led to conflict between the two men and Berra "eventually needed to move on."

A second theme, somewhat related to the first, was that three of the pastors mentioned being "surprised" or "caught off guard" by conflict in the early days of their ministry. Even though their seminaries tried to prepare them for the reality of conflict in ministry, they were surprised it "happened to them." Gehrig was representative of this group. Though he did not consider himself to be naïve, he still " never dreamed conflict would happen" to him.

For Gehrig, conflict developed over the use of the church building. Members of his congregation were involved in home-schooling their children and needed a central place to meet with other families. Eventually the church leadership was asked if the

church facility could be used during the week for this purpose. Gehrig and the session readily agreed.

Over the course of a few years, however, the group's philosophy of education and the church's outreach efforts began to clash. The school, which ultimately used the building five days a week, was one that, according to Gehrig, was not open to people who did not agree with their views regarding family and education. The church, however, was striving to be a place where everyone was welcome, particularly those within the neighborhoods that surrounded the church. In fact, the church had been planted years before in an effort to bring the gospel to that community.

It became clear to Gehrig and others on the leadership team that the relationship between the church and the school would have to be addressed. What started as a wonderful relationship between a Christian school and the church ended in a heated season of intense conflict. Gehrig found himself being ridiculed, and a number of families left the church. The whole issue was a surprise to Gehrig. He was caught off guard and wondered how such intense conflict had "happened" to him.

Mantle also described being "caught off guard" and "surprised." Recalling his idealism coming out of seminary, he was amazed at how different the reality of pastoral leadership was from what he expected. He was hired to develop strategies for outreach and mission, and he expected that people in the congregation would readily support those efforts. However, in the early days of his ministry, when speaking about the need to "care for the poor," and "do the work of bringing restoration and hope to the city," he was often called a "social liberal." Mantle said the conflict was so intense and so shocking during

his first five years that he was not sure he was going to make it, which points to a third theme.

Conflict, according to all eight participants, helped to provide insights into their hardwiring. All eight participants suggested that conflict helped them to understand what they brought to ministry, especially with regard to handling conflict as a part of the pastoral office. Ruth was the only pastor of the eight who stated that he is "hard-wired to step into conflict." Gehrig, while stating that he avoided conflict, admitted that conflict is a tool that had shaped him and compelled him to learn about himself. He said, "Conflict is good in that it helps you to become a better pastor. God uses conflict to shape us."

Six of the eight pastors, including Gehrig, learned they were "conflict-avoidant by nature." These six used words such as "survival," "flash point," and "life-defining" to describe their experiences. Their responses to conflict ranged from a "temptation to run away," to a determination to "not back down." One pastor said he was "not sure [he] was going to make it." Several of the pastors mentioned feeling overwhelmed by the conflict incident(s) and recalled how the conflict bled into other areas of their life and ministry. Five of the participants shared that conflict revealed how their tendency to be "people pleasers" or "feelers" impacted their leadership style.

Berra said he learned that he tends "to take things personally," and that as a "feeler" he wants people "to feel good and get along." He said he is learning that he needs "to set some of that aside" in order to lead. Berra commented on Lencioni's book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, expressing surprise that healthy conflict is necessary for a healthy team.

Jeter said he learned that he has tendency to try and "make people happy by working for consensus." Working in a highly anxious system where conflict consistently came his way allowed him to realize that his reactions were connected to wanting the approval of those in authority. This meant he was often tempted to "fix the problem" rather than let others sit in the issue, deal with it themselves, and "grow up."

Jeter shared that it took a difficult season for him to learn this about himself, but ultimately the experience helped to keep him from becoming a "hero leader." While serving as an associate, he found himself managing the system so that senior leadership did not have to deal with "the issues" or with conflict. Eventually however, Jeter knew he needed to wade into conflict with a particularly powerful man. The man was "advocating for something" that Jeter knew would not work. No attempt to dissuade the man would deter him. Jeter realized that the best approach was to let the man go ahead and embarrass himself.

The end result was that the man exploded in anger, but Jeter knew that he had to let it happen. His prior tendency was to rush in and fix things out of a need for approval. In this instance, letting the situation play out without his interference resulted in Jeter having to endure the rage that followed. Jeter, however, remained steadfast, and told the man he needed to "grow up." This pattern happened a few more times, but each time "the conflict was not as scary" for Jeter.

In describing the critical incident, Jeter said he learned some important leadership lessons. Despite his tendency to avoid conflict, Jeter said he had to learn to push through his normal reactions. "I know that the tension in my heart can dominate the way I relate

to people," he said, but he has learned to "wade into the conflict" instead of trying to resolve the tension by "fixing" the situation.

Maris also learned that he is "a feeler." He said, "I feel dissent pretty strongly and it makes me overreact or run away." His "knee-jerk reaction" is to "take control" and "fix things." Often that has meant leaving people out of the process, which has contributed to conflict. As a result, he learned and continues to learn to "slow down, stay calm, and get people involved." He also learned that he needed to "remain calm and present and to practice brokenness in the midst of tension and crisis." That, he said, is hard to do, "because you want to get over it" as quickly as possible. He recognized that he will most likely continue to vacillate between taking control and bringing people along, but conflict led him to understand things about himself that have changed his approach to pastoral leadership.

Mantle had a similar experience, however, the conflict he experienced helped him rethink his understanding of pastoral leadership. As stated earlier, he was accused of being "one of those liberals" because of his passion to work toward shalom and his desire to see the church "engaged in the life of the city." Following that accusation, he encountered a great deal of resistance and conflict. At first he despaired, but ultimately he came to a better understanding of his office.

Mantle said, "I began to see myself journeying with people on a movement toward the kingdom." He got to know people at the heart level and to see them "as powerful potential ministers of the gospel." He began to see his role as "helping to equip them to do that work." To do so, he said, "I had to discard traditional models of pastoral ministry that were implicitly given to me in seminary. I had to rediscover new models of

pastoral ministry that were more about storytelling and shepherding rather than lecture and dictating action."

As an associate pastor, Mantle was able to preach and thus be one of the "storytellers" for the congregation. Preaching and teaching allowed him the opportunity to think through the how the biblical narrative "helps shape the congregations' vision" of who they are and should be, especially as it relates to the mission of shalom. Second, he discovered his "role as a shepherd" and the importance of being shoulder-to-shoulder with those he was leading (rather than face-to-face).

Mantle learned the value of serving side by side with those he was called to serve. Rather than only preaching and teaching, that is being face-to-face, he learned how vital it is to be engaged in outward work along with others. Mantle realized that, as difficult as it often was, the "inefficient, messy, person-to-person ministry" was ultimately what allowed him to help move a small part of the church toward the mission of shalom. In no way was he able to change the whole culture of the church, but at least a portion of the congregation was engaged in the mission of shalom. To be sure, conflict and resistance were still part of the process. Yet, Mantle began to see himself "journeying with people on a movement toward the kingdom."

Rizzuto had a different reaction than Maris and Jeter. He said that his experience with conflict helped him to understand his role is not as a strategist but as a peacemaker. Rizzuto said the source of his conflicts always hinged around "programs" because churches have "too many pet programs." In fact, he suggested that "80 percent of church conflicts can be traced to a choir."

While not a timid man by any stretch, Rizzuto admitted that he has become "fearful of conflict" because of the way it drains him emotionally. He also dislikes the way conflict drains resources away from the mission of the church, particularly the mission of shalom. Therefore, although Rizzuto knows that no change occurs without conflict, he shies away from it, electing instead to keep the mission and vision in front of his people.

The learning experiences these pastors had with conflict also extended to their marriages. All eight pastors shared how their experience with conflict had an impact on their spouses. Six of the eight pastors said it was difficult to know whether to share the full nature of their experience with conflict with their wives. However, none of the six were able to "hide it" from their spouse. In fact, Jeter's wife once remarked, "Your stress is oozing out of your pores."

Maris said that as the "heat goes up in the church, it turns up the heat in the marriage relationship. It all just gets thrown in together." He said his wife hears his "agony" and must manage it on two levels: she has to deal with how it impacts him and "process it" from her own perspective as well. Gehrig agreed. He too said his wife feels the impact of the stress of conflict he encounters. He said, "You know, the wife always suffers more than the guy." Several of the pastors provided insights into how they approach their own self-care and care for their spouses as well.

Maris and Gehrig pointed out the need for trustworthy friends for both the pastor and his wife. Maris learned the importance of confidants for he and his wife early in his ministry. However, finding people they can talk to openly has not been easy. Gehrig shared this feeling as well. He said "these friends are generally not close by" because

their local context "doesn't seem like a place where you could trust a whole lot of people."

Another theme emerged regarding self-care for pastoral leaders. Maris, Gehrig, Jeter, and Mantle spoke of the importance prayer had in their lives. Jeter mentioned that he had to "go back to the gospel a lot." Maris spoke of the minister needing "a strong interior identity in the gospel" that must "be continually nourished and developed—both through personal devotional practices and though having a close-knit group of friends to walk alongside."

All four of these pastors mentioned the ways in which conflict had led them to a deeper understanding of their need for prayer. Maris spoke of his devotional practice. He kept a prayer journal during the worst seasons of conflict. Mantle and Maris have utilized the Book of Common Prayer and a lectionary as devotional aids. Gehrig expressed a need to carve sufficient time out of his life in order to be present in prayer.

Orchestrating Conflict to Lead Significant Change Towards the Mission of Shalom

The third and final research question asked in what ways and to what extent these long-term pastors had orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. Having established that each of the pastors had experienced conflict, albeit more generally as recipients rather than orchestrators, the researcher wanted to understand whether pastors made a connection between pastoral leadership, orchestrating conflict, and leading significant change, especially as it related to the mission of shalom. In order to gather the data, the researcher asked the participants a series of questions. The first question asked whether pastors perceived from scripture that Christ orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. The second question asked participants how Christ's orchestration of

conflict had shaped their view of pastoral leadership, and whether they had orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. A few findings and themes emerged.

Pastors, Jesus, and Orchestrating Conflict

The first finding is that all eight pastors affirmed that scripture portrays Christ using conflict in order to lead significant change. In addition, four of the pastors suggested additional examples from the Bible in which God, as Gehrig put it, "sovereignly used conflict." Jesus, according to Mantle, orchestrated conflict with people all the time.

Referring to the account of Jesus and the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-27, Mantle said, "Jesus was a master at using conflict in love. He used this moment of tremendous tension to provoke change in the rich young ruler." The key here is that Jesus loved him. Mantle said, "He engaged the man's heart in a way that was better than simply saying 'you've got to stop loving money.'" Jesus was willing to let people sit in tension, "much like a pastor does in counseling." Drawing from Jonathan Edwards, Mantle suggested, "The heart needs to change, to be warmed by 'new affections,'" and Jesus facilitated that by turning up the heat in the young man's heart.

When asked he had ever considered a strategic use of conflict in order to lead significant change in light of Christ's actions, additional themes emerged. The four pastors who responded "no" were asked to explain why they had not. Three themes emerged from their responses. Three pastors said "yes," and were asked to provide additional information. Three themes emerged from this group. Finally, one pastor's response is treated separately because it did not clearly fit into either of the previous two categories.

Themes from Pastors Who Responded "No"

Four of the pastors replied no when asked whether they had ever considered a strategic use of conflict in order to lead significant change. From their answers explaining why they had not, three themes emerged. The first theme was related to what they had learned about themselves from previous conflict situations. The second theme was related to an earlier theme wherein some pastors posited that conflict is simply a general part of ministry that naturally comes to the pastor. They did not view conflict as a means to an end. The third theme deals with the idea that pastors are "not Jesus" and thus may not be qualified to use conflict in the way that He did.

Related to the first theme, all four of these pastors had referred to themselves as either conflict-avoidant or as "people pleasers." When asked whether he had ever considered a strategic use of conflict in order to lead significant change, Gehrig answered, "Not really. I mean, frankly, I'm a conflict avoider by nature, so I'm not looking for any more conflict."

Rizzuto shared the same feeling. While affirming Christ's use of conflict, Rizzuto said, "But I hate it. I'm very fearful of conflict." He explained that his avoidance stems in large part from the negative emotional impact conflict has on him, and from the way conflict drains resources away from "doing ministry." In that regard, he disagrees with author Ken Sande. Sande writes,

> To some, conflict is a hazard that threatens to sweep them off their feet and leave them bruised and hurting. To others, it is an obstacle that they should conquer quickly and firmly, regardless of the consequences. But some people have learned that conflict is an opportunity to solve common problems in a way that honors God and offers benefits to those involved.[442]

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[442] Sande, 22.

Berra, when asked whether he had ever considered a strategic use of conflict in order to lead significant change, replied, "Funny you'd be interviewing me. I'm one of those people who don't like conflict. I'm more pastoral. I'm a maintainer or a builder."

