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OVERCOMING CULTURAL AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS:
Exploring How Minority Pastors Overcome Leadership Challenges
In Majority Culture Congregations

By

Edward S. Koh

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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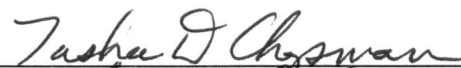
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. Exploring how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges requires an understanding of personal struggles minority pastors encounter due to cultural differences, systemic barriers they encounter because of the pervasive influences of racialization in the American church, and the crucial role of the Caucasian leadership and congregants that impact the ministry of minority pastors in majority culture congregations.

This study utilized a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with six minority pastors in the Presbyterian Church in America. The review of literature and analysis of the six interviews focused on three key areas that provided insights to how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. The three areas of focus were: minority leadership challenges, organizational culture, and multicultural leadership competencies.

This study found that the complexity of racialized patterns in the American church must be addressed in order for minority pastors to effectively overcome personal and systemic leadership challenges and thrive in majority culture congregations. The study further found that even when minority pastors encounter sustained leadership challenges, they can overcome by the means of grace God provides to fulfill his plan in majority culture congregations.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Leadership is about making a difference in life. It involves taking risks, being selfless, and working patiently with others. And by nature, leadership is challenging. In their book *Leadership on the Line*, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky state, “Leadership is worth the risk because the goals extend beyond material gain or personal advancement. By making the lives of people around you better, leadership provides meaning in life. It creates purpose.”¹ Leadership is a challenge because, in the words of Heifetz and Linsky, it is about providing “meaning in life” and “creating purpose.” Leadership might be “worth the risk,” but it is by no means an easy task to provide meaning in life and create purpose for the betterment of others.

Relationships in Leadership

Sharing a similar view to Heifetz and Linsky, in *The Leadership Challenge*, authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner explain the challenge of doing something beyond personal gain: “The most significant contribution leaders make is not simply today’s bottom line; it is to the long-term development of people and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper, and grow.”² Leadership, therefore, requires keen eyes to see the distant future, a persevering heart to love people and the organization, and skillful hands to equip people to thrive in an uncertain future. Kouzes and Posner conclude, “Leadership is an affair of the

¹ Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 3.

² James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), xvi.

heart.”³ Rightly done, then, leadership is a challenge because it gives life to people and to the organization: “Leaders breathe life into the hopes and dreams of others and enable them to see the exciting possibilities that the future holds.”⁴ According to Kouzes and Posner, the leadership challenge is to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.⁵ In other words, leaders must set an example that inspires and enables others to dream, improve, thrive, and celebrate in the face of difficulties, frustrations, and uncertainties. By nature, leadership is no easy task.

In *Primal Leadership*, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee echo Kouzes’s and Posner’s conviction regarding the most significant contribution and the challenge of leadership: “Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us.”⁶ How are leaders able to ignite passion and inspire the best in others? The key, they assert, is “the leadership competencies of emotional intelligence: how leaders handle themselves and their relationships.”⁷ This competency of emotional intelligence is so important to leadership that the authors argue, “Whether an organization withers or flourishes depends to a remarkable extent on the leaders’ effectiveness in this primal emotional dimension.”⁸ Leadership, then, is a challenge because it requires emotional intelligence to ignite, inspire, and move people to do their best and thrive, lest their organization “wither” away.

³ Ibid., 351.

⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 3.

⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁸ Ibid.

Influence of Leadership

But there is more to the challenge of leadership. Leadership requires not only knowing people, but also understanding the environment in which leadership takes place. Geert Hofstede, a pioneer researcher of organizational cultures, explains, “The effectiveness of leadership depends only to a limited extent on the leader’s traits and to a much larger extent on who the subordinates are, what the task is, and what the environment is.”⁹ That is, leaders must understand their leadership context.

To this point, Heifetz and Linsky explain that leadership in the twenty-first century is particularly and increasingly challenging because of, among other things, globalization and the dynamics of cultural diversity. “We live,” the authors assert, “in a period of history when taking on the risks of leadership in your individual world is both more important and more complicated than ever before.”¹⁰ Leadership in the twenty-first century is more complex and challenging because of globalization of the economy, the necessary interaction of cultures, the flattening of clearly defined hierarchical leadership structures in organizations, and democratization throughout organizations as well as countries.¹¹ Simply put, according to Heifetz and Linsky, leadership has become more challenging because of drastic changes in the working environment that require everyone to adapt.

Given such an environment, leaders need to learn to inspire people who “must face the challenge of adapting to a tough reality” of “giving up an important value or a

⁹ Preface to Mary L. Connerley and Paul B. Pedersen, *Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment: Developing Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2005), ix.

¹⁰ Heifetz and Linsky, 4.

¹¹ Ibid.

current way of life.”¹² Inspiring others to follow is already a challenging task, but when it also involves convincing people to give up their way of life in order to survive and thrive in a new environment of drastic changes to their world, “leadership becomes dangerous.”¹³ It is dangerous to lead people through these adaptive challenges because leaders must challenge people to “take a loss, experience uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures.”¹⁴ Furthermore, leaders must “force people,” if necessary, to “question and perhaps redefine aspects of their identity.”¹⁵ In short, leading people through adaptive challenges requires adaptive leadership, that is, “the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.”¹⁶ In the twenty-first century world of cultural, economical, political, technological, and organizational changes, then, the challenge of leadership has become “more complicated” and requires not only emotional intelligence to move people but also adaptive leadership to mobilize people.

Process of Leadership

As a natural development of globalization, organizational leaders now face the additional challenge of learning how to effectively work in an environment of cultural diversity, both within and outside the organization. In *CQ: Developing Cultural Intelligence at Work*, Christopher Earley, Soon Ang, and Joo-Seng Tan point out, “[Globalization] has increased permeability of all kinds of borders – physical borders such as time and space, nation-states and economies, and industries and organizations, as well as less tangible

¹² Ibid., 13.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 30.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 14.

borders such as cultural norms or assumptions about how ‘we’ do things ‘here.’”¹⁷ In such a multicultural environment, the authors assert, people need “the ability to adapt constantly to different people from diverse cultures and the ability to manage the interconnectedness of today’s world.”¹⁸ They add, “Interactions in the global workplace require individuals to be sensitive to different cultures, capable of analyzing them as they are encountered, identifying what is required of people from other cultures, and engaging in appropriate interactions with them.”¹⁹

For leaders, this means providing “global leadership,” which requires cultural intelligence, defined as “a person’s capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings.”²⁰ Having cultural intelligence, Earley et al. assert, “Effective global leaders are able to lead in culturally diverse work settings.”²¹ In this age of globalization, leaders must have not only adaptive leadership skills, but also cultural intelligence.

Crucially, so important is cultural intelligence in leadership that, regardless of giftedness, if leaders lack cultural intelligence in this age of cultural diversity, they will be ineffective. This is the point Mary Connerley and Paul Pedersen make in *Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment*. They explain, “No matter how highly skilled, well trained, or intelligent you are, if you are making wrong or culturally inappropriate assumptions, you will not be accurate in your assessment, meaningful in your understanding, or appropriate in your interactions as a leader.”²² When leaders make

¹⁷ P. Christopher Earley, Soon Ang, and Joo-Seng Tan, CQ: *Developing Cultural Intelligence at Work* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books, 2006), 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Ibid., 197.

²² Connerley and Pedersen, xi.

“wrong or culturally inappropriate assumptions,” they will likely produce “a negative impact on meeting an organization’s goals.”²³ Such is the complexity of the challenge of leadership in the twenty-first century workplace environment. Leaders need the competency of cultural intelligence, not only to work in a global environment, but also to work with others from different cultural backgrounds even within the same organization.

To summarize, in the words of Earley et al., leadership involves process, relationships, and influence.²⁴ The challenge of leadership is to inspire others to achieve a common objective in a multicultural environment. Effective leadership requires emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and adaptive skills. Leadership “provides meaning in life” and “creates purpose.” Leadership “breathes life” into people and organizations. Leaders make a difference.

Systemic Barriers to the Leadership of Minorities

However, for minorities in leadership, there are additional challenges – mostly unknown and unfamiliar to leaders from the majority culture. Minority leaders face additional barriers that greatly challenge their influence, hinder their relationships, and render their process ineffective in achieving their objectives as leaders. Consider the reality for ethnic minority leaders working in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s report by the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission [hereafter FGCC], regardless of preparedness, minority leaders and managers face “significant barriers” within their organizations.²⁵ These barriers include “conscious and unconscious stereotyping,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 176.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Labor’s Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (FGCC), *The Environmental Scan: A Fact-Finding Report of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission* 1995, 9.

prejudice, and bias related to gender, race, and ethnicity,” “corporate climates that alienate or isolate minorities,” “lack of mentoring,” and “special or different standards for performance evaluation.”²⁶

The FGCC reports that due to prejudice and bias, white middle-level managers are reluctant to mentor and promote African Americans.²⁷ Asian Americans, on the other hand, struggle to advance to top-level management because of widespread acceptance of the stereotype that they “make superior professionals and technicians but are not suited for management leadership.”²⁸ Connerley and Pedersen confirm the reality that “race is deeply imbedded in the cultural landscape of the United States and that racial stereotypes and attitudes heavily influence the racial inequality in the labor market.”²⁹ They conclude, “This suggests that White privilege is real.”³⁰ This reality, however, is “often denied” by those in the majority culture.³¹

Why do these barriers exist? What is the underlying cause? According to the FGCC, these barriers exist because of fear – “the perception of loss”:

The glass ceiling exists because of the perception of many white males that as a group they are losing – losing the corporate game, losing control, and losing opportunity. Many middle- and upper-level white male managers view the inclusion of minorities and women in management as a direct threat to their own chances for advancement. They fear that they are losing competitive advantage.³²

Simply put, many barriers exist for minority leaders because white male leaders fear “losing the corporate game, losing control, and losing opportunity.”

²⁶ Ibid., 71.

²⁷ Ibid., 83.

²⁸ Ibid., 115.

²⁹ Connerley and Pedersen, 35.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ FGCC, 29.

³² Ibid., 31.

Because of the barriers erected by widespread acceptance of stereotypes, prejudice, and bias, once minorities do advance into positions of leadership, they face unique leadership challenges. Specifically, Harry Waters, Professor of Management at California State University, argues in his article “Minority Leadership Problems” that minority leaders face two main related challenges, namely, presumed incompetence and resistance to their leadership.³³

Presumption of Incompetence

First, minority leaders face the issue of presumed incompetence. Waters states, “One of the problems that virtually all minority managers have to address is the question of competence.”³⁴ As also pointed out by the FGCC, Waters confirms that African Americans are “perceived as being less competent because of what was assumed to be an unfair selection process” and thus “the legitimacy of the minority manager’s authority will be called into question.”³⁵ Asian Americans, Waters states, are “perceived as competent within a restricted range.”³⁶

Resistance to Leadership

Second, because they are presumed incompetent to lead, minority leaders face resistance to their leadership. Waters states, “The end result...is that the minority manager may encounter difficulties in his or her efforts to exert leadership.”³⁷ There may be

³³ Harry Waters, "Minority Leadership Problems," *Journal of Education for Business* 68, no. 1 (1992).

³⁴ Ibid., 17.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 18.

³⁷ Ibid.

“reluctance or hesitation to accept the authority of the minority manager.”³⁸ And it may take minority leaders longer to gain respect than non-minority leaders.³⁹

Personal Anxiety

Given these realities and challenges, minority leaders may feel added pressure to prove themselves as competent leaders. Waters explains,

In response, the manager may feel under great pressure not to make any mistakes in order to demonstrate his or her expertise power. This pressure to perform correctly to prove one’s competency (and, hence, legitimate claims to leadership) will create tension and anxiety and may be expressed in how the manager responds in his or her daily dealings with subordinates.⁴⁰

That is, the presumption of incompetence and resistance to their leadership may, in turn, create personal challenges, such as increased anxiety and reduced self-confidence for minority leaders.

When minorities seek to be leaders in organizations in the United States, they face these undeniable barriers. And when they gain positions of leadership, besides the standard challenges of leadership of inspiring people to greatness to achieve lofty goals, minority leaders face the additional challenge of overcoming the issues of presumed incompetence and resistance to their leadership. For minority leaders, then, leadership is a daunting challenge.

Problem Statement

Pastoral leadership, like any organizational leadership, is a challenge. In the first century, writing to the Christians in Corinth about the challenges of ministering as a pastor and leader in the first century world, the Apostle Paul confessed that his ministry

³⁸ Ibid., 19.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

was marked not only by physical “toil and hardship,” but also by “the daily pressure” of his “anxiety for all the churches.”⁴¹ Pastoral leadership has not changed much in two thousand years. In the twenty-first century, a pastoral participant who was discussing the challenges of pastoral leadership and ministry at The Pastors Summit, sponsored by the Center for Ministry Leadership, confessed, “The relentless nature of ministry means that fatigue is a constant companion of leaders in the church. While lay people joke about ministers only working on Sundays, the truth lies on the other side of the continuum. A pastor’s work is overwhelming because it wears upon the body and soul.”⁴² Simply, be it the first century or the twenty-first century, the work of pastoral leadership involves “toil and hardship” and “daily pressure,” and it “wears upon the body and soul.”

What makes pastoral leadership so challenging? Bob Burns, pastor, professor, and former director of the Center for Ministry Leadership, points out four main characteristics of the basic roles and responsibilities of ordinary pastors: multiple tasks, long hours, challenging responsibilities, and a life defined by the role as a pastor.⁴³ Pastors regularly multitask up to five core tasks, including teaching, preaching, pastoral care, worship leading, and administration. In addition, pastors often spend long hours fulfilling their weekly duties, regularly face the challenging responsibility of caring for souls, and find it challenging to un-blend the distinction between work, family, and personal responsibilities.⁴⁴ Indeed, the challenges of pastoral leadership “wear upon the body and soul” in the long haul. Regarding this challenge, Burns states, “Being a pastor is hard work

⁴¹ Second Corinthians 11:27-28.