From within this discussion a second theme emerged related to the pastors' views regarding conflict. These four pastors expressed that conflict is something that "just comes" to the pastor. DiMaggio, who acknowledged being conflict-avoidant, agreed that Christ orchestrated conflict. Citing James chapter one, he suggested that conflict is something God uses to sanctify his people. He said, "There is no doubt that God intends to use conflict, trials, and challenges to change us, to grow us, and to mature us as individuals." However, DiMaggio added, orchestrating conflict is for God to do and to allow. "I don't think we have to go out creating it or looking for it. Conflict will come along the way and what we've got to do is not be too scared to avoid it." He also suggested God uses conflict mostly to change people's hearts and that pastors should not use it to try and change a system. Change is related to "God's growth in our lives, personally." From his perspective, significant change is related more to individuals than to institutions or organizations. Leading significant change is connected to his understanding of pastoral leadership and is "done through relationships."

Gehrig agreed with DiMaggio's assessment of the role of conflict. While acknowledging that Christ orchestrated conflict, he maintained that if "God sovereignly works it, great. We'll deal with it. But I'm not actively seeking to see that happen as a means to an end." At the same time, Gehrig said he sees conflict as "a pathway to greater intimacy, greater communication, and even deeper friendship. " Nonetheless, he believes that "intuitively pastors know not to create strife and not to create division."

Gehrig, agreed that a pastor must sometimes "turn up the heat," but said he did not think of it as orchestrating conflict. As a part of making a "stand on building truth" a pastor must also "be patient and wait for the right time—and it may not be in your lifetime that some things will happen." He said pastors have enough conflict that is just part of "doing ministry. There is no need to go out creating it, making it happen." In terms of strategic planning and direction, a pastor should "trust the Lord" to help them "know when it's the right time to push and when its not. So, when the time is not right you just back off. But you continue to cast the vision."

The third theme that emerged from this group dealt with the idea that pastors are not God (as Jesus is), and thus may not be qualified to orchestrate conflict as He did. Berra, while affirming Christ's use of conflict, said, "I'm not Jesus. The scripture is not a handbook for leadership, no matter what John Maxwell says." Rather, the Bible is intended to shape our attitudes and character; it is a place for an "attitude check."

Rizzuto agreed, saying, "I'm very fearful of conflict because we are sinners. Even our best work is marred with imperfections and unintended bad consequences." Rizzuto acknowledged that change does not happen without some level of conflict, but said he prefers letting it come his way rather than intentionally orchestrating conflict. Gehrig also agreed, stating that pastors have to avoid creating division and strife.

<center>Themes from Pastors Who Responded "Yes"</center>

When asked whether they had ever considered a strategic use of conflict in order to lead significant change, three participants said yes. These three pastors provided insights from the perspective of strategically orchestrating conflict in order to lead

significant change. Maris, Jeter, and Ruth report that they have "turned up the heat"
within their respective congregational systems. From their insights three themes emerged.

Much like the four pastors who don't orchestrate conflict to lead change, the first
theme is related to what they learned about themselves, but with different results. Second,
the three pastors focused on some element of vision and mission (statement or goals) to
orchestrate conflict, even as they cultivated relationships and developed collaborative
groups. Third, all three pastors led change that was specifically addressing governance or
operational concerns within their systems. In two cases the change was not related to an
outwardly focused missional congregation; one case was directly related to an outward
focus.

All three pastors referred to their personal strengths and weaknesses. However, in
this case those pastors who articulated their predilection to conflict avoidance worked
through that to orchestrate conflict in order to lead what they considered significant
change.

Maris suggested pastors need to "grow adaptive challenges in order to become the
leaders our organizations need." At the same time he recognized his bent for handling the
situation quickly and on his own. Regarding one critical incident, he said his initial
reaction was, "I'm going to handle this on my own." Later he realized how important it
was for him to bring his elders into the conversation, to allow them to wrestle with him
through the difficult situation. Since then he has made efforts to do just that.

Jeter referred to himself as a "people pleaser" and confessed that he often wanted
people in authority to approve of him and his work. Over time, however, he realized that
tendency was personally detrimental, and that it also hindered his ability to lead

pastorally. That was when he began to allow those who depended on him to "fix the things that made them anxious" to deal with their own issues. Although he agonized over it, he was thankful that he made the switch to orchestrate conflict by allowing the situation to develop.

Ruth was the only one of the eight pastors who stated, "I'm hard-wired to step into conflict." However, Ruth recognized that there is a difference between "creating conflict in the flesh and doing it in a relational, pastoral way. I'm learning about that." His tendency early on in ministry was to "do conflict in the flesh," which he said made him "want to fight, withdraw, be sad, eat pizza, drink beer and cope rather than live in the tension." Since then he has learned to slow down, pray things through, develop collaborative teams, and work to orchestrate things pastorally.

A second theme developed from each pastor learning that leading change requires allies. All three pastors recognized in the process of strategically orchestrating conflict to lead change that they could not do it alone. Each pastor identified a group or team that helped in the process. Those teams were each united by a shared purpose, generally in the form of the mission and vision of the church.

As an associate pastor, Ruth often struggled to bring about change he felt was needed in order to help foster spiritual growth. At the same time, every effort he made to bring about necessary changes to the church's practices met with resistance and conflict. Initially, as stated earlier, he "took conflict head on." He soon realized that would not work in the long run.

Eventually he began to realize the importance of either finding or creating collaborative bodies. Soon he realized that he could go to existing bodies and help to

bring about change simply by asking questions. He said he would "go to the gatekeepers of different ministry teams in order to get things going." Simply asking those leaders to help him with a situation that was specifically in their area "always caused conflict," but it also got the conversation started. At the same time he developed other collaborative bodies made up of key stakeholders who then helped to bring about specific change. This strategy also created conflict, but at least it was a group who "owned the change" rather than just one person.

Jeter shared a similar insight. Knowing that his congregation was used to having a hero leader, Jeter began the work of undoing that paradigm. In the process of developing a strategic plan for vision, mission, and goals, Jeter created a team made up of several subgroups. Rather than simply giving the congregation his vision, Jeter "gave the work back to the people," refusing to "just tell them something."

The result, initially, was hesitancy. Most of the people were anxious about the change to participatory leadership, and in some cases they were resentful. However, Jeter pulled together the teams of people and strategically used the "anxiety" in order to create a workable, sustainable vision and mission for the church.

Maris recognized the way he often handled situations was destructive in terms of the relationships between he and his elders. He also recognized how important it was to keep the church's mission and purpose—its core identity—in front of them. So rather than rushing in to fix things, he now works closely with the session and staff teams. In challenging situations he often allows colleagues to "sit in the tension" in order to wrestle through difficulties, especially as they relate to the identity of the church and what God has called them to do.

Finally, the third theme that emerged from this group concerned the focal point of orchestrated conflict and significant change. The examples that two pastors provided had internal implications for the local church. In other words, the changes were focused on governance or operational issues of the church. Only Maris indicated the concern related to an outwardly focused congregation.

Maris' efforts to strategically orchestrate conflict helped to keep the church on track as a "gospel-and-kingdom-oriented, urban, outward-mission-focused kind of church." At one point early in his ministry, Maris had to deal with a situation where the core identity, vision, and mission of the church was being brought into question. In order to keep the congregation from moving away from its missional purpose, Maris turned up the heat. It is important to note that the church was founded with missional principles as a core of their identity. However, over time there was move to shift the church's identity to an inward-facing focus of preserving doctrine and articulating key truths.

Though he did not feel he orchestrated this particular conflict very well, Maris did succeed in focusing his attention on the adaptive nature of the problem. He said he views adaptive challenges as positive, because pastoral leadership requires growth through adaptive challenges "in order to become the leaders that our organizations need." Maris explored the idea that significant change is connected to process and an expectation for "rough waters." Being willing to orchestrate conflict allows leaders to protect the vision and core identity of the church.

Maris went on to suggest that "good leadership recognizes the things that need to be protected at all costs" against those that "can be let go off." He shared an experience that helped him to see that crisis in the church is not occasional, but ever present. He

believes crises can actually help keep the church on mission, and help the pastor to lead with people, shoulder-to-shoulder.

Jeter's situation is different from Maris in that his congregation is over one hundred years old. He desires to lead his congregation away from "doing a lot of stuff—and doing it well—but just a lot of stuff." For Jeter, simply asking questions and not providing quick answers can raise the temperature. This, he says, is because the congregation wants a hero leader. However, as stated earlier, Jeter is committed to giving the work back to the people.

Jeter is strategically turning up the heat within the system and orchestrating a level of conflict, even with those on his staff and session who are conflict-avoidant. He has pulled together a team of people who are helping to bring vision alignment, which he views as vital for the future of the church. His goal is for the church to "bring blessing to the community." To make that a reality, Jeter said, he must "use anxiety for that vision to be comprehended—and owned."

Ruth also said he had orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. However, as an associate pastor he felt he had limited opportunities to appropriately do so. Ruth spoke of helping the staff work together in much better ways through establishing communication practices and focusing on a shared vision and mission.

Pastoral Leadership, Conflict, and the Mission of Shalom

Only one pastor, Mantle, represents the final group. When Mantle was asked if he had ever considered a strategic use of conflict in order to lead significant change, he was reluctant to answer yes or no. Rather, he related a critical incident that shaped the way he understands pastoral leadership. In essence, Mantle is not averse to orchestrating conflict

on order to effect change, but does not feel he has the institutional authority to do so. "I'm not in charge," he said. "It is difficult to orchestrate change when you are not in charge."

Nonetheless Mantle is passionate about the mission of shalom, and he desired to bring the larger congregation into that work. That intention, as stated earlier, was a source of conflict and resistance in the early days of his ministry. Looking back, Mantle said, he thought that experience had been good because it helped him develop the "disciplines of patience and love." While not able to bring the whole of the congregation into the mission of shalom, Mantle continued to work in that direction.

Along with a team of people who were of the same mind about the mission of shalom, Mantle and his wife relocated to a troubled area within their city. Guided by the gospel and John Perkin's framework (redistribution, relocation, reconciliation),[443] they began working for renewal. While this was not an official endeavor of the church, over time the efforts of his team provided an opportunity for the church to embrace the work as their mission.

Mantle did not view his actions as "raising the heat" in the system. Rather, he saw them as living out the mission of shalom faithfully. Eventually the church was in a position to develop a site ministry as part of the work that Mantle and others had been doing. Mantle is now serving as co-pastor at the site ministry.

The researcher asked Mantle to give some thought about orchestrating conflict in order to lead significant change. From Mantle's perspective, pastors should stir things up and leverage crisis for change. However, Mantle suggested, pastors should endeavor to

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[443] Charles Marsh and John Perkins, *Welcoming Justice: God's Movement toward Beloved Community*, Resources for Reconciliation (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 47-49.

live out of the law of love, and therefore only use conflict in love, as Jesus did. A real problem can develop, he said, if pastors use conflict to manipulate a situation.

Table 2

Alias	Current Position	Do you see yourself as a strategic leader?	Did Christ orchestrate conflict to lead significant change?	Have you orchestrated conflict to lead significant change
R. Maris	Senior	Yes	Yes	Yes – internal concerns/ shalom
D. Jeter	Senior	Yes	Yes	Yes - internal concerns
B. Ruth	Associate	Yes	Yes	Yes – internal concerns
M. Mantle	Co-Pastor	Yes	Yes	Special Category—established site
Y. Berra	Senior	No	Yes	No
L. Gehrig	Senior	Yes	Yes	No
J. DiMaggio	Senior	No	Yes	No
P. Rizzuto	Senior	Yes	Yes	No

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors, in an effort to lead significant change, have orchestrated conflict within an established church. Eight pastors were interviewed using a series of research questions that guided the study.

This chapter examined the ways in which a long-term pastor's understanding of leading change within an established church had been formed. This exploration included discovering the factors that had shaped their knowledge and expectations for pastoral leadership, conflict, and significant change.

Two themes emerged from asking the participants to define pastoral leadership. First, participants tended to emphasize one side of pastoral leadership over another. A second theme is bound up in the first, in that participants defined pastoral leadership more by what it is not, than by what it is.

In addition to understanding the factors that shaped pastors' understanding of pastoral leadership, the researcher wanted to find out how pastors defined significant change. Two themes emerged from this area of research. First, the same leadership

experts had influenced a number of the participants. The second finding that emerged

suggested that the direction of significant change tended to be inward-focused, towards

individual change or internal operations dynamics.

The researcher also asked participants to reflect on what had shaped their

expectations and understanding of pastoral leadership. Two themes emerged from this

area of research. First, the participants felt that seminary did not and perhaps could not

have fully prepared them for the demands of pastoral leadership. Second, all eight

participants felt that experience and self-guided learning helped them better understand

pastoral leadership.

This chapter also examined the extent to which pastors have experienced conflict.

The second research question focused on the ways and extent to which long-term pastors

have experienced conflict as a result of leading what they described as significant change.

All eight pastors had experienced various levels of conflict as a result of change. Whether

it was directly or indirectly related to their intentional orchestration was dependent upon

a number of factors. Participants were asked to reflect on a critical incident, and three

themes emerged.

The first theme that emerged was that conflict is something "that happens to a

pastor." A second theme, somewhat related to the first, was a sense of surprise or being

"caught off guard" by conflict. A third theme relates to the ways in which conflict

provided personal awareness as pastors contended with how they respond to conflict and

the resultant impact on their leadership.