⁴² Bob Burns, *Pastors Summit: Sustaining Fruitful Ministry* (St. Louis: Covenant Theological Seminary, 2010), 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

– so hard that many will eventually decide to leave the pastorate or leave ministry altogether.”⁴⁵

Challenges to Pastoral Leadership in Majority Culture Congregations

Making the already challenging work of pastoral leadership more complex are the ongoing cultural changes that impact pastoral ministry. In *Leading Across Cultures*, James Plueddemann states, “Today’s generation of leaders in the global church must learn new skills and be willing to discard some of the styles that made them so effective in monocultural leadership.”⁴⁶ Given the prominent rise of cultural diversity, Plueddemann specifically points out, “Church leaders must learn to cooperate with people who have radically different assumptions about leadership.”⁴⁷ Burns confirms, “If pastors are going to lead more effectively now and in the coming years, it is vital that they develop cultural intelligence and equip others to serve in a multi-cultural environment.”⁴⁸ Pastors and church leaders must develop the ability to “recognize dominant cultural perspectives and the tendencies to assume that these are correct” and to “make careful distinctions between biblical expectations and cultural assumptions.”⁴⁹ Thus, similar to secular organizations, today’s church leaders are faced with the challenge of learning how to effectively work in a multicultural environment in the United States.

There are, however, two categories of issues that may hinder multicultural ministry within the United States. These include the monocultural nature of denominational

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁶ James E. Plueddemann, *Leading across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Burns, 30.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

systems and the lingering impact of the history of segregation and racism in majority culture congregations. The first category of issues that hinder multicultural ministry stems from the prevalence of monoculturalism in majority culture denominations. Western-European or Anglo-American cultural influences that shape majority culture congregations make it challenging for minority pastors to lead within the system. Likewise, the second category of issues, the reality and existence of racial stereotypes and prejudice toward minorities, also make it challenging for minority pastors to lead in majority culture congregations.

Monoculturalism

The prevalence of monoculturalism in majority culture congregations makes developing multicultural ministries a notable challenge. In *Recreating the Church*, Richard Hamm, a former mainline denominational leader, discusses why leadership in the mainline church is so difficult.⁵⁰ One major reason, Hamm points out, is the denominational systems shaped by Anglo American cultural influences. Applying the concepts of systems approach to adaptive leadership developed by Heifetz and Linsky, Hamm argues, “The modern paradigms, which are the underpinning of our mainline systems, no longer work. Yet these systems and we who comprise these systems are loath to change much of anything about them”⁵¹ because of “the fear of change.”⁵²

Hamm specifies what the change would involve: “The mainline denominations and their component institutions were profoundly shaped by and for the modern era and must become contextually relevant again if they are to be faithful and effective in the current

⁵⁰ Richard L. Hamm, *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007).

⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

⁵² Ibid., 7.

postmodern context.”⁵³ That is, the organizational culture that shapes the systems of denominations would need to change. Emphasizing that it is crucial “to remember that the mainline cultural consensus was a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant male consensus that effectively silenced women and people of all other races and ethnicities,”⁵⁴ Hamm suggests that the denominational systems established during the era of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant male dominance with its cultural assumptions and practices must be challenged and changed if they are to effectively minister cross-culturally in the United States.⁵⁵

Simply put, majority culture congregations hoping to develop and be effective in multicultural ministry would need to address their cultural assumptions and practices. Organizations as systems have cultural dynamics. Cultures that shape organizations impact how these organizations interact with others from different cultures. Unless Anglo American cultural assumptions and practices are understood, acknowledged, and addressed in majority culture congregations, those leading these congregations toward a multicultural ministry environment may encounter significant leadership challenges.

History of Segregation and Racial Injustice

Second, the history of segregation and racial injustice in mainline and evangelical denominations, to which many majority culture congregations belong, makes multicultural ministry a significant challenge. This is because there are consequences to actions. Actions taken by churches in the past impact ministry opportunities in the present. Thus, in order to pursue and develop multicultural ministries, majority culture denominations and

⁵³ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁵ Ibid., xi.

churches need to recognize their history of passive acceptance of racial injustice and even institutional segregation and racism.

Church historian and professor Douglas Sweeney points out the history and lingering impact of past racial sins of majority culture congregations:

While evangelicals did not invent the sins of racism or ethnocentrism, the slave trade, segregation, discrimination, or racial hate groups, literally millions of white evangelicals have either participated in or sanctioned one or more of these things, distorting their common witness to the gospel...Though evangelicalism has always been an ecumenical movement, its racial sins have often precluded the involvement of black Christians in its leading institutions.⁵⁶

Sweeney makes the connection between lack of integration or “involvement” of black Christians in leading evangelical institutions to the white evangelicals’ participation in racial sins of the past.

Theologian and professor John Frame makes a similar connection in the history of the Reformed churches in America. In his discussion of why there are so few African Americans and Hispanics in the Reformed church, Frame points out its history of racial injustice:

Some Reformed theologians, particularly R.L. Dabney, have made statements deemed racist. These are largely forgotten today, but Reformed churches in America must bear the burdens of the history of slavery, segregation, and discrimination. Other denominations and traditions in the U.S. bear the same burdens.⁵⁷

Though Frame suggests that “statements deemed racist” may be “largely forgotten today,” Soon-Chan Rah, Korean American author and professor, suggests that racial sins of the past are still remembered and hinder multicultural ministry in the present. In view of the

⁵⁶ Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 108-109.

⁵⁷ John M. Frame, "Minorities and the Reformed Churches" http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/2003Minorities.htm (accessed February 28, 2012).

historical realities in the American church, Rah argues, “Because of the failure of many (not all) in the white church to stand against injustice, the rift between black and white grew. We must recognize that these historical rifts provide obstacles for cross-cultural communication and ministry even into the twenty-first century.”⁵⁸ In other words, in the pursuit of multicultural ministry in America, the history of racial sins and segregation in the church cannot be ignored. Sweeney, Frame, and Rah all concur that past racial sins matter to present multicultural ministry opportunities in America.

In short, church leaders who pursue multicultural ministry in the United States need to be aware of two categories of challenges. First, church leaders must understand that there are cultural assumptions and practices in majority culture congregations that directly impact interactions with others from different cultures. Second, church leaders need to recognize that the history of racial segregation and sins in the church by white Christians of the past is an undeniable hindrance and challenge to the development of a multicultural ministry in the United States.

Multicultural Leadership Opportunities in Majority Culture Congregations

Despite these challenges, there is progress. In response to the necessity of, and opportunities in, cross-racial and multicultural ministry in the United States, one mainline denomination has begun to appoint minority pastors to lead Anglo American congregations. The United Methodist Church [hereafter UMC], “in a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity,” practices what it calls “Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments” in which minority pastors are appointed to serve in its

⁵⁸ Soong-Chan Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 58.

predominantly white congregations.⁵⁹ To systematically educate both minority pastors and majority culture leaders, pastors, and congregations, and to present both the majority and the minority cultural points of view, the UMC has published *Many Faces, One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry*, written by Ernest Lyght, Glory Dharmaraj, and Jacob Dharmaraj.⁶⁰

In *Many Faces, One Church*, Lyght et al. describe the leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations. They state,

Unfortunately, even in light of years of pastoral experience, minority and ethnic-minority pastors are asked repeatedly to prove their credibility in direct or indirect ways, both by denominational leadership and church members ... In addition, minority and ethnic-minority pastors are evaluated more harshly than their Anglo counterparts. As indicated above, often minorities and ethnic-minority pastors suffer and grieve about racism in silence ... The alienation of the pastor, and her or his spouse and children, is a critical problem that must be addressed if the church is to achieve true Christian fellowship.⁶¹

Simply put, minority pastors are presumed to be incompetent by both church leadership and members. And when minority pastors are unprepared to encounter challenges such as racism in the church, Lyght et al. explain, “Self-doubt and lack of confidence haunt them, and they often become depressed and withdrawn.”⁶² Thus, minority pastors experience similar leadership challenges in majority culture congregations that minority leaders encounter in the systems of majority culture organizations, including presumed incompetence and self-doubt.⁶³

⁵⁹ The United Methodist Church General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Legislation to the General Conference 2008, 430.4.

⁶⁰ Ernest S. Lyght, Glory E. Dharmaraj, and Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *Many Faces, One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 2006).

⁶¹ Ibid., 57.

⁶² Ibid., 55.

⁶³ Waters, 19.

Recognizing that the success of minority pastors involves meaningful support of denominational leadership and congregational members, Lyght et al. honestly discuss the reality and dynamics of racism in the church.⁶⁴ They remind Anglo pastors and leaders that “racism in the local church is about power and control,”⁶⁵ and, therefore, they “need to question the underlying assumption behind the policies, rules, and expectations.”⁶⁶ Lyght et al. add, “Educating the congregation plays a crucial role in the success of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.”⁶⁷ For example, they teach Anglo congregants that minority pastors have different “management techniques.”⁶⁸ As for minority pastors, Lyght et al. state that serving cross-culturally requires them to learn multicultural management skills.⁶⁹ Minority pastors also need to “disengage from their own cultural and social baggage willingly and deliberately in order to minister to the people they have been called to lead.”⁷⁰

In summary, Lyght et al. remind Anglo pastors to cultivate an environment of cooperation and encouragement that will allow minority pastors to succeed. They explain, “All that minority and ethnic-minority pastors ask from their Anglo colleagues in ministry is tolerance and acceptance, from the local churches cooperation and collaboration, from church leadership presence and encouragement, from the denomination belonging and meaning. Sadly, all too often they find these things in short supply.”⁷¹ Thus, it is evident that even in an environment that actively appoints, integrates, and supports minority

⁶⁴ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 55-57.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 103.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 78.

⁷¹ Ibid., 105.

pastors, minority pastors regularly encounter unique leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

In contrast to the UMC, the Presbyterian Church in America [hereafter PCA], which has historically served “Anglo, educated, and middle to upper income”⁷² congregants, does not appoint pastors to congregations in its denomination. Instead, the PCA plans to respond to opportunities in an ethnically diverse environment by intentionally increasing the involvement of minority pastors in the future.

As a denomination, the PCA is well aware that it now operates in a new world of cultural changes since its beginning in 1973. In an article published for the PCA by its agency Mission to North America [hereafter MNA] entitled “Ministering Among the Changing Cultures of North America,” the writers state:

Most of those reading this paper will live to see the day when people of so-called minority ethnic backgrounds comprise more than 50% of the United States population...Not only are new cultures being created by the presence of new people groups, but these new cultures will be constantly changing, and they will bring constant change even to the dominant American culture.⁷³

In response to “an ever changing and increasingly heterogeneous and pluralistic American culture,” the PCA leadership acknowledges that “the key to a vibrant future” is for the PCA to “become highly skilled in the contextualization of the Gospel.”⁷⁴ Simply, the PCA recognizes the need for a new strategy to effectively communicate the gospel in a multicultural environment.

⁷² Mission to North America (MNA), *Ministering among the Changing Cultures of North America* (Lawrenceville, GA: Presbyterian Church in America, 2008), 13.

⁷³ Ibid., 9-12.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 12.

Accordingly, in its 2010 Strategic Plan to be implemented “ASAP,” the PCA states its objectives to “have contributions of ethnic minorities and global church leaders expand perspectives, ministries, and influence,” “gain insights and perspectives from voices important to church’s future,” and “retain and mentor future leaders.”⁷⁵ It also explores the risks associated with carrying out the plan. The PCA fears it might “give leadership voice to inexperienced” and also “lose PCA members concerned about compromise and political correctness.”⁷⁶ The Strategic Plan also includes the objective to “develop a credible and rigorous alternative credentialing process for men from disadvantaged constituencies” to “prepare the PCA to minister beyond the as-of-2030 Anglo minority in North America.”⁷⁷ In implementing such a plan, the PCA leadership also realizes the risk that “potentially or perceived ‘shortcuts’ in ministry preparation will produce an ill prepared and/or perceived ‘second-class’ ministry.”⁷⁸

However, while the PCA has a strategic plan to “utilize the valuable insights of people from different backgrounds,”⁷⁹ and while it offers some Anglo support for various minority-group-focused ministries,⁸⁰ it currently does not have written policies, guidelines, literature, or a manual to systematically prepare and equip its Anglo denominational leadership, presbyteries, and churches for the challenges of working with minority pastors serving within the context of its majority culture congregations. For instance, the latest revision of the Book of Church Order, which guides the business of the presbyteries and

⁷⁵ PCA, *2010 Strategic Plan* (Presbyterian Church in America, 2010), 21.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁰ <http://pcamna.org/>

the ministry of its congregations, is silent on the matter of working with minority pastors serving in majority culture congregations.⁸¹

While the PCA has publically repented of its pride, complacency, and complicity with regards to oppression and racism, and while the strategic plans for the future, at least in part, are in view of its historic failures, the PCA has not yet addressed at the congregational leadership level the underlying systemic issues that “continue to create barriers between brothers and sisters of different races.”⁸² Therefore, it is probable that minority pastors currently serving in majority culture congregations of the PCA are overcoming challenges they encounter on their own without the needed support system and with what limited resources they might have available to sustain them.

Leadership Challenges of Minority Pastors in Majority Culture Congregations

Even though there is the certainty of unique leadership challenges for minority pastors ministering in majority culture congregations in the United States, their struggles are unfamiliar or unknown to most majority culture pastors and colleagues. Similarly, majority culture congregations remain mostly unaware of the struggles of minority pastors besides their day-to-day ministry difficulties. As a result, minority pastors experience unique struggles and anxieties foreign to non-minority pastors and leaders of congregations. Even though Christ, through His death on the cross, has broken down the dividing wall of hostility so that, by God’s grace, all people regardless of ethnicity have equal status in the

⁸¹ <http://www.pcaac.org/BCO.htm>

⁸² Presbyterian Church in America, "PCA Position Papers: Racial Reconciliation" <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/race.html> (accessed March 2 2012).

church, this gospel reality is simply not the experience of the minority pastors in majority culture congregations.⁸³

Seminary professors Robert Priest and Alvaro Nieves suggest that the problem, in part, exists at the level of educational institutions that train pastors for ministry leadership.