This chapter also examined the ways and extent to which long-term pastors

orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. The first question asked whether

pastors perceived from scripture that Christ orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. All eight pastors affirmed Christ doing so. The pastors were also asked if they had orchestrated conflict to lead significant change. The third research question asked in what ways and to what extent long-term pastors have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. The result was three distinct groups and multiple themes.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. Specifically the study was designed to find out how pastors in established churches have led their congregational systems to become more outward-facing. The following chapter provides the results of that study.

Two areas of pertinent literature were reviewed. The first area of literature focused on leading change in organizational systems. That literature suggests the only way to lead significant change is through the strategic orchestration of conflict. The majority of this literature was written about non-ecclesial organizations.

The second area represented literature from within ecclesial concerns. This literature focused on conflict within the church. It presented insights regarding conflict management and the restoration of relationships. What became clear is that an inconsistency or gap exists between these two areas of literature and their understanding of conflict. The two literature areas differed sharply concerning the role of leaders, mostly because the literature written from an ecclesial perspective views pastoral leadership differently than general leadership.

Pastors interviewed for this study indicated another kind of inconsistency, this one between the expectations of pastoral leadership they developed during their preparation for ministry, and their subsequent experience serving in churches. For this study I spoke

to twenty-five pastors from the United States, all within reformed Presbyterian denominations. Fifteen of these pastors participated in formal interviews, while the remaining ten agreed to speak with me informally, in private conversations. From the pool of fifteen formal interviews, I chose eight on which to focus this study. These eight pastors were chosen based on length of experience, geography, and years the church has been established. The pastors selected were also chosen because they represent three denominations within Presbyterianism. Three overarching research questions guided this study. Those questions are:

1. What informs a long-term pastor's understanding of leading change within an established church?

2. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors experienced conflict as a result of leading change?

3. In what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change?

The following chapter is both a summary and a discussion of the findings. The study highlights the relationship between pastoral leadership, conflict, and leading what would be considered significant change in a church. This study has shown that a gap exists between the expectations, training, and experience of pastors. In order to provide as clear a presentation as possible, the discussion is divided into three sections, guided by the aforementioned research questions. Following each section I will provide implications and suggestions based upon the research findings.

Discussion of Findings

The following discussion will be divided into three general areas. First, I will present findings related to pastoral leadership. The second area will cover findings related to pastors and their experience with conflict. The third area will focus specifically on the

ways in which pastors have led significant change through orchestrating conflict. Each

area will be subdivided based on particular themes that emerged in interaction between

the interviews and the literature review.

Pastoral Leadership

The first area of interest can be summarized by the overarching question that

drove this part of the study. What shapes a pastor's understanding of pastoral leadership?

In the process of answering this question, a number of factors emerged that provided

insight; however, these factors can all be placed under the heading of expectations versus

experience.

Before I briefly examine each of the factors it is important to provide an

explanation. During the process of interviewing the eight pastors and examining the

literature, it became clear that the ministry the pastors expected to do was not what they

ending up doing. In other words, while they felt seminary had prepared them for one

aspect of ministry, seminary failed to prepare them for pastoral leadership.

Thus, to some degree, their expectations and their experiences are not the same.

Two questions brought this to light: Did seminary prepare you for pastoral leadership?

How would you define pastoral leadership? The following summary provides insights

into the findings. The first deals with seminary and continuing education. The second

area looks at how pastors define pastoral leadership.

Expectation Versus Experience

Seminary and Continuing Education

All eight pastors said "no" when asked whether seminary prepared them for

pastoral leadership. That is not to suggest that their respective seminaries did not attempt

to prepare them. In fact, Ruth, Mantle, and Jeter all affirmed that their seminary did try to speak into the dynamics of pastoral leadership. However, the overall consensus was that as much as seminary tried to prepare them for pastoral leadership, it either did not or could not.

Author Albert Poirier affirms that new pastors are not equipped for pastoral leadership. He stated that many young pastors "enter their calling naively, believing that orthodox preaching, well ordered worship, and a sufficient number of different venues for discipleship will be all they need to grow their members in faith and their church in numbers."[444] His argument is that young pastors need a better handle on how conflict should be managed.

Mantle suggested that his seminary had prepared him to spend his days studying and "riding horseback" around his parish to visit his parishioners. Instead he found himself working on committees and dealing with conflict as his missional ideology came in conflict with long-held practices, values, and behaviors. He felt ill prepared for what he experienced in the early days of ministry.

Ruth expressed that his seminary attempted to help students make pastoral leadership applications. Nevertheless, he recognized an inconsistency between his expectations and his experience when he joined the staff of a large established church. The advice he received from his seminary professors was simply to go and love people well.

Hoge and Wenger write that pastors often find themselves doing work they did not expect when they entered ministry. Many of them express feelings of "strain,

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444 Poirier, 9.

weariness, burnout and frustration,"[445] and, as a result, leave ministry. These authors

further state that most pastors enter ministry expecting to "devote themselves to

preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry but instead find that they need to spend the

majority of their time on institutional tasks, administration, and program planning."[446]

The pastors I spoke with agree with these authors. Hoge and Wenger suggest that when a

pastor is "forced to do unwanted tasks, especially outside one's specific professional

skill," it impacts them emotionally and professionally.[447]

Mantle said in the first few years of his ministry he was not sure he was "going to

make it." That feeling was due to an inconsistency between what he felt he had been

prepared to do as a pastor and what he found himself doing. In fact, each of the pastors

pointed to an inconsistency between the training they received in seminary and actual

day-to-day pastoral leadership. Seminary, specifically at the Master of Divinity level, did

little to prepare them for administrative work, dealing with conflict, committee work, and

leadership that is a normative part of a pastoral call.

As a result, all eight pastors pursued additional study and equipping through

continuing education (i.e., reading, conferences, and or Doctor of Ministry programs) or

self-directed reading and study. Four of the eight pastors obtained a Doctor of Ministry

degree. One pastor, Maris, is pursuing his PhD. Berra stated that his Doctor of Ministry

program provided the key training he felt he needed. Many of the pastors attended

conferences on leadership or conflict management through their denominations or other

venues.

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[445] Hoge and Wenger, 115.

[446] Ibid., 116-117.

[447] Ibid., 117.

Five of the eight pastors had read Ron Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Patrick Lencioni as part of their additional training and self-study. How well they had incorporated that literature into their ministry was not specifically assessed. However, it became clear in the case of Maris and Jeter that they felt orchestrating conflict was a necessary part of leading change. No other pastor mentioned a connection between Heifetz and Linsky and their willingness to orchestrate conflict.

Only Gehrig mentioned sources that were written from the perspective of church leadership. In other words, when asked what they had done to help close the gap between their seminary training and their experiences, seven of the pastors turned to secular sources. Interestingly, when it came to examining leadership, no one mentioned studying the Bible or looking at the leadership of Christ. Maris mentioned keeping a check on being gospel-centered. Berra suggested the Bible was not intended to be a book on leadership. In fact, he suggested that outside sources such as Heifetz and Linsky were preferable.

Defining Pastoral Leadership

It was clear from each of the pastors that their training in seminary had not prepared them fully for their experience in pastoral leadership. However, given that all eight of them had pursued additional studies regarding ministry leadership, it seemed appropriate to ask each pastor to define pastoral leadership. I asked the pastors to provide either a definition or an idea of how they would design a seminary course on pastoral leadership. Their answers highlight a second way that pastors have come to understand pastoral leadership through the perspective of expectation and experience. Two notable factors emerged.

First, the pastors tended to emphasize either the word pastor or the word leadership. What is interesting about this is how it relates to those who cited leadership theorists as a source and those who did not. In a few cases, those pastors whom Heifetz, Linsky, Williams, Lencioni, and Ford had influenced focused on the leadership dynamics of pastoral leadership. The second factor is how pastors reflected on their experiences as associate or assistant pastors in order to define pastoral leadership. Their experience was directly related to their relationships with other staff, most notably senior pastors. These respondents focused on examples of what pastoral leadership is not, based upon their experience and relationship with other pastors.

An Emphasis on Pastoral Care or Leadership

It is important to define what I mean by emphasizing one word (pastor or leadership) over another. In the case of emphasizing a pastoral side over leadership, pastors tended to focus on the shepherding dynamics. Ruth and Jeter described this as a "chaplaincy" style of pastoral leadership. In this model pastors are caretakers.

For instance, Berra noted that pastors should be less focused on stirring things up and more focused on "faithfully teaching the scriptures and shoring up the foundations of people's lives." He suggested he was more pastoral by nature, which meant that he was more concerned with building consensus than being a catalyst for change. He said that trait served him well, given that churches like his own of under a hundred people "don't need much of a leader." The demands he faces in a church of that size are different than those faced by a pastor in a larger congregation. While there may be more emphasis on the pastoral side of leadership in a smaller congregation, I would suggest that need for leadership is still very evident.

In his book, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, Poirier states, "Peacemaking is the embodiment of pastoral ministry even as Christ is the embodiment (incarnation) of the God of peace . . . every moment of a pastor's life is a moment wherein we call others to be reconciled to God."[448] Marlin Thomas calls pastors to move from generalists to specialists in an effort to shepherd hearts. A minister "must be more than just a pastor; he must be skilled in taming of the hearts," because God "desires to use sensitive, skilled human agents in that effort."[449]

In contrast, the language of vision could be heard among those pastors who seemed to focus more on the leadership aspect in defining pastoral leadership. Gehrig pointed out that pastoral leadership is when a pastor can "demonstrate their own sense of passion, interest, and zeal for the particular direction they believe the Lord wants them to go." In other words, Gehrig believes pastoral leadership focuses on taking a church in a well-defined direction towards a clear vision and mission.

Consistent with this view of pastoral leadership, authors Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky highlight the importance of keeping a vision in front of people within an organization, especially during difficult times. They write, "To sustain momentum through a period of difficult change, you have to find ways to remind people of the orienting value—the positive vision—that makes the current angst worthwhile."[450] Although not cited by any of the pastors, author Mark Gerzon agrees with Heifetz et al., pointing out that leadership requires "an integral vision of where the organization [is] going and a strategy for getting there."[451]

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[448] Poirier, 87.
[449] Thomas, 67.
[450] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 120.
[451] Gerzon, 67-68.

Maris and Mantle are the only pastors who seemed content to sit in the tension between the words "pastor" and "leader." When asked to define pastoral leadership, Maris focused on a pastor's ability to build relationships, focus people on the "implications of God's word," and "build consensus around a particular direction." His definition seemed to focus on pastoral leadership as two equal parts of the pastoral vocation. It is important to note that Maris is one of the pastors who understood the value of orchestrating conflict in order to lead significant change, which I will address later in the chapter.

Experience as a Teacher

Pastors also reflected on their observations of other pastoral leaders to construct their definitions of pastoral leadership. In other words, pastors defined pastoral leadership based on their experience serving under the leadership style of other pastors, especially senior pastors. In the course of the interviews, a number of the pastors reflected on specific experiences in their careers and used those experiences to define what they believed to be either good or bad pastoral leadership.

In their research, Hoge and Wenger cite conflict with other staff as one of the reasons for ministers leaving parish ministry.[452] In fact "troublesome conflicts with staff or clergy" is one of the top reasons that associate pastors reported for leaving parish ministry. The conflicts were generally "over pastoral leadership styles" and often involved a senior pastor.[453]

Hoge and Wenger report that associates felt "powerless," and that their senior pastors were "controlling or micromanaging." Some said their senior pastor was

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[452] Hoge and Wenger, 29.
[453] Ibid., 80-81.

"unaccustomed to having an associate and did not welcome them." Others felt they were "subject to the whims of the senior pastor."[454]

Interestingly the pastors who focused on the leadership of other pastors as a way to define pastoral leadership all served in associate positions, either previously or currently. As a result of their negative experiences, they were determined to go in the opposite direction of what they had experienced. They shared insights about the difficulties of working for pastors they termed "hero" leaders.

Berra recounted having to leave his first call because of conflict with his senior pastor over differing expectations. Berra expected to be doing "pastoral ministry" consistent with his gifts. Instead, Berra said, the senior pastor expected Berra to advance his boss' ministry. In other words, Berra felt his job was more about serving the needs of the senior pastor than the needs of the congregation.

Jeter and Ruth shared their experiences with different hero leaders. In both instances, the senior pastor was highly conflict-avoidant, was the chief speaker and singular voice for the congregation, and led staff and parishioners primarily with words versus modeling behaviors. Jeter and Ruth both felt their job was to make sure the anxiety levels of the system were bearable for the leader.

Mantle felt he was unable to make a lot of changes in his area of ministry due to the impact it would have on senior leadership. In all three cases, these pastors talked about having to work around the senior leadership. To some degree, in learning how to work around the senior leadership, they learned the value of working with teams of key stakeholders around a shared vision.

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[454] Ibid., 81.