In *This Side of Heaven*, they state:

In the preceding twenty years, the proportion of European American students at this historically Scandinavian seminary [Trinity Evangelical Divinity School] had dropped from 98 percent to 59 percent – a massive shift in the ethnic makeup of the student body. And yet, as in most American seminaries, changes at the level of faculty and curriculum came more slowly. In 2000 nearly half of all accredited seminaries in America lacked even one ethnic minority on the faculty, and half of the rest had but one. This represents a serious weakness in the educational institutions committed to forming and shaping the next generation of religious leadership in America.⁸⁴

That is, a culturally homogenous faculty and curriculum written from an Anglo-European point of view pose “a serious weakness” in training future pastors and church leaders of an ethnically diverse America. To address the problem, Priest and Nieves suggest that seminaries need to evaluate “long-established reading, teaching, research and writing patterns oriented toward a white / Euro-American world.”⁸⁵ They imply the need to re-orient seminary curriculum, adding the teachings, reflections, and perspectives of ethnic minority authors and teachers in order to train all pastors to think more critically about cultural assumptions and preach the gospel with greater clarity in a pluralistic and diverse American culture.

⁸³ Ephesians 2:11-22.

⁸⁴ Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves, "Introduction," in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, ed. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2007), 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

In addition to lack of training, there is a lack of literature and resources available to provide insights into and to encourage minority pastors struggling to lead and serve in majority culture congregations. Currently, besides *Many Faces, One Church* by Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, there is not a single book on Amazon.com, the world's largest online bookstore, that addresses how minority pastors might overcome the unique leadership challenges they face and effectively minister in majority culture congregations.

Purpose Statement

With increasing ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in the United States, more minority pastors will likely serve in what have been traditionally Anglo American congregations. Inevitably, minority pastors who lead and minister in majority culture congregations encounter unique leadership challenges. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What personal leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with personal anxiety?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with self-confidence?
2. What systemic leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors recognize being presumed as incompetent by others in their congregations?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors recognize challenges to their authority by others in their congregations?
3. How do minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors overcome challenges on their own?

- b. In what ways and to what extent do others play a role in helping minority pastors overcome leadership challenges?
- 4. What motivates minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for minority pastors, Anglo pastors and denominational leaders, majority culture congregations, and seminaries and pastoral leadership training institutions.

Minority Pastors

The ongoing cultural changes in the United States will create more opportunities for minority pastors to serve cross-culturally in majority culture congregations. Currently, there is very little literature that sufficiently describes the problem, explores the underlying causes, or offers possible solutions to the leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations. Minority pastors will gain a deeper understanding and awareness of the prevalent challenges of ministering in majority culture congregations in order to overcome challenges and effectively minister in such congregations.

Anglo American Pastors and Denominational Leaders

In view of increasing ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in the United States, Anglo American pastors and denominational leaders wanting to develop multicultural ministries will benefit by understanding that the history of racial sins and segregation by Anglo Christians of the past does matter today. They will become more aware of the existence of “white privilege” even in the church when working with minority pastors. They also will learn the importance of distinguishing the difference between biblical principles

versus Anglo American cultural assumptions and ecclesiastical traditions regarding leadership competencies and ministry expectations in order to effectively work with and serve minority pastors hoping to minister in their churches and denominations.

Majority Culture Congregations

Majority culture congregations will benefit by understanding that minority pastors experience leadership challenges when ministering in their congregations. They will begin to understand that there are cultural influences on leadership styles that differentiate minority pastors from Anglo pastors. They will also become more aware of Anglo American cultural assumptions and practices that shape their Christian experiences in order to provide meaningful biblical fellowship and support for minority pastors.

Seminaries and Pastoral Leadership Training Institutions

Finally, seminaries and educational institutions will benefit by understanding the importance of addressing “long-established reading, teaching, research and writing patterns oriented toward a white / Euro-American world”⁸⁶ and re-orienting them to train all pastors to think more critically about cultural assumptions, lead with multicultural awareness, and preach the gospel with greater clarity in a pluralistic and diverse American culture.

Definition of Terms

Adaptive Challenge: A problem that is “not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures” and requires “experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Heifetz and Linsky, 13.

Cultural Intelligence: “The ability to understand, acknowledge, and appreciate current contextual forces as well as the cultural background of oneself and others.”⁸⁸

Culture: “A social group’s distinctive way of life, the beliefs and practices that members find ‘normal’ and correct.”⁸⁹

Emotional Intelligence: “The ability to manage one’s own emotions proactively and respond to the emotions of others appropriately.”⁹⁰

Globalization: “A large-scale, interactive social process in which people increasingly interrelate, communicate, and work in an increasingly culturally diverse workplace, both within and outside the organization.”⁹¹

Intentional Invitation: For the purposes of this study, in view of American racialized patterns of marginalizing minorities while Caucasians remain in the center of influence and power, an intentional invitation is a deliberate and purposeful act of placing minority pastors in positions of authority and influence equal to Caucasian pastors to systemically change the dominant culture-centric way of life in majority culture congregations.

Majority Culture Congregations: Congregations that are predominantly Anglo American.

Minority Leaders: Ethnic minorities such as African Americans or Asian Americans in leadership positions.

Racialization: The act of differentiating or evaluating people based on skin color. It often stems from the attitude of thinking less of others based on racial prejudice.

⁸⁸ Burns, 29.

⁸⁹ Michael Jindra, "Culture Matters: Diversity in the United States and Its Implications," in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, ed. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 64.

⁹⁰ Burns, 25.

⁹¹ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 1.

Racialized Society: “A society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships.”⁹²

Social Power: The degree of influence that individuals have among their peers and within their organizations, community, or broader society.

System: An organized structure that consists of interrelated and interdependent elements that regularly influence one another. In this study, majority culture congregations are viewed as organizational systems that include pastors, congregants, and church values and practices that constantly interact and influence one another.

Systemic: Affecting or relating to the organization as a whole instead of its individual parts. In this study, a systemic problem refers to a problem that has so affected the attitudes of the people and practices of majority culture congregations within the context of a racialized society that solving it requires addressing the complex interactions between pastors, congregants, and assumptions and practices of majority culture congregations.

White Privilege: “White privilege refers to the invisible systems that confer dominance on Whites through being socialized in a racist society, even though none of them may have chosen to be racist or biased or prejudiced.”⁹³

⁹² Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

⁹³ Connerley and Pedersen, 35.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. Though there is scant literature available on this subject, the Bible offers a theological explanation of the root source of what leads to struggles between people of different races or ethnicities. This provided a biblical-theological understanding of why minority pastors encounter leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. There is also valuable literature that explores minority leadership problems, dynamics of organizational culture that affect leadership, and competencies leaders need for effectiveness in a multicultural environment. Collectively, these literature areas provide a framework to better understand the complexity of the leadership challenges minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations.

Biblical-Theological Perspective on Human Equality

In essence, the leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations are about inequality. That is, minority pastors – because of their race or ethnicity – are not treated as equals to Anglo pastors in majority culture congregations. Minority pastors are often presumed to be incompetent, and they struggle to exert leadership in majority culture congregations. This is because the dynamics of racism and systemic racial prejudice in American society are at work also in the church.⁹⁴ As such, it is a challenge that finds its ultimate solution in God's work in Christ to restore humanity

⁹⁴ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 57.

from sin by creating one new humanity. This work of Christ is highlighted in the biblical story of God's redemption of sinful mankind.

The Bible explains that all people – regardless of race or ethnicity – are equally created in the very image of God. But human beings rebelled against God and began to mistreat one another. Through Christ, however, God reconciled sinful human beings to himself and united people who were hostile to each other into one new human race. God did this to display the glory of his grace among the nations. The biblical story of reconciliation and restoration provides the framework for minority pastors to view their struggles and find hope in the gospel – now and forever.

All Human Beings Are Created Equally in the Image of God

All human beings, regardless of ethnicity or race, are created equally in the image of God. In Genesis 1, the author of Genesis pauses in the account of God's creation to highlight the creation of human beings. Why? Because, unlike other creatures God created, human beings were uniquely made in his own image.

In *Every Tongue and Nation*, Solomon Kendagor explains, “It took a special deliberation from heaven for mankind to be created. Every human being is created in the image of God. Regardless of what culture one represents, one bears this image of God and must be treated with awe and respect.”⁹⁵ That is, the lasting significance of the fact that every human being is created in the image of God is that each person “must be treated with awe and respect.” Kendagor reiterates the equality and unity given to human beings in their creation when he states, “The greatest commonality mankind have is that we are all

⁹⁵ Solomon K. Kendagor, *Every Tongue and Nation: Biblical Perspective on Cultural Diversity in the Church Today* (Denver: Outskirts Press, Inc., 2007), 6.

bearers of God's image one way or another."⁹⁶ Lest its lasting significance be missed, Kendagor specifically points out, "Man was commanded to subdue the earth and rule over creation. But we are not to subdue and mistreat other human beings."⁹⁷

Professor Daniel Hays agrees with Kendagor on the significance of mankind being created in the image of God. In *From Every People and Nation*, Hays states, "So the creation of human beings in the image of God has far-reaching implications for how we view each other and how we treat each other."⁹⁸ Echoing Kendagor, Hays argues, "All people of all races are created in God's image and therefore deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."⁹⁹ Based on his study of Genesis 1, Hays even formulates a "theology of race" and concludes, "From Genesis 1 comes the basic foundational premise for a theology of race: all people are created in the image of God. This gives every individual of every race in the world a remarkable status before God. It demolishes every theory of racial superiority or racial inferiority."¹⁰⁰ Simply put, because all people are created in the image of God, people regardless of race or ethnicity "deserve to be treated with dignity and respect." John Stott concurs, "Both the dignity and the equality of human beings are traced in Scripture to our creation."¹⁰¹ Furthermore, as Hays articulates, racial superiority or racial pride is senseless because "every race in the world" is given "a remarkable status before God." The scholars

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D.A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 51.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 62-63.

¹⁰¹ John R. W. Stott, *Human Rights and Human Wrongs: Major Issues for a New Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 174-175.

of the ESV Study Bible agree and assert that “all human beings share equally in the exalted status of being made ‘in the image of God’ (Gen. 1:27).”¹⁰²

Thus, according to the Bible, no particular racial or ethnic group of people is better or worse in the eyes of God because he created them all in his own image. God gave human beings equality from the beginning. They were created to treat each other with mutual dignity and respect. God’s will for them was to subdue the earth and have dominion over his creatures. They were not to subdue and have dominion over each other. The Bible reveals, however, that human beings rebelled against God.

Human Inequality Exists Because of Man’s Rebellion Against God and His Plan

African American theologian and professor Carl Ellis explains that human inequality entered human history through sin. Ellis states, “Before the fall Adam and Eve had significant power of dominion, yet there were no power struggles between them. Why? Because they were one.”¹⁰³ Just as there are no power struggles among the persons of God because of their oneness, the unity between Adam and Eve reflected God’s unity, and they had no power struggles between them. However, this all changed when the first human beings sinned against God. Ellis explains: “After the fall their oneness was broken. This is where we begin to have our problems. We began to think individualistically, and this led to self-centeredness ... The man and the woman began to seek dominion and dominance over each other, and inequality was the result.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² “Racial Discrimination” in the *English Standard Version Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2557.

¹⁰³ Carl F. Ellis, “The Sovereignty of God and Ethnic-Based Suffering,” in *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 124.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

As Kendagor points out, human beings were commanded to subdue the earth and rule over the creation. But as a result of sin, Ellis argues, human beings began to “seek dominion and dominance over each other,” thereby setting the stage for human inequality for all of mankind. The result was universal inequality. Ellis concludes:

Because of the loss of oneness, power struggles infected the marriage relationship. Eventually it infected all human relationships. Thus, human inequality became universal, not only between individuals like Cain and Abel but also between people groups. It makes no difference how you define people groups, whether ethnically, culturally, linguistically, or generationally. There will be inequalities among them and power struggles between them.¹⁰⁵

According to Ellis, then, human inequality began to manifest itself through “power struggles” between Adam and Even and eventually between people groups. People began to differentiate themselves by using power to seek dominion over each other in direct violation of God’s will. Instead of unity and equality, separation and inequality pervade human relationships. Instead of treating others with dignity and respect, people began to treat others as less, inferior, and unequal in order to make themselves feel better, superior, and dominant.

Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke makes a similar point regarding the problem of inequality through the use of power. In *An Old Testament Theology*, Waltke explains that the consequence of the original sin is “spiritual death, marked by alienation” from one another and from God.¹⁰⁶ Where life was once characterized by nakedness of “openness and trust in the marriage relationship,” life is now characterized by “alienation from one another” as symbolized by “wearing fig leaf barriers,” Waltke argues, to protect each other

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 263.

from “shame and hurt.”¹⁰⁷ He asserts, “We seek to cover ourselves up so that we cannot be abused, victimized, or criticized. Clothing is a symbolic barrier that protects us from the slings and arrows of others.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, Waltke implies that as a result of sin, human beings use weapons of power – “slings and arrows” – to seek dominance over others. And, like Ellis, Waltke concludes that, “in their greed and fear, pride and hubris,” human beings “rape the creation and fight to subdue one another.”¹⁰⁹

Pastor and theologian John Piper concurs with Waltke and Ellis. However, Piper singles out human pride as a key factor that motivates one group to seek power and dominance over another. In *Bloodlines*, a book devoted to the discussion of the complexity of racism and the gospel, Piper states,

Racial tensions are rife with pride – the pride of white supremacy, the pride of black power, the pride of intellectual analysis, the pride of anti-intellectual scorn, the pride of loud verbal attacks, and the pride of despising silence, the pride that feels secure, and the pride that masks fear. Where pride holds sway, there is no hope for the kind of listening and patience and understanding and openness to correction that relationships require.¹¹⁰

Thus, Piper argues that pride is the reason behind racism – a prime example of human inequality and mistreatment of others based on race. Piper further explains that inequality, racism, mistreatment of others, power struggles, or seeking dominion over others are not always expressed through physical actions. The desire for dominance over others may be expressed through attitudes of the mind and heart that look down upon others.

Mistreatment of others may also be expressed through words that hurt or even through “despising silence” when a cry of justice is necessary.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 220.

¹¹⁰ John Piper, *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 90.

Though human beings were created in the image of God to “share equally the exalted status” before God, sin has brought inequality to human life. Instead of obeying God’s will to subdue the earth and seek dominion over His creation, human beings chose to subdue and seek dominion over one another. Instead of treating others as equals, people began to treat others as inferior in order to feel superior.