Implications

Experience is a grand teacher. A challenge to learning from experience is found when seminary training prepares pastors to have certain expectations, especially as it relates to pastoral leadership. The pastors in this study all reported an inconsistency between what they had been taught and what they experienced in the day-to-day pastoral call. All of them turned to continuing education in some form to help bridge the gap.

It is clear from this study that experience, more than seminary training, taught the pastors in this study about pastoral leadership. It is not a simple task for seminaries to provide pastoral experience for students, but it is necessary task and one that needs improvement. In some cases the experiences that the pastors' related were painful and caught them off guard. This is something that will be explored further in the second and third sections of this chapter. Nevertheless, these painful experiences, especially as they relate to pastoral leadership and conflict, are inevitabilities that seminaries can better prepare pastors to encounter as normative.

Perhaps seminaries should teach future pastors to expect to continue their education, particularly in the area of pastoral leadership. Rather than giving the graduates impression they have mastered what they need to know in order to lead a church, seminaries could help pastors understand the need to be life-long learners. Seminaries should continue to focus on what they do well, but also prepare pastors to be students of their congregations, experiences, emotions, and congregational systems.

In addition, most pastors leaving seminary are going to serve in assistant and associate roles. They will do more administrative work than they anticipate. They will face conflict, and they will need to work with other staff. Seminary training leads some

pastors to expect to be in private study more than in positions of significant leadership. Seminaries should work much more closely with the local church in order to help bridge the inconsistency between what pastors actually experience and what they are being taught to expect.

Pastors and their Experience with Conflict

The second area of this study focused on pastors and their experiences with conflict. A second research question guided this area of research. The question asked in what ways and to what extent have long-term pastors experienced conflict as a result of leading change. In the course of the interviews each and every pastor shared that they had experienced conflict as a part of the pastorate.

The pastors also shared what they had learned from their experiences with conflict. Their responses can be divided into two areas. One aspect of their experience, when brought together with the literature, highlights two distinct perspectives related to conflict and pastoral leadership. Pastors are caught between two approaches to conflict, either managing conflict to resolution or orchestrating conflict for change.

Each pastor's preference for one of these two approaches shapes how they understand the source and nature of conflict, their role in the conflict, and how conflict relates to pastoral leadership. Each pastor's perspective also informs a second aspect. While the first section addresses the pastors' experience of conflict related to its source, the second section focuses on what pastors learned about themselves and their approach to pastoral leadership.

Perspectives on the Source of Conflict

All eight pastors had experienced conflict in ministry, and all eight said their seminary training had not fully prepared them for the experience of pastoral leadership. As a result many turned to various books, conferences and Doctor of Ministry programs in order to understand how to navigate the waters of pastoral leadership. Depending on where they turned, they developed different ideas regarding the relationship between conflict and pastoral leadership.

The literature and the participating pastors represent various perspectives on the source of conflict. These different perspectives influence how pastors respond to the conflict they experience as part of pastoral leadership. The two responses can be categorized as either conflict management or conflict orchestration, and each will be evaluated in light of Jesus' model of redemptive conflict.

Management

The literature I classified as management towards restoration contends that conflicts within the church are due to conflicting (or different) desires. Sande and Poirer define conflict as "a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goal or desires."[455] George Bullard defines conflict as "the struggle of two objects seeking to occupy the same space at the same time."[456]

Sande suggests that conflict "always begins with some kind of desire," some of which are "inherently wrong,"[457] and others that are not wrong at all. These unmet desires have the potential of becoming idols,[458] which are at the heart of conflict.[459] Conflict of

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[455] Poirier, 29; Sande, 29.
[456] Bullard, 11.
[457] Sande, 12.
[458] Ibid., 14.

this nature has the potential to "rob us of immeasurable time, energy, money, and opportunities in ministry or business. Worst of all, it can destroy our Christian witness."

Poirier says that conflict results "when my desires, expectations, fears, or wants collide with your desires, expectations, fears or wants,"[460] and that conflict "brings chaos, darkness and confusion." He views the role of the pastor as a "peacemaker" who must enter into the conflict "with the brightest of lamps" in order to "guide his fellow brothers and sisters who have been blinded by conflict."[461] Poirer further states that conflicts "arise over conflicting allegiances to people or ministry styles."[462]

In his book, *Managing Church Conflict*,[463] Hugh Halverstadt joins Sande and Poirier in their assessment of the way conflicts happen. He sees "a Christian vision of shalom" as "the most fitting goal for an ethical process of conflict management." Halverstadt agrees with Sande's and Poirier's understanding that effective pastoral leadership involves peacemaking and "managing conflicts" as "a ministry of reconciliation." He also states that, "We do not do the reconciling. God does."[464] Like the previously mentioned authors, Halverstadt provides a multi-step conflict management model that encourages readers to see themselves as managers of conflict.[465] "Managing conflicts," Halverstadt suggests, "is a process of intentionally intervening by proposing constructive processes by which to deal with differences."[466] In other words, conflict can be summarized simply as differences.

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[459] Ibid., 115.
[460] Poirier, 30.
[461] Ibid., 35.
[462] Ibid., 30.
[463] Halverstadt, 5.
[464] Ibid., 82.
[465] Ibid., 19.
[466] Ibid., 10.

Orchestration

In contrast to this perspective on conflict, Heifetz, Grashow, Linsky,[467] Williams, Ford, and Lencioni suggest that conflict is a normal part of leadership.[468] While recognizing the dangers of poorly handled conflict, these authors contend that conflict is necessary for the health and progress of any system. They view conflict as a useful tool for leaders.

Heifetz and Linsky suggest that conflict is a normal part of leadership, especially as it pertains to leading adaptive change. An adaptive change is one that "stimulates resistance because it challenges people's habits, beliefs, and values." Adaptive change "asks them to take a loss, experience uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures." Adaptive change also "forces people to question and perhaps redefine aspects of their identity." Additionally, it often "challenges their sense of competence."[469]

Dean Williams shares a similar insight. He suggests that "real leadership . . . gets people to confront reality and change values, habits, practices and priorities."[470] To do this, a leader must recognize the value of conflict and tension within a system. Williams contends that work is "intensely emotional, often turbulent, and riddled with conflict."[471] Rather than managing conflict as a sinful problem, a "degree of tension, and even conflict . . . should actually be encouraged, not avoided, because it can generate the sparks that allow for new ideas to develop. The challenge is to keep everyone in the room long enough to achieve a breakthrough and ensure they do not flee."[472]

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[467] Heifetz and Linsky, 2, 101, 151.
[468] Lencioni, 202.
[469] Heifetz and Linsky, 30.
[470] Williams, ix.
[471] Ibid., 182.
[472] Ibid.

Lencioni adds that relationships are not healthy unless there is a certain degree of constructive conflict. According to him, that principle extends into all areas of life: "All great relationships, the ones that last over time, require productive conflict in order to grow. This is true in marriage, parenthood, friendship, and certainly business." Lencioni clarifies that "It is important to distinguish productive ideological conflict from destructive fighting and interpersonal politics."[473]

Kevin Ford suggests the challenge is that the attitude most churches have toward conflict is based on the "lie" that "change can occur without conflict."[474] That lie is often cemented when a pastor makes "the mistake of believing that part of their job is to protect people from pain—most often by minimizing conflict."[475] He believes that "change cannot occur without healthy conflict."[476]

With these things in mind, Heifetz and Linsky assert that leaders should not manage conflict but rather "orchestrate"[477] conflict. The authors confess that despite their default to "limit conflict as much as possible," the reality is that "deep conflicts, at their root, consist of differences in fervently held beliefs, and differences in perspective are the engine of human progress."[478] In other words, conflicts are generated as behaviors, values, loyalties, and practices are challenged. Those things need to happen if an organizational system is going to change. The authors suggest that leaders must "live dangerously" because they must "challenge what people hold dear"[479] in order to lead adaptive or significant change.

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[473] Lencioni, 202.
[474] Ford, 135.
[475] Ibid., 175-176.
[476] Ibid., 161.
[477] Heifetz and Linsky, 101.
[478] Ibid.
[479] Ibid., 3.

Jesus' Model of Redemptive Conflict

Another significant contrast exists between the idea that conflict should always be managed to restoration and the model of Jesus found in the Bible. Sande[480] and Poirier suggest that Jesus was a peacemaker, and so pastors should be as well. Poirier writes, "Failure to train our people and our leaders as peacemakers is a failure in Christology, for peacemaking is Christology."[481] Poirier points out that Jesus was about the work of reconciling sinful man to God through his atoning death and resurrection. He asserts the "gospel of Jesus is the message of peacemaking that we pastors bring to our people in conflict."[482] Further, "the mode or manner of peacemaking is shaped by Christ himself, who was humble and gentle of heart and would not break a bruised reed."[483]

The problem with Sande and Poirier on this point is their view regarding the presence of conflict within the church and what pastors are supposed to do about it. Equating "peacemaking" and "Christology" is shortsighted with regard to what Jesus calls his people to do. Poirier is overly simplistic when he suggests, "Conflict and sin are necessarily complex. Conflict brings chaos, darkness, and confusion. Peacemaking is . . . deliberate and necessarily simple."[484]

In contrast to the assertions of Sande and Poirier, the gospels show that Christ stirred up conflict. In calling people to be "peacemakers," Christ may actually be calling them to push against behaviors, beliefs, habits, and loyalties. In other words, Jesus is an example of a leader who orchestrated conflict in working towards adaptive change.

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[480] Sande, 32.
[481] Poirier, 26.
[482] Ibid., 27.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Ibid., 35.

The gospels report that in some instances, Christ deliberately created conflict. A case in point is in Mark 3:1-6. Jesus knew in this instance that the Pharisees were in opposition to him. He knew that they planned to use the man with a withered hand to trap him into "working" on the Sabbath. His question to them was provocative. The text is clear that he was grieved and angry over their hardness of heart. Jesus wanted these people to be reconciled to God, and he used conflict in an attempt to expose their hearts and help them see their need for reconciliation. He allowed people to sit in an uncomfortable tension. Whereas Sande and Poirier would assert that the ultimate goal is always reconciliation, there is no indication that Jesus pursued these men after that exchange to try and bring about reconciliation or restoration.

In another instance, Jesus cast the demons out of a man who was blind and mute (Matthew 12:24-37). The people were amazed, but the Pharisees accused Jesus of being the "prince of demons." Jesus clearly created conflict by exclaiming, "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Jesus' words do not reflect the approach to peacemaking that Poirier describes as being "shaped by Christ himself, who was humble and gentle of heart and would not break a bruised reed."[485]

Peter Steinke, although explicitly advocating for the orchestration of conflict, stated that Jesus "upset people emotionally."[486] In his interview, Mantle affirmed that Jesus was a master of letting people sit in tension. He explained that the life of Jesus (and thus Christians) "takes place against a backdrop of suspicion, opposition, and

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[485] Ibid., 27.
[486] Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 107.

crucifixion" and is "underlined with conflict." Mantle also pointed out that Jesus orchestrated a "tension" that was so acute it "led to crucifixion."

Herrington, et al., also suggest that Jesus "was the master at generating and sustaining creative tension."[487] Granted, Jesus was doing the work of restoring people to God and to one another, but the conflicts he engaged in were not simply about differing desires, but rather about fundamental beliefs and behaviors.

Sande and Poirier have established their ministry and work on the basis that pastors and all Christians are to be peacemakers. While there is a degree of truth in that assertion, it seems to fall short of the full measure of what Jesus meant. It is clear from the gospel accounts that Jesus could not have simply meant an absence of conflict or a healthy management of conflict within his church. His life and ministry were filled with conflict, much of which he orchestrated.

In his commentary on Matthew 5:9, Frederick Dale Bruner makes a similar distinction. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Bruner contends that "biblical shalom" or "peacemakers" is less about "inner tranquility" or "an absence of war" and more about right relationships between people, and between people and God.[488] Of course peacemaking includes reconciliation and right relationships, but Bruner explains that Jesus' words also point to biblical shalom.

Nicholas Wolterstorff contends biblical shalom means "each person enjoys justice," and is "dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature."[489] He asks, "Can the conclusion be avoided that not only is shalom

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[487] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 101.
[488] Bruner, 1:176-177.
[489] Nicholas Wolterstorff, 69.

God's cause in the world but all who believe in Jesus will, along with him, engage in the works of shalom?"[490]

Bruner points out the conflictual nature of Jesus' ministry. Though Jesus affirms the work of "shalom making," he had to "pass through a spiritual war with [his] family, the devout, and Bible teachers." Bruner suggests, "Peacemaking for Christians . . . is defined by the life and death of Jesus. The way Jesus does peace shapes the way we do it. This way is rough."[491] In other words, peacemaking is not simply about smoothing over conflict; sometimes peacemaking requires creating conflict.

If peacemaking includes concern about the flourishing of others, then pastors must encourage believers to develop a level of concern that includes action on behalf of others. That sort of change can be very difficult to foster. It would require telling people not to think of their own needs as their first or only concern. That challenge alone would push against personal beliefs, behaviors, and ways of thinking. This transformation of personal focus is closely connected to the idea of adaptive change. Jesus is calling his people to do the adaptive work of biblical shalom.