Piper, Ellis, and Waltke, however, believe that there is yet hope for human equality found in the glory of God’s grace in Christ. Piper ponders, “Imagine what race relations and racial controversies would look like if the participants were all dead to pride and deeply humble before God and each other.”¹¹¹ The solution – “the key to killing pride and living in humility” – Piper argues, is God’s grace in “the cross of Christ.”¹¹² Likewise, Ellis states, “Yes, there is ethnic-based suffering. Yes, we can understand it. Yes, by grace we can make a difference to the glory of God.”¹¹³ And Waltke asserts that humanity would glorify God “by subduing the earth by words and by work.”¹¹⁴ How? It would require God’s work of new creation. Waltke states, “God would form a new race of people in Jesus Christ to make a culture that would bring him glory.”¹¹⁵

Sin has brought inequality to human life. But inequality would not be the end of the story of human life. “God would form a new race of people in Jesus Christ” to undo human beings’ subduing and seeking dominion over one another.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 91.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ellis, 141.

¹¹⁴ Waltke, 221.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 220.

Christ Restores Human Equality By Creating One New Human Race For God

The Bible explains that God, who created human beings in his own image and gave them equality, is able to recreate humanity and restore human equality. Those who lived to subdue and rule over one another in rebellion against God are able to submit to Christ and live for God's reign in all of life. This is the message of the gospel that writers of the New Testament proclaimed and taught concerning the work of Christ that restores humanity from the power of sin. The Apostle Paul made it his lifelong mission to proclaim this gospel message to the Gentiles – those who were treated as less, inferior, and unequal, as “dogs” by the Jews. Paul's message to the Ephesians, in particular, proclaims the gospel truth that all people have equally privileged standing before God and equal access to God because of his immeasurable grace in Christ.

In his letter to the church in the ancient city of Ephesus, “a rendezvous of many nationalities,”¹¹⁶ Paul teaches God's people that Christ's redemptive work on the cross has accomplished two things. Paul explains that (1) Christ brought peace between God and fallen humankind, and (2) Christ also brought peace between people groups in hostility to each other.

Peace Between God and Sinful Human Beings

First, Christ brought peace between God and fallen humankind. Before Paul delivers the good news to the Gentiles, he first reminds them of their natural state that justified their eternal suffering and separation from God. Namely, the Gentiles were “separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the

¹¹⁶ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 15.

covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”¹¹⁷ In the words of Bible scholar and commentator F.F. Bruce, the Gentiles were “Christless, Godless, hopeless.”¹¹⁸

But Paul explains that these “Christless, Godless, hopeless” Gentiles now have the same access to and the same privileged standing before God as the Jews, solely by the gracious work of Christ on the cross. Paul states, “But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”¹¹⁹ He explains that the only criteria for receiving God’s eternal acceptance and favor is one’s faith in the work of Christ – not one’s race, status, performance, or attributes. That is, “The Gentiles have gained all that they lacked in comparison to the Jews by means of Christ’s sacrificial death.”¹²⁰

Peace Between Hostile People Groups

Second, Christ has also brought peace between people groups that are hostile and divided because of sin. Paul shares the good news to the Gentiles, stating, “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.”¹²¹ Here, Paul explains that Christ permanently addressed the “loss of oneness” and decisively conquered the sin that led to power struggles and hostility between people groups because of pride, summarily stated as “between Jews and Gentiles.”

¹¹⁷ Ephesians 2:12.

¹¹⁸ Bruce, 59.

¹¹⁹ Ephesians 2:13.

¹²⁰ Bruce W. Fong, *Racial Equality in the Church: A Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in Light of a Practical Theology Perspective* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 75.

¹²¹ Ephesians 2:14.

Hostility Between Jews and Gentiles

What were the reasons behind “the dividing wall of hostility” between Jews and Gentiles? Bruce Fong provides one plausible explanation for their hostility:

As Gentiles by birth are called the “uncircumcision” by the Jews, their physical separation was the reason for Jewish disparagement. This physical difference was symbolic of a completely separate way of life. What once began as a symbol for spiritual loyalty eroded into an ugly racial tension. Consequently, both socially and spiritually a wall of separation existed between them. If what was symbolized by this physical mark were fleshed out in daily living, then, God’s chosen people, the Jews, would not mix at all with Gentiles.¹²²

According to Fong, one reason behind “the dividing wall of hostility” was differences – including physical differences – based on religious tradition, belief, practices, and worldview. Regarding the attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles, Bruce states, “Carnal pride entrenched in sanctimonious observances had warped the Jewish mind to a settled disdain of the uncovenanted peoples outside their sacred precinct and devoid of their passport of circumcision.”¹²³ Like Piper,¹²⁴ Bruce also points out that pride was the reason behind the Jewish ethnic superiority.

Fong identifies yet another reason for their hostility besides Jewish superiority based on religious tradition, belief, practices, and worldview. As a people group, the Jews experienced a long history of oppression by the Gentile nations. Fong explains,

As a nation, Israel was certain of her future glory ... No matter how oppressive their current situation was they had a hope of national redemption. Every Jew took great pride in their faith of a future deliverance. They detested the nations for their oppression of Israel and shunned them as dogs unworthy of Israel’s future hope.¹²⁵

¹²² Fong, 73.

¹²³ Bruce, 58.

¹²⁴ Piper, 90.

¹²⁵ Fong, 74.

That is, Israel's hostility toward the Gentiles was further fueled by generations of godless, lawless, unrighteous, and oppressive mistreatment of the Jews by the Gentiles. The Jews also believed that their reverent and zealous observance of the Mosaic law made them righteous before God. Such a zealous life further hardened their hostile attitude toward the Gentiles. Thus, commentator William Barclay states: "The Jew had an immense contempt for the Gentile. The Gentiles, said the Jews, were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell. God, they said, loved only Israel of all the nations that he had made."¹²⁶

Stott, on the other hand, offers a different perspective. According to Stott, the Jewish superiority and hostility toward the Gentiles was a sinful failure to obey God's will for Israel. Stott states,

It may seem that God himself contributed to the process [of hostility] by choosing Israel out of all the nations to be his "holy" or "distinct" people. But we need to remember that in calling Abraham he promised through his posterity to bless all the earth's families and that in choosing Israel he intended her to become a light to the nations. The tragedy is that Israel forgot her vocation, twisted her privilege into favoritism and ended by heartily despising – even detesting – the heathen as "dogs."¹²⁷

In His plan to save all of humanity from sin, God blessed Israel so that Israel could be a blessing to the Gentiles. But Israel took God's blessing and mistreated the Gentiles as detestable "dogs."

Peace Between Jews and Gentiles

Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul proclaims, the good news is that Christ destroyed the source of the hostility between the Jews and the Gentiles. Christ did so "by abolishing

¹²⁶ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 125.