The fact that Jesus did indeed orchestrate conflict is in direct contrast to the notion that conflict is something to be managed and worked through in a particular way. Pastors are caught between the common notion that conflict is to be managed and Jesus' model of strategically orchestrating conflict. No matter which approach they espouse, pastors must deal with conflict. All eight pastors interviewed for this study had experienced conflict many times.

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[490] Ibid., 72.
[491] Bruner, 178.

While all of the participants realized they would face conflict, and to some extent had been prepared for it, four of the eight expressed surprise that conflict "happened to them." In fact, the notion that conflict just happened was a common refrain of participants. Conflict seemed to be a key reason why all eight pastors said they did not feel prepared for pastoral leadership. Indeed, conflict is one of the top reasons that pastors leave ministry.[492] It seems clear from the interview data that pastors do not understand the relationship between conflict and pastoral leadership.

Gehrig's statement that "I never dreamed conflict would happen to me," was representative of numerous other interviewees. And while saying he was hard-wired for conflict, Ruth was still surprised that it "arose from somewhere." Other pastors consistently used language such as "conflicts arose" or "conflict sort of happened" when talking about their experiences. In other words, while they knew that conflict could happen, they did not think that it would happen to them. They weren't prepared for the plain truth that as leaders of congregational systems, pastors will inevitably be involved in conflict.

Sande and Poirier foster this view that conflict is abnormal in their books. Sande's perspective is that conflict is something that pastors should be prepared to respond to and see as an opportunity to glorify God. In his Peacemaker Pledge, participants promise,

> As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict . . . We commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles: Glorify God . . . Get the Log out of Your Eye . . . Gently Restore . . . Go and be reconciled.[493]

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[492] Hoge and Wenger, 29; Poirier, 9-10.
[493] Sande, 259-260.

Poirier uses similar language. Building on Sande's framework, he suggests that young pastors emerge from seminary somewhat naïve. He says that "once in the pastorate . . . the reality of conflict and an inability to respond to it in a wise, godly and gospel manner soon cripple both their effectiveness as pastors and their church's witness."[494]

Given that so many of the pastors in my study had read literature focusing on the orchestration of conflict for leadership, I was trying to understand if they made the connection between the conflicts they experienced and the fact that orchestrating conflict is an important aspect of pastoral leadership. The majority of pastors did not. As Rizzuto stated, "I don't have to go looking for conflict, it comes looking for me."

I found that two of the eight pastors, while working through their experiences, did link conflict with pastoral leadership, largely because they had been impacted by Heifetz, Linsky, Ford, and Lencioni. Insights from these authors helped them take a step back and begin to do things differently, instead of continuing in their default responses as "feelers" and "people pleasers." None of the other pastors in the study mentioned a connection between their leadership and the conflict they endured.

In summary, six of the pastors did not see conflict as normative in pastoral leadership. Rather, they considered it as abnormal, out of place, and something to work through. To some degree they saw conflict as a failure of leadership and not a part of leading change. Yet, six of the eight pastors saw themselves as strategic leaders. All eight of the pastors talked about how going through conflict had impacted them and their understanding of pastoral leadership. However, the pastors experience with conflict extended beyond the source of conflict and other areas of their lives.

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[494] Poirier, 9.

Learning from Conflict: EQ Self—Soul Care and Pastoral Leadership

Dan Allender writes, "Leaders inevitably face conflict, and observing the relational struggles involved in such conflict reveals a person's character."[495] He is not alone in his views regarding the way conflict reveals a great deal about those who are going through it. Herrington, et al.., support the contention that leaders need to understand the dynamics of conflict and its personal impact. The authors suggest that leaders need to "see the anxiety in [themselves] and in the systems around [them]."[496] They also suggest that in order to be a calm presence in the midst of difficulties, it is important for leaders to "acknowledge the tendency of [their] hardwiring and the regular encouragement from [their] culture to blame and diagnose . . . It takes intentional, consistent effort to change these habits."[497] Furthermore, Herrington et al. suggest that leaders "who want to become less anxious learn to monitor their feelings."[498]

All eight pastors shared that they had learned a lot about themselves and about pastoral leadership from their encounters with conflict. Gehrig said, "as I look back on our conflicts, I wouldn't trade them in. I'm thankful because they taught me and shaped me and matured me and strengthened me and scared me and all that, but you need scars." He feels that God uses conflict to shape people and that conflict helped him to become a better pastor. At the same time, the process of learning from conflict was not simple. Many of the pastors expressed feeling like they were simply trying to survive. Mantle said, "I wasn't sure I was going to make it," as he related his experience in the first five years of his ministry.

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[495] Allender, 37.
[496] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 70.
[497] Ibid., 71.
[498] Ibid., 79.

Some described particular conflict situations as "life defining." The reason for this relates to Allender's remark about the ways in which conflict reveals character. While working through the emotional elements of conflict, a number of the pastors discovered more about who they are. Some mentioned learning that they were "feelers" and "people pleasers." Berra expressed being a feeler and that he wants people to "feel good and get along." He also learned that part of pastoral leadership requires putting those feelings aside. This process of acknowledging one's emotional responses is valuable because before a pastor can be engaged with the hearts of others they need to be "engaged with [their] own heart."[499]

The emotional aspect of conflict is important because the impact on pastors spills over into their marriages and ministry. Three of the pastors shared how their spouses could tell they were stressed and dealing with issues simply by the way they looked. Jeter said he became aware of the "tension" in his heart and noted that it impacted the way he felt about and treated others. He, like Maris, had to learn to push through his emotions, recognizing them but not allowing them to dominate him, in order to continue to lead change.

Being aware of the emotional dynamics of leadership is important. Heifetz and Linsky suggest, "We get caught up in the cause and forget that exercising leadership is, at heart, a personal activity."[500] These authors recognize that leaders involved in conflict often feel "beat up, put down or silenced."[501] The pastors I spoke to said they were impacted both physically and emotionally by conflict. Heifetz and Linsky say it is "easy

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[499] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 38.
[500] Heifetz and Linsky, 163.
[501] Ibid., 226.

to confuse yourself with the roles you take on in your organization and community."[502]

One way to avoid doing this is to "keep confidants, and don't confuse them with

allies."[503]

Maris and Gehrig made similar suggestions. Both of them learned the importance

of having people in their lives with whom they could speak openly and honestly. They

also pointed out how important it was for their wives to have confidants and close

friends. Heifetz and Linsky suggest that the

> job of a confidant is to help you come through the process whole, and to tend to
> your wounds along the way. Moreover, when things are going well, you need
> someone who will tell you that you are too puffed up, and who will point out
> danger signals when you are too caught up in self-congratulations to notice
> them.[504]

A number of participants reported the necessity of trustworthy confidants, both

for themselves and their spouses. Kevin Ford also recognizes the need for relationships

and extends an invitation to his readers to connect with him and his organization. He

reminds pastors, "God has created all of us as incomplete by ourselves," and as such

pastors need do the work of developing relationships beyond their local church.[505]

That advice is consistent with insights from Heifetz, Grashow, Linsky, and

Williams. These authors help leaders become aware of how conflicts impact them. This

knowledge is important for the health of the leader and the system. In every case, pastors

said that the emotional side of dealing with conflict impacted their pastoral leadership.

Rizzuto stated that he was fearful of conflict. He believes he is to be a peacemaker

and not a strategist. Gehrig talked about being conflict-avoidant. In most cases, even

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[502] Ibid., 187.
[503] Ibid., 199.
[504] Ibid., 200.
[505] Ford, 251.

when it was necessary to turn up the heat, he was more than willing to let things go for a long period of time rather than push too hard. Berra stated that though his experience with conflict revealed he was a people pleaser, he wasn't as concerned about leadership issues in his context, because "you don't need much of a leader in a church under a hundred."

What was clear in all the conversations is that conflict had an emotional impact on these men and their families. They did not go into ministry in order to fight. They went into ministry because they felt called to be about the work of gospel ministry. They had certain expectations that came with that calling. Dealing with conflict that arose as a result of being in relationship to others within the church surprised them, at least to some extent. They were also unprepared to deal with the emotional impact conflict had on them. It was one thing to talk about conflict in seminary; it was quite another to experience it as part of their vocation and calling.

Implication: Conflict as Normative in Pastoral Leadership

All of the pastors in this study experienced conflict in one form or another. The interviews and the literature —including the Bible—support the reality that conflict is part of the warp and woof of humanity. The literature and interviews also support the idea that conflict is normative and leaders must deal with it one way or another. Peter Steinke notes that a "conflict-free congregation is incongruent not only with reality but with biblical theology."[506]

While the presence of conflict is normative, the ways in which pastors undersand and experience it vary. First and foremost, no matter how healthy a congregation is,

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[506] Steinke, 119.

pastors need to be aware from the start there will be conflict. Conflict is part of every organizational system. As a result it, cannot be ignored or avoided.

Every family, marriage, and other sort of relationship has conflict. Hopefully the conflict is healthy and constructive, but that requires good leadership. It does not just happen. Healthy conflict is something that people have to work towards. Avoiding conflict also means avoiding the relational work that results from engaging in healthy conflict.

Second, it is important that pastors be trained to understand the relationship between pastoral leadership, leading change, and conflict. One pastor I spoke with shared his surprise when he started making suggestions and changes in an area of ministry for children. He was caught off guard when older members of the congregation accused him of trying to take over their church. In fact one woman was so angry over changes to a nursery she pointed her finger in his face and screamed, "There are too many baptisms here. We need to keep these kids in the basement. Kids stink."

The pastor was surprised because he thought he was doing something good and positive. He could not see how anyone could misconstrue his motives to provide good ministry for children into a political agenda. It is important to note that this pastor had been trained in conflict mediation through Peacemaker Ministries.

Pastors need to think differently about conflict and pastoral leadership. Seminary could provide valuable help in this area. In essence, pastors' expectations and training are not matching up with their experience of the day-to-day running of the church. This inconsistency also impacts the ways in which pastors provide leadership for their congregations. Throughout the interview process a number of the pastors said they did

not orchestrate conflict because they were conflict-avoidant or people pleasers. Their response was the same whether conflicts "arose" out of a wrong desire, or could "arise" as a result of strategically orchestrating conflict in order to lead change.

However, if Heifetz, Grashow, Linsky, Williams, Ford, and Lencioni are correct, no adaptive or significant change happens without conflict. Kevin Ford suggests the attitude of most churches is a major challenge. He contends that many pastors and congregants believe "the lie that change can occur without conflict."[507] Making matters more challenging, Ford states that pastors make the mistake of "believing that part of their job is to protect people from pain—most often by minimizing conflict."[508]

I believe a paradigm shift is needed in how pastors understand pastoral leadership in four ways. First, a shift needs to occur in the way we look at Jesus as our Master and Lord. Clearly Jesus calls us to follow him. This means that pastors, like all Christians, are to do all that they can, relying on the Holy Spirit, to emulate Christ's example. Imitating Christ does not necessarily mean adopting Sande and Poirier's interpretation of Christlike peacemaking.

From my reading of the gospel accounts, it is clear that Jesus often orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. Jesus was known for orchestrating conflict in order to push against the behaviors, beliefs, loyalties, and values of men and women. If Jesus used conflict in this way, pastors should as well. I will look at this area in more detail in the next section on Pastoral Leadership and Significant Change.

Second, as a result of Christ's example, pastors must reconsider the way they understand pastoral leadership, especially as it relates to conflict. Pastoral leadership is

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[507] Ford, 135.
[508] Ibid., 19.

connected to Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4:11-16 regarding the work of spiritual

maturity.

> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

From this text in Ephesians, the apostle Paul encourages those who have been

called to "equip the saints" to speak "the truth in love." That notion supports the idea that

pastoral leadership requires pastors to push, both as pastors and leaders, against behaviors

and beliefs that are not in accord with spiritual maturity and growth. Doing so will almost

certainly cause some level of conflict. This approach does not wait to respond to conflict,

but rather steps right into it.

The life of pastor Martin Luther King, Jr. offers an instructive example. King was

a controversial figure in the church. Many pastors within the reformed community feel

his understanding of scripture was not orthodox enough to use him as an example. Others

contend that his orthopraxy is questionable. However, I believe that King[509] led change

within and outside of the church context out of his understanding of God's call for

justice, at least initially. For King, the call for justice extended beyond himself and his

congregation into the civic realm. It is clear from the literature that King orchestrated

conflict in order to push against the injustices that were placed upon African-Americans.

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[509] Branch; King and Clayborne Carson.

The call to the mission of shalom requires a similar tack. In my experience over the last ten years in ministry I have heard a number of pastors talk about the mission of shalom. Most of these pastors were associated with church plants. I have often wondered if established churches could make the sort of change that would allow them to become outward-focused as opposed to insular, so that they could work for the flourishing of others. I have come to the conclusion that this change can only happen if pastors are willing to orchestrate conflict in order to lead significant change.

With this principle in mind, it is important to consider a third dynamic. Conflict is a normative experience for pastors, whether they strategically orchestrate it or not. Pastors feel conflict, sometimes deeply; it significantly impacts their ministries and families.

Thus, it is important for pastors to understand that pastoral leadership and conflict go hand in hand. It is normative for them to feel the emotional impact of conflict. In my opinion, it is preferable for pastors to learn how to wisely and gently orchestrate conflict rather than merely respond as recipients and reconcilers.

Seminaries should continue to offer instruction that helps pastors understand themselves and how they respond to difficult situations. Churches would do well to do the same sort of work with their officers and staff. Before someone is allowed to take on a leadership role, it would be wise to ensure they are able to articulate how they respond to conflict and how they interact with others.

Pastors and elders should know, prior to their calling, how they respond to conflict. What is their normal reaction to conflict? How are they going to handle it when— not if— it comes? How does conflict impact their relationships with their spouse,

their children, and those they have been called to serve? How do they define pastoral leadership?

In the final analysis, conflict is normative. To avoid conflict is to avoid pastoral leadership. To avoid conflict is to avoid learning deep truths about the gospel and ourselves. To only see conflict as something to manage and not something to orchestrate is to avoid the real work of leading congregations toward significant change that could have a positive impact on our cities, neighborhoods, neighbors, and families.

Pastors Orchestrating Conflict for Significant Change

The final area of interest involved discovering the ways and extent to which pastors have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. This is the area that I felt would shine the greatest light on how pastors in established churches lead what they consider significant change. In the course of researching the literature and conducting interviews, I was trying to understand how pastors in established churches had led the sort of change that helped an established congregation to be outward-facing and/or engaged in the mission of shalom.

I asked the eight pastors to define significant change. Then I asked how they determined what significant change is needed in their congregational system. This line of questioning was an attempt to understand how pastors evaluate what needs to change within their congregation. I also wanted to understand what value they placed on vision, how they factored system dynamics into their thinking, and how they carried out the change.

Second, I asked the eight pastors to reflect on Jesus as a leader. Did they see Jesus using conflict in order to lead change? It is important to note that all eight pastors agreed

that Jesus used conflict, and even orchestrated it, in order to lead significant change. Mantle said, "Yes, Jesus was a master of orchestrating conflict." Jeter said, "Oh yeah. I see him doing that a lot. I see him creating conflict. He used anxiety and conflict to get people to move —all the time. There is a leadership skill there that's hard."

With that in mind, I asked the pastors if they had considered Jesus' example as one to emulate. Had they orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change? If so, they were asked to describe it, and if not, they were asked why they had not.

This line of questioning was designed to determine whether they had orchestrated conflict in order to lead what they defined as significant change. I also wanted to understand how their study of the life and ministry of Jesus factored into their decision-making, especially with regard to pastoral leadership and change. What emerged from this area of research is a considerable difference among the pastors and the churches they are leading.

In the following section I hope to highlight these differences by describing the ways pastors defined significant change. This section will also provide insight into the ways that vision and systems impacted each pastor's willingness and ability to orchestrate change. In addition, Jesus' orchestrated use of conflict and a pastors' willingness or unwillingness to follow his example will be explored. In the final area I will discuss the implications the findings have for pastoral leadership.

Definition and Direction of Significant Change

Throughout this study I have used the terms significant change and adaptive change, and I have done so deliberately. From my viewpoint the words are interchangeable. However, given that a majority of the pastors I spoke with were familiar

with the work of Heifetz, Linsky, Grashow, and Williams, I did not want to overly influence the direction of the conversation.

I was hoping to hear each of the pastors define what they considered a significant change in their own words. When asked to define significant change, six pastors (Jeter, Maris, Dimaggio, Gehrig, Mantle, and Ruth) used the word adaptive at some point during the conversation. This point is important because according to the literature that advocated orchestrating conflict, (particularly Heifetz, Linsky,[510] and Ford)[511] a significant or adaptive change will not occur without the orchestration of conflict. This is an important factor given that the majority of pastors in the study referred to themselves as conflict-avoidant or people pleasers. Also, it is important to note that all of them said they were not as prepared for pastoral leadership as they could have been when they entered ministry. It is clear from the literature advocating conflict orchestration that leadership requires the willingness to enter into difficult matters and provide direction. Often that means stepping into conflict, or even creating it, as the situation warrants. As Heifetz and Linsky have written,

> Exercising adaptive leadership requires that you be willing and competent at stepping into the unknown and stirring things up. Most people prefer stability to chaos, clarity to confusion, and orderliness to conflict. But to practice leadership, you need to accept that you are in the business of generating chaos, confusion, and conflict, for yourself and others around you.[512]

Williams agrees. He contends that leadership requires getting people to see reality, to see things for what they are, and to recognize the problems that need to be addressed. Doing so requires leaders to stir "people to action by forcing them to confront what they cannot see or refuse to see . . . Provocative intervention might throw the people

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[510] Heifetz and Linsky, 30.
[511] Ford, 135.
[512] Heifetz and Linsky, 206.

into a temporary state of disarray, but if properly orchestrated, it also generates a tremendous opportunity for deep learning."[513]

The challenge for pastors is that orchestrating conflict requires them to make people uncomfortable. Some pastors, including Berra, are unlikely to adopt that approach, because they believe a pastoral leader should provide comfort and create as little disturbance as possible. Williams, on the other hand, states that leaders cannot allow "problems to be ignored," or allow people to play it "too safe in the name of maintaining harmonious relations, keeping the peace, and appearing loyal. For the group or organization, if leadership is not exercised to get the people to confront reality, danger awaits."[514]

Nevertheless, six of the eight pastors understood, from the conflict orchestration literature, that a significant or adaptive change within a church would mean challenging what people hold most dear— their beliefs, practices, traditions, ways of thinking, and loyalties. These six participants presented a number of insights. Mantle provided a sociological perspective regarding significant change.

Mantle said a significant change is one "where there is cultural movement, suppositions are challenged, and there are a new set of assumptions that govern people's behaviors." Within that category the way people view others and their needs will need to change. That sort of change is significant change. Mantle suggested that significant change is not "just adding new things into their repertoire, but rather a fundamental rethinking of assumptions," which then leads to a new set of behaviors and patterns. He did not, however, connect that such change would occur through conflict.

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[513] Williams, 72.
[514] Ibid., 64.

Berra suggested that a significant change happens when pastors provide opportunities to be "agents of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). In some respects, this definition of significant change echoes the mission of shalom. He said, "There are certain people who choose to identify a need. Then they choose to lead in that direction. The need tends to find the person who will do the work of addressing it." From his perspective, providing his congregants opportunities to pour themselves into something positive allows them to change. That has been a helpful approach for him, given the issues his denomination has been experiencing in recent years. He made no mention of orchestrating conflict in order to make positive changes.

While aware of the ways in which Heifetz and Linsky defined "adaptive change," DiMaggio suggested significant change is "moving people, not institutions, toward sanctification." He suggested that as people change, the system will change organically. Rizzuto suggested significant change is more about a particular person rather than the whole of the local church. In other words, change is about impacting the heart of a person rather than system.

Gehrig defined a significant change as one in which there is a "change from a classroom, knowledge-based, Christian education program to a life-on-life discipleship emphasis." This change moves beyond the "walls of a classroom" to being invested in each other's lives. This movement can be a "pretty big change if you're in a traditional classroom-based Christian education church." However, as noted, Gehrig's church began as a missional church whose congregation desired to reach the unchurched and non-Christians within their community.

One key item emerged from this area of research that is of critical importance to understanding how pastors lead change in established churches. The majority of the change mentioned by the pastors was directed inwards. The examples provided by interviewees had primary implications for the congregation, the staff, or for the governance structures of the church. In other words, any efforts to help the church to be more outward-facing were secondary.

There were two exceptions. Only Maris and Mantle focused on leading change that had outward-facing, mission of shalom implications outside of their church. In these instances of change, pursuing a mission of shalom was of primary importance. Of note is that these two pastors serve congregations that are on the opposite end of the age spectrum in terms of the number of years they have been established.

While I recognize the importance of internal matters, i.e., governance structures, operations, and staff relationships, this study was designed to look at how pastors help established churches become more outward-focused. It became clear to me through the interviews that these pastors were primarily concerned about operational issues, congregational development, and caring for parishioners. The following section addresses how pastors evaluated what constituted a significant change and what factors they considered.

Evaluation, Vision, and Systems

After asking pastors to define significant change, I asked them how they determined what significant changes needed to take place within their congregational system. I was hoping to discover the tools that pastors used to evaluate those changes and

to see how they understood the importance of vision and of systems theory. The following discussion relates those findings in interaction with the literature.

Berra's church holds an all-church leadership retreat every year in order to re-examine their core values and purposes. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky support such periodic re-examination because "effective visions have accuracy"[515] that members of an organizational system can tie into. Over the course of the retreat there is a great deal of discussion, and many questions related to where people are theologically and emotionally. There is also an effort to help clarify where they are trying to go and how they are going to get there. This process affords the leadership an opportunity to come together on what needs to change in light of their vision.

Berra shared that his session is "gun shy" because of issues that his church and denomination have been facing for some time. Over the last few years a number of people have left the church over significant issues within the denomination. His session, recognizing the dynamics of the family system, wants to "minimize the issues." In some regards Berra's system is conflict avoidant. Heifetz, et al., warn that leaders must "let people feel the weight of responsibility for tackling"[516] hard issues and concerns. To do so, however, would elicit conflict that Berra does not want to face.

DiMaggio focused on spiritual dynamics. He said one way he discerned what needed to change was through a "convergence of listening to God and listening to people." Change, he said, happens through relationships and the fact that Jesus is building his church. Jesus brings people into his church to do the work he is calling them to do. DiMaggio did recognize that system dynamics play a part. He said, "The greatest anxiety

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[515] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 113.
[516] Ibid., 109.

and the darkest times in ministry come for me when I have forgotten that that the church is a body and Christ is the head."

Herrington, et al., remind us that a congregation is a living, relational system. They say, "Whenever you engage in a relationship that is long-term, intense, and significant, you become emotionally connected to one another in a living system."[517] DiMaggio feels he is able to provide leadership for his congregation because he is with them, listening to them, and learning who they are and what they are dealing with. However, he doesn't see himself as the lone soldier. He recognizes that he is part of the congregation.

Mantle shared similar insights. He said in the early days of his ministry he struggled and at times wanted to quit. Eventually, however he was able to see that Jesus was calling him into the messiness, the inefficiencies, and the difficulties of doing ministry life-on-life. He had gone from thinking of ministry as being "face-to-face," as a preacher to a congregation, to "shoulder-to-shoulder," as a pastor on a journey with his people. That metaphor shaped the way he understood the system and how he made decisions about what changes to make.

As Mantle got to know the congregation, he realized that the changes they needed to make were the same changes needed within himself. He said, "I was able to assess what needed to change because the things that so aggravated me about the congregation were also in me. I was working in a church that was similar to my childhood and to my white, middle-class culture."

Mantle is doing the work of trying to understand the emotional and spiritual maturity level of his parishioners. He recognizes that he is a bridge-builder or translator.

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[517] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 29.

He wanted to help the congregation move from being "missions minded" (in the sense that they outsource missions) to being an outward-facing, missional church. In order to do anything at all, however, he recognized he would have to be a shepherd and know his people. Osterhaus, et al., help to make this clear. They suggest that as part of any system it is important that leaders to know their people and the system in which they operate. "Leaders," they write, should understand "the emotional maturity of the people within the system as well as how they have been shaped to deal with anxiety and conflict."[518]

Jesus' Orchestration of Conflict

In the course of the interviews I asked pastors to reflect on the work and ministry of Christ. I asked if they could see Christ using or orchestrating conflict as a way of leading significant change. All of the pastors agreed there were occasions when Jesus orchestrated conflict as a way of leading significant change. Gehrig said that God "sovereignly used conflict" a great deal throughout the scriptures. Mantle concluded that Jesus was a master at allowing people to sit in the tension of conflicting beliefs and assumptions. He focused on the account in Mark 10:17-27 of Jesus and the rich young ruler.

Outside of the Bible, I was unable to find literature addressing Jesus' use of conflict. In contrast, there is much written about Christ as peacemaker and his ministry of reconciliation. Bible commentaries that focus on specific texts do provide some insight into Jesus' use of tension and conflict, however. As stated earlier, Bruner's commentary on Matthew 5:9 highlights the ways in which Jesus' ministry of peacemaking often required his involvement in conflict and spiritual war. This explanation of Jesus' ministry

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[518] Osterhaus, Jurkowski, and Hahn, 33.

is consistent with the idea that Jesus orchestrated conflict to advance authentic reconciliation.

Peter Steinke, though not necessarily advocating for the orchestrated use of conflict, does point out that Jesus "upset people emotionally."[519] He states as well that Jesus' life and ministry—and thus the whole of the Christian story—was "underlined with conflict."[520] Herrington, et al., agree with Mantle that Jesus "was the master at generating and sustaining creative tension."[521]

In a way Herrington, et al., point to Jesus making adaptive changes when they describe how he countered the idea of "the righteousness of the Pharisees" with the "righteousness of the Kingdom" (Matt. 5:20).[522] In addition, Jesus purposefully challenged the "image of a leader," as well as their "notions of what was most important in life" (Luke 12:16-21). They also note that Jesus "sustained this tension in the face of opposition on all sides."[523]

However, it is important to consider that while Jesus may have "challenged the image of a leader," the way individuals value or understand conflict impacts the way they understand pastoral leadership. It seems clear that Sande and Poirier view conflict as the result of desires wrongfully applied. Therefore Sande and Poirier consider conflict as primarily about interpersonal relationships that must be managed. They focus on Jesus as the one who can bring healing to conflictual relationships. I believe this is true as well, but I also see that Jesus often orchestrated conflict between people in order to lead them

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[519] Steinke, 107.
[520] Ibid.
[521] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 101.
[522] Ibid.
[523] Ibid.

to a saving, reconciling relationship with himself. Bringing them to relationship with himself often required challenging their ideas, ways of thinking, behaviors, and beliefs.

The pastors I spoke with and a few authors within the conflict orchestration category of literature agree that Jesus orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. However, Jesus never instigated conflict for conflict's sake; he always connected conflict to leading change. According to the literature, at a minimum leaders must be aware that conflict is a natural part of leading change and that it must be managed responsibly.

Pastors and Orchestration of Conflict

Given that pastors affirmed that Jesus orchestrated conflict to lead significant change, I asked if they had considered doing the same. Four of the eight said no; three said yes. One provided insights into why he was ambivalent about his ability to do as Christ had done; those insights will be examined in a separate section.

Again the importance of pastors' willingness to orchestrate conflict is related to the way significant change happens. The literature suggests that changes in behavior, belief, practice, etc., do not happen unless the status quo is challenged. It is clear from the gospel accounts that Christ used conflict in the lives of people to lead change.

The first group of pastors who said they do not orchestrate conflict reflected on their experiences and what they had learned about themselves. The literature affirms that leaders should be aware of the personality traits and characteristics they bring to their roles. It is important for pastors to understand how conflict and all aspects of leadership will impact them. Self-care is a big part of leadership, according to Heifetz and Linsky.[524] However, while it is important for leaders to take know and take care of themselves,

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[524] Heifetz and Linsky, 163.

doing so is not a reason to disregard their responsibility to use conflict for pastoral leadership.

When asked whether Jesus used conflict to orchestrate change Berra said, "Yes—but I'm not Jesus." He described himself as a person who is averse to conflict and wants to make sure people are happy. Lencioni's book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, had opened Berra's eyes to the idea that healthy conflict is necessary for a healthy team or staff. Berra was working through the implications in his own life and ministry, but he was not inclined to orchestrate conflict.

Gehrig offered similar insights. He said, "I'm conflict avoidant by nature. So I'm not looking for any more conflict." He knows God uses conflict to shape lives and make better pastors. He said it is fine if God allows conflict to come up, but he is not going to go out and stir things up. At the same time he said there are times when a pastor needs to "turn up the heat in the system" and pastors should be aware of the "tensions and anxieties" going on around them.

It is important to consider Rizzuto and DiMaggio together. Both of these pastors serve mission-focused congregations. These congregations are similar in that they are urban, nearly the same age, and serve diverse ethnic groups. Both congregations are concerned about the mission of shalom, even stating that focus in their promotional literature. Neither of these pastors felt that orchestrating conflict is part of their gifting or calling. In fact, from their perspective, conflict should be avoided because it takes time away from ministry.

Rizzuto said he hated conflict and that he is fearful of it because of the ways it negatively impacts mission. In fact, he has decided against program-heavy ministries at

his church specifically because they were a source of conflict in the past. He believes

conflicts drain away resources for ministry, and are a threat to being on mission together.

DiMaggio confirmed that God uses conflict to challenge and grow individuals, and therefore it is God's business to orchestrate conflict. He felt that the purpose of orchestrating conflict, even for Jesus, was about changing individuals rather than systems. In other words, he is unwilling to consider orchestrating conflict within a congregational system in order to bring about significant change. However, he is willing to let people sit in tension in a counseling session. DiMaggio is in a context in which the needs of the congregation and the community nearly match. The congregation itself is on mission together and that mission is largely outward-focused. Discipleship in his context has implications that impact the community.

It is important to keep in mind that both of these pastors are leading mission-focused congregations. When I asked them about conflicts within their congregations, both said similar things. In essence, they said they do not have a lot of time for petty conflicts. They felt the needs of those around them in their community are too numerous and too serious to allow for petty conflicts.

Both Rizzuto's and DiMaggio's congregations understand they are on mission together. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky have argued that an "incisive statement of the key issues that underlie a messy, complexified discussion orients people and helps focus attention productively."[525] DiMaggio and Rizzuto feel a similar dynamic is at work in their congregations. While people have certainly had their differences, they could see those differences in light of what the church is trying to accomplish.

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[525] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 113.

Vision and mission do not negate conflict. In fact it is through vision and mission that leaders are able to strategically orchestrate conflict for significant change. Developing vision and mission often create conflict, especially if the vision is taking the congregational system in a new direction.

The importance of a unifying vision and mission were important for the three pastors who said they had orchestrated conflict. In all three cases the pastors had to work from a unified vision of where they wanted to lead. For Maris, the conflict was about keeping the missional vision of the church intact. For Ruth and Jeter, orchestrating conflict was about establishing a vision and then aligning ministries with that vision.

In fact, all three pastors recognized that the issues they were bringing up were for the good of the whole, to help the congregation fulfill its larger purposes. Heifetz, et al., point out that "Defining a shared purpose is often a challenging and painful exercise because some narrower interests will have to be sacrificed in the interests of the whole."[526] Maris had to face just that situation.

When I asked about his experience orchestrating conflict, Maris pointed to an incident that occurred within the first ten years of the church's establishment. From the start, Western Heights wanted to be a church that lived out the mission of shalom within its context. As the church grew, they attracted people from other congregations within their community. These people, inadvertently perhaps, put pressure on Maris and other elders to adopt a philosophy of ministry that was more inward-focused. Essentially, they wanted the church to become more insular in its practices. Maris recognized this pressure as a threat to the core identity of the church and pushed against it. He utilized the shared

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[526] Ibid., 40.

vision and mission of the church to orchestrate the conflict needed to keep the vision intact and outward-facing.

Maris' response is consistent with Williams' insights regarding getting people to "wake up to the fact that there is a problem"[527] within the system, especially a problem that threatens core identity. Ruth, while serving as an associate, recognized that his abilities were limited by several factors. First, senior leadership had no agreed upon vision and mission. Second, he was serving under the leadership of someone he described as a classic hero leader. This senior pastor was conflict avoidant and highly "allergic" to anxiety within the system. Third, the system was divided into distinct ministry teams that, while cordial, served their own purposes. Ruth recognized that the church was in a difficult place.

Eventually Ruth approached the senior leader with the situation. He was met with resistance during this first encounter, but afterwards he began to work with other ministry teams to promote a unified vision for where things could go. He recognized, like Williams, that as a leader he was going to be dealing with "an unwillingness to change" with regard to "values or thinking to accommodate some aspects of reality."[528] Ruth began to organize collaborative teams of key stakeholders in specific areas to try to overcome this resistance to change. In the meantime, he continued to have conversations with the senior leader. He was able to provide some insights and bring about some aspects of change within the system. However, during the course of working to bring about internal changes, Ruth recognized he had taken things as far as he could. As a result he felt he needed to leave to pursue other interests.

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[527] Williams, 59.
[528] Ibid., 62.

It is true that leadership is dangerous.[529] Kotter warns that a "good rule of thumb in a major change effort is: Never underestimate the magnitude of the forces that reinforce complacency and that help maintain the status quo."[530] Jeter met those challenges after becoming a senior pastor. Having previously served as an associate under hero leaders, he was committed to being a different kind of pastor than the two he had worked under. Immediately he began the work of pushing against the expected behavior of a senior pastor.

Jeter recognized in the early days of becoming a senior pastor that his congregation was accustomed to a hero leader arrangement. Recognizing the dangers, he put together a team from within the session and other congregational leaders to develop a vision and mission. When people asked for his vision for the church he was willing to let them sit in tension rather than give into their anxiety—or his own. Jeter recognizes that he is a people pleaser and wants to win the affirmation of those in authority. Yet he pushed those things aside in order to develop vision through a collaborative effort.

Kevin Ford explains, "There are times when a leader must slow down the change process to regain authority. And there are times when a leader must orchestrate conflict to begin challenging expectations."[531] It seems that Jeter was doing both of these at the same time. By not giving in to the demands for an answer, he turned up the heat within the system.

It should be noted that in all three instances the significant change had the ministry and vision of the congregation as a primary purpose. Maris was working to

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[529] Heifetz and Linsky, 2.
[530] John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 42.
[531] Ford, 139.

maintain an outward-facing vision rather than working to change the vision. Nonetheless, even in that situation the matter of significant change orchestration had an inward focus. The implications related to Maris' efforts will be discussed later.

Mantle and the Mission of Shalom

One anomaly in this conversation emerged with regard to Mantle, an associate pastor in a long-established congregation. Mantle has been greatly impacted and influenced by the concept of the mission of shalom, along with the work of John Perkins. When I asked if he had considered following Christ's example of orchestrating conflict in order to lead change, he was reluctant to answer. The reason was simply that he was not sure if he was qualified to do so.

"I'm not in charge," Mantle explained. "It is difficult to orchestrate change when you are not in charge." Second, he had concerns that pastors would use manipulation and guilt instead of love in the process of orchestration. In other words, when Jesus orchestrated conflict he was doing so out of the law of love. A real problem can develop if pastors are not keyed in to their hearts and motives.

It is important to note that Mantle and a team of people have begun a ministry much like that of Rizzuto and DiMaggio. This work is coming out of a larger, long-established congregation. The ministry includes a worship service, a center for vocational training, tutoring, medical services, and legal aid. This holistic ministry came first, and then the established church began to support the effort. In other words, Mantle worked on something outside of the larger church culture. He established a work that is vibrant, growing, and engaged in the mission of shalom. The larger, long-established church endorsed it after the fact.

Implications and Summary

In the course of the research regarding the ways and extent to which pastors had orchestrated conflict to lead significant change, three implications emerged. These implications impact the ways in which pastors can provide responsible and adequate leadership for their congregations. The first implication involves established congregations and the mission of shalom. The second involves the direction of the significant change. The third implication has to do with the role of biblical imagination and the Pastor.

Established Congregations and the Mission of Shalom

Though Mantle did not orchestrate conflict, and the larger culture of the congregation has yet to show definite change, people are seeing what a mission-minded congregation can do as they watch Mantle and his team reach out to their urban neighbors. The larger church is being drawn to those efforts and they applaud them. However, the work is still viewed as a mission effort rather than the church viewing itself as missional.

Mantle and his team shared a passion and vision for bringing the gospel to bear on the city. Initially he tried to get the church involved, but the church resisted. On his own he and others took a page from John Perkins and moved into the city. His church was not directly involved. Mantle moved into the neighborhood and created a non-profit agency to provide a holistic social service ministry to area residents. Eventually he and a few other pastoral staff added a worship service.

At a later point Mantle was able to get the church involved. Perkins reminded Mantle and his team that their efforts should be connected with the church. It was after

Mantle and others were already invested in the project that the church came on board. In other words, the project had already been started and was doing well before the Session approved it.

The above comments are not meant to take away from what the Lord has done through Mantle. In fact, his approach may be a wise way to get a large, established, affluent congregation to move toward the mission of shalom. Mantle's approach may have been especially appropriate given the fact that he is an associate and felt he did not have the formal authority to orchestrate change. The culture may be slowly changing, as Mantle observed, but the needs of the community could not wait for the church to make the long, slow turn toward the mission of shalom.

Mantle stated that he was not in a position to orchestrate change because he was an associate pastor. It is fortunate for the people in his city the Lord was able to raise up a team around him that shared the same passion for bringing shalom to the city. One implication from Mantle's case is that if he had waited on the church to make the change he would probably still be waiting.

In the early days of his ministry Mantle was accused of being a social liberal. That reaction was a shock to him because he felt the work of bringing restoration and renewal to their city was part of the work of the gospel, part of the fruit of discipleship. In fact, he shared he had been taught this perspective of missional theology in seminary.

Nevertheless, in serving an established, middle-to-upper-middle-class congregation, Mantle's perspective was challenged. Fortunately, Mantle, his wife, and some close friends shared the view that the gospel should be making an impact on the broken places of their city through their lives. While Mantle was on staff with the church,

he family and some friends moved into the city with the hope of brining renewal and restoration.

Mantle continued to try to speak to the vision of the church but received little more than a polite hearing. All the while, he and his team were building relationships within the community, helping in the schools, developing vocational training centers, and securing legal and medical aid for the community. In the meantime the congregation was planning to create a site church in a high-end, fast growing area of the community. Very soon the decision was made to purchase property, with the hope of building a facility and beginning a worshipping community in the area.

In the meantime Mantle's family and some friends continued to live in the urban community and to develop relationships. However, they were aware that their efforts needed to be connected to a local church. They had been shaped by the work of John Perkins, who focuses on bringing renewal, reconciliation and redistribution to broken communities through the church. Mantle and the others wanted to do the same.

Over a period of time, changes in the economy and the relationships and trust they had developed in the community led to Mantle and his team starting a worship service in the community. This worshipping community is directly tied to the work that Mantle and others began when they moved into the neighborhood. Mantle and the other families moved into the urban area of their own accord; it was not something that was part of the church's strategic plan for mission and outreach.

Eventually, when the senior leadership and other leaders began to see the sort of work they were doing, they were drawn to it and wanted to support it. While they supported Mantle personally, as an institution they were only able to get behind what he

was doing "on the side" after other options did not work out, i.e., the church plant in the suburbs was impacted by the economic downturn.

In other words, Mantle, to some extent, worked outside the normal context of ministry in order to bring about a significant change within the larger system. He was, along with his wife and friends, able to establish a mission-focused work that was eventually supported by the established congregation. While it did have an impact on the established church, the church as a whole did not become outward-focused.

One implication of Mantle's experience is the fact that if he had waited for the church leadership to get on board, it would have been a long, slow, and uncertain process. As an associate, he did not feel he had the ability to orchestrate change, though he did try to speak into the process and build relational trust. Nevertheless, when it came time to move toward the city or move toward a site in the suburbs, the senior leadership moved toward a suburban site, despite the fact that Mantle, as the pastor over missions, was encouraging them to pursue missions in the city.

It took an economic downturn before the senior leadership was able to get on board with what Mantle, his family, and friends were already doing. In other words, the established church did not lead the change to make an impact on the city. It was through an "end around" that Mantle was able to get the established church engaged in an outward-focused ministry. This was not a deliberate, strategic move on Mantle's part, but in essence just the way things worked out. Ideally, a church's senior leadership asks how their discipleship efforts are impacting the surrounding community. I believe long-established churches will need to step up and begin to examine their behaviors, beliefs, and practices in order to be part of what God may be trying to do through them.

Direction of Significant Change

As each of the pastors defined significant change, I was initially focused on the idea that they were predominately impacted by the same authors and ideas that call for orchestrated conflict as a tool to lead adaptive change. Most of the pastors mentioned the word "adaptive" when they defined significant change. However, it was not until I was working through the data that I began to realize the direction of the changes the pastors mentioned; they always pointed toward the inner workings of the local church.

All of the pastors mentioned leading change. However, many of the changes they mentioned were along the lines of changing elements within worship services, hiring staff, moving classrooms, and changing curriculums. While pastors might experience conflict as a result of these changes, they are more likely technical rather than adaptive changes given that behaviors, beliefs, practices, and ways of thinking are not being challenged.

That is not to say the inner workings of the church are not important. They are very important for the day-to-day operations of the church. It may be that these sort of changes need to be enacted in order to gain the momentum needed for the church to become outward-focused. After all, as stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to explore how long-term pastors have orchestrated conflict in order to lead significant change. However, I am specifically interested in understanding how pastors have helped an established church to become outward-facing.

As I listened to each pastor and then reviewed the data, I realized that all the pastors, except for Mantle and Maris, were focused on significant change that primarily had internal implications for the local congregation. It may be that the pastors I spoke

with did not mention that they were working to become more outward-facing as part of the process. However, I do not think this is the case.

I believe the findings highlight that congregational leadership is focused on the inner workings of the local church as a primary function of their responsibilities. Such a focus may not have any direct or indirect impact on those beyond the church doors. The change has implications for the larger community only as a secondary matter, and generally that is not intentional. The primary purpose of the pastors in this study was to put together a better operating session or a clearer vision statement. While those things are important, they don't necessarily indicate an intentional, strategic move to be outward-focused.

As I listened to Maris, I began to realize another important implication. From what I was able to gather about Gehrig's and Berra's congregations, they began with a similar core identity and purpose as that of Maris, DiMaggio, and Rizzuto. In essence they started as mission-minded, outward-focused congregations. Both churches started in rapidly growing parts of their community. Their original visions were to be congregations who shared the gospel in a new part of the community. Their churches were evangelistic in focus and practice.

It seems from the interviews that while Gehrig's and Berra's congregations were once outward-focused and engaged in evangelism, their current focus is geared toward the day-to-day operations of running a church. In other words, their core identity and focus has shifted from outward-focused to insular. I do not think being insular is a mark of gospel health. When the majority of a church's efforts and time are spent on itself, the church does not seem to be in a position to bring hope to a broken community.

Maris shared that he had orchestrated conflict in order to retain the church's core value of being outward-focused. The threat to that identity of being outward-focused came from those who wanted the church to simply care for the needs of its members after the first few years of the church's establishment. Fortunately, Maris was able to lead adaptive change to keep them focused on being a missional congregation.

In essence, Maris became aware that his elders were being pressured by congregants to provide more for their needs. The elders were unaware that the pressure to provide greater congregational care in various forms (including Bible studies) was an attempt to make the church like other reformed churches that were sectarian and highly insular. Maris led an adaptive change effort by challenging the elders' and congregants' views regarding the mission of the church. Many of their ideas regarding the purpose of the church had been shaped by experiences in other congregations where the needs of those within the church came before anything else. Maris challenged those beliefs, and helped them focus on the vision and mission that constitute the church's core identity.

Biblical Imagination

Pastoral leadership requires courage. It is difficult to do things—or not do things—that disappoint people. Pastors, by calling and training, want to bring comfort to God's people. Therefore it is difficult for most pastors to allow congregants to sit in tension and to create challenges that raise anxieties. Nevertheless, pastoral leadership requires a willingness to confront behaviors, beliefs, and loyalties that keep people from growing in spiritual maturity or that threaten to undermine God's purposes in the world.

All systems have conflict, but healthy systems have healthy conflict. Leaders must be willing to determine how to help the system to be healthy. That often means

speaking the truth in love to those within the system. According to Kevin Ford, leaders must be willing to orchestrate conflict in order to lead adaptive change.[532] The experiences reflected in the data of this study show that gospel ministry will bring conflict. Challenging people's beliefs, behaviors, ways of thinking, and loyalties does create conflict; however, such conflict may be necessary when those issues are keeping them from being fully reconciled to each other, to God, to creation, and to their neighbors.[533]

However, five of the eight pastors I spoke with were hard-pressed to consider orchestrating conflict to lead significant change—even though they saw examples of Jesus doing that very thing. That, I believe, is a significant problem identified in this study. I believe one reason for this disconnect is a lack of biblical imagination and the neglect of the law of love.

I was surprised when Berra, after affirming that Jesus did orchestrate conflict, said, "Yes—but I'm not Jesus." His reasons for not orchestrating conflict were based on his personal concerns as much as not wanting to cause harm to the church. Gehrig and Rizzuto had similar issues.

I would say those concerns reflect a love of self rather than love for others. I would also suggest these pastors have failed to take the biblical narrative into account. What I mean is that the law of love calls Christians to put self aside and step into the messy, difficult situations that come from being in community with other believers. The law of love means that I am willing to make you uncomfortable for the sake of seeing

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[532] Ibid.
[533] Heifetz and Linsky, 2, 30, 171.

you come to know Jesus more fully. A biblical imagination helps me to see that when I

live faithfully, God will act.

Adopting a biblical imagination does not mean that everything works out

smoothly. In fact, many of God's prophets died as a result of faithfully proclaiming the

truth. This is where the law of love dovetails with a biblical imagination. Romans 8:31-39

says it most clearly,

> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against
> us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not
> also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against
> God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one
> who died—more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who
> indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall
> tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or
> sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are
> regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more
> than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor
> life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor
> height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from
> the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is important to be self-aware and to acknowledge the way conflict impacts us

personally. It is important so long as it does not become an excuse for not moving into

difficult leadership moments. Pastoral leadership requires a willingness to look to Jesus,

to follow him, to shepherd as he shepherds.

I believe that one of the great challenges to pastoral leadership is that pastors can

become overwhelmed by fear and anxieties when they call people to faithfully follow

Jesus. Rizzuto shared that he "hates conflict" and that he is afraid of it. Ruth and Jeter

talked about their experience with hero leaders who were impacted by anxieties within

the congregational system to that point that Ruth and Jeter felt they had to serve as

buffers for these senior pastors.

It is no easy thing that we, as pastors, are calling people to do. Pastoral leadership requires courage that comes when we have a robust biblical imagination and are shaped by the law of love. Having that courage means we are willing to orchestrate conflict within a system and with individuals in order to see the fruits of adaptive change. Pastoral leadership requires courage if pastors are to pursue God's purposes over their own.

In order to exercise pastoral leadership, pastors need a more robust biblical imagination, looking to the ways in which Jesus orchestrated conflict in a redemptive way as an example. Pastors must recognize that the biblical stories are true, because the implications of the stories about Jesus and his followers are as true today as they were then. God gave us the biblical story not only for the pulpit and classroom, but also so that we, as the shepherds of his sheep, may be encouraged to do the difficult things he has called us to do—not in our own strength, but in the strength and wisdom that God gives.

Summary

In order to provide a through summary of findings I have included a series of tables to give an overview. The tables focus on why pastors did or did not orchestrate conflict and the implications of their decisions and actions.

Why Pastors Do Not Orchestrate Conflict
Personal concerns, i.e., conflict avoidant, people pleaser, fearful of conflict, sensitive to anxiety
Concern for lack of training in the area of pastoral leadership
Understanding of Pastoral Leadership • Pastor's call is to bring comfort and cause no pain or stress to the system.
Previous experience
View themselves as recipients of conflict • Do not understand connection between leadership and conflict, i.e., leadership is a direct cause of conflict (recipients of conflict).
Position • Mantle felt his position as associate kept him from being able to orchestrate change. Literature highlighted associate pastors' relationship with other staff and job descriptions as a concern related to pastors leaving ministry.

Implications if Pastors Do Not Orchestrate Conflict

No Significant Change
   • According to literature, system will not change in significant ways[534]
   • Thus difficult to help church be outward-facing/pursue mission of shalom

Threats to Identity   • From perspective of Maris, threats to core identity of congregation will not be met properly if pastors are unwilling to engage conflict.
Pastors will experience conflict as part of leading and calling.
Assistant and associate pastors will sometimes feel the need to work outside the system in order to become missional or outward-focused (see Mantle).

Why Pastors Orchestrate Conflict
See Christ doing so and willing to do the same
Influenced by orchestration literature
Overcome their personal concerns   • While aware of their reaction to conflict, are able to work through it to lead change
Are concerned with mission of shalom
Lead by mission and vision, working with a team

Implications if Pastors Do Orchestrate Conflict
By working through their personal concerns they are able to see growth in others, themselves, and the system.   • See Jeter, working with a difficult person and able to help them to grow despite personal concerns
Helps in moving the system toward significant change and to protect core identity   • See Maris, threat to identity of congregation as outward-facing
Move system to become outward-facing/ pursue mission of shalom

How Pastors Orchestrate Conflict

Influenced by orchestration literature, pastors learned to
   • Understand power of systems and their part of the system: EQ-Self, EQ-Others.
   • Aware of the anxiety within the system, understood how much anxiety the system could take

Vision/ Mission Driven & Team-based   • Pastors worked in collaborative groups under an agreed vision and mission. With this framework they were able and willing to allow people to sit in tension and orchestrate conflict to move the system toward change.

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[534] Ford, 208, 222.

> Put Personal Concerns Aside
> - Pastors were aware of how they were reacting and feeling, and the impact it was having on their family. They had networks of friends, worked on spiritual formation, and encouraged their spouses.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further study could help identify and describe the challenges to core identity that happen within the first fifteen years that a church has been established. It may be of interest to see at what point the mission and purpose comes under attack, particularly if it is outward-facing. It would also be of benefit to provide insights into the ways that pastors orchestrate conflict in biblically redemptive ways. Perhaps a third area of research should investigate how assistant and associate pastors can orchestrate change. In addition it would be helpful to investigate the ways in which seminaries could work to select men and women for admission in order to properly prepare them for pastoral leadership.

Final Words

The purpose of this study was to understand how pastors have led established churches to change. My original inquiry began out of a combination of my experiences in the Southern region of the United States, and my introduction to the work of Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff. Having established an area for Young Life, I was asked several times if I had considered being a church planter. After speaking to over a dozen church planters who are eagerly trying to establish their congregations to be outward-facing, I wondered about the future of the established church. Can an established, successful, church change and become more missional and engaged in the mission of shalom?

That question has driven this research. It was clear from my research and personal experience that the work involved in leading that sort of change requires a great deal

from pastoral leaders. I believe that pastoral leadership is impacted by a gap that exists between what pastors expect prior to going into ministry (including expectations formed during the training period), and their experiences of pastoral ministry once in the church. It will take some time for pastors to learn that leadership often requires them to risk their jobs in order to bring about significant change. However, that kind of leadership is a requirement of the law of love: a love of God, of neighbor and each other.

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