¹²⁷ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, *The Bible Speaks Today*, ed. John R. W. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 91.

the law of commandments expressed in ordinances.”¹²⁸ That is to say, Christ brought peace between the Jews and the Gentiles by destroying the source of the Jewish pride. The Jews had a deep-seated separatist attitude of religious, social, and ethnic superiority over the Gentiles because they believed they had a right standing before God through their obedience to the Mosaic law. But, Paul explains, the right standing before God is given as a gracious gift through faith in the perfect law-keeping of Christ.¹²⁹

Paul’s gospel is that because no one can perfectly keep the law and gain a right standing before God – “for no one is righteous, not even one” – Jesus, who alone was perfectly obedient to the law, had to die on behalf of all sinners, both Jews and Gentiles. So now, those who trust in the merits of Christ, and not their own merits, are righteous before God. Because no one is righteous before God without Christ, Jews cannot claim to be superior because of their merits. What is more, the Gentiles have equally privileged standing and access to God through faith in Christ.

Paul explicitly points out that the work of Christ has radically changed the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles. No longer can the Jews claim to be superior or privileged above the Gentiles because of their ethnicity, history, religious practices, or worldview. All people groups are now “brought to the same level at the foot of Christ’s cross,”¹³⁰ and any kind of “inequality before God is abolished.”¹³¹

In fact, Paul emphasizes that Christ’s purpose was to “create in himself one new man in place of the two” and reconcile “both in one body through the cross, thereby

¹²⁸ Ephesians 2:15.

¹²⁹ Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 3:21-26, Galatians 3:10-14.

¹³⁰ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 101.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

killing the hostility.”¹³² Simply put, Christ’s aim was to create “a single new humanity,”¹³³ one multiethnic people of God united by faith in Christ. Christ willingly died for the sins of racism and ethnocentrism, which separated people groups and led to ongoing mistreatment of each other. In doing so, Christ once and for all dealt with the “loss of oneness” that resulted in power struggles between people groups caused by sin. In the words of Stott, “Christ crucified has thus brought into being nothing less than a new, united human race, united in itself and united to its creator.”¹³⁴ In the words of Eugene Peterson, “Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody. Christ brought us together through his death on the cross.”¹³⁵ This being the case, “Our primary identity as humans,” Hays argues, “is to be based on our union with Christ, and no longer based on traditional human sociological connections.”¹³⁶

And because of the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, Paul summarizes, Jews and Gentiles have equal privilege as “fellow citizens” in God’s multiethnic kingdom, equal “access to the Father” as multiethnic “members of the household of God,” and equal importance and responsibility as a multiethnic “holy temple in the Lord.” “In him,” Paul concludes, “you [Gentiles] also are being built together [with the Jews] into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”¹³⁷ In Stott’s words, “The new society God has brought into being is nothing short of a new creation, a new human race, whose characteristic is no longer

¹³² Ephesians 2:15-16.

¹³³ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 101.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹³⁵ *The Message*, Ephesians 2:15-16.

¹³⁶ Hays, 204.

¹³⁷ Ephesians 2:22.

alienation but reconciliation, no longer division and hostility but unity and peace. This new society God rules and loves and lives in.”¹³⁸

In summary, God created human beings in his own image. They had equality and equal privilege as God’s people to subdue the earth and rule over his creation for his glory. But human beings sinned and rebelled against God. Instead of subduing and ruling over God’s creation, human beings subdued and ruled over each other. The good news is that the Son of God became a human being to decisively reverse the impact of sin upon humanity. Through the work of Christ, God brought together Jews and Gentiles to create a new human race. Human equality has been restored by the power of the cross. All who trust in Christ and submit to God have equal standing and equal privilege to bring the rule of God upon all peoples of the earth to the glory of God’s grace.

God’s Promise of Eternal Human Equality Gives His People Hope in the Midst of Inequality in the Church

Jesus died on the cross to end hostility and restore equality between ethnic groups on earth. However, this was not the only purpose for his death. The Bible reveals that Jesus died and rose again as the Lamb of God to forever unite all ethnic groups as the equally privileged people of God. This is the eternal hope given to suffering people of all ethnic groups in God’s vision to John as recorded in the book of Revelation:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 110.

¹³⁹ Revelation 7:9-10.

Hays states, “This multiethnic image, where people of all races and ethnic groups are shoulder to shoulder worshipping God, portrays exactly the same unity of believers that Paul calls for in his epistles.”¹⁴⁰ In other words, Paul explains in his letters the work Jesus began to do to unite people groups who have been mistreating each other. And John describes in his vision the work that Jesus will complete to unite all ethnic groups forever as God-glorifying people. “It is a picture of the reality that will exist in the climactic kingdom of Christ, and, as such,” Hays argues, “provides a model for us to strive toward.”¹⁴¹

Similarly, the scholars of ESV Study Bible state, “If [Revelation 7:9-10] is God’s great plan from the beginning of time until the end, then surely the Christian church of today should be a living example of racial harmony, characterized by full inclusion of people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds united in serving Christ and his universal kingdom on earth.”¹⁴² God’s plan of one new multiethnic humanity and racial harmony, these authors argue, should be reflected in the church today. Furthermore, in view of the vision of Revelation 7:9-10, where people of all ethnic groups worship the Lamb in harmony, Ellis asks, “What is the purpose of ethnicity anyway?” Ellis suggests it is to glorify God by discipling the nations.¹⁴³ Thus, he prays, “May God give us the grace to disciple the nations by demonstrating the true meaning of ethnicity rather than imitating the world within ethnic power struggles, marginalization, and oppression.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Hays, 205.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² *English Standard Version Study Bible*, 2558.

¹⁴³ Ellis, 141.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Indeed, in *United by Faith*, Michael Emerson and his fellow authors boldly claim that “multiracial congregations are God’s plan for responding to racism.”¹⁴⁵ They reason,

Creating authentic, reconciled, multiracial communities in the midst of division is hard, complex work. The barriers in a racialized society are many, and the degree of their entrenchment should never be underestimated. Courageous and visionary leadership among both clergy and laity is essential and a necessary ingredient for success. The journey requires a respect and appreciation for the cultures represented in the congregation in tandem with the willingness to travel into the unexplored territory of creating a new congregational culture ... We are called as Christians to live, work, serve, and be together, forging community that can occur only with God’s help.¹⁴⁶

Even though the work is hard and complex in a racialized society, these author argue that God’s plan for his multiethnic people is “to live, work, serve, and be together, forging community that can occur only with God’s help.” In doing so, the church will fulfill and reveal God’s plan to undo the sin of racism.

Similarly, Andrew Walls argues that it is in the coming together of different ethnic groups that the church experiences the maturity of the body of Christ.¹⁴⁷ He explains,

The Ephesian letter is not about cultural homogeneity ... The very height of Christ’s full stature is reached only by the coming together of the different cultural entities into the body of Christ. Only “together,” not on our own, can we reach his full stature ... They [Jews and Gentiles] could have formed separate churches, but that thought does not occur to the author [the Apostle Paul]. Two races and two cultures historically separated by the meal table now met at table to share the knowledge of Christ ... We need each other’s vision to correct, enlarge, and focus our own; only together we are complete in Christ.¹⁴⁸

According to Walls, God’s plan is not “separate churches” for different ethnic groups, but a unified multiethnic church. “Only ‘together,’ not on our own, can we reach his full

¹⁴⁵ Michael O. Emerson and others, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003), 184.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁴⁷ Andrew F. Walls, “The Ephesian Moment,” in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

stature,” as people from different cultures “share the knowledge of Christ...to correct, enlarge, and focus our own” limited vision of the fullness of Christ and his church.

Jerram Barrs concurs with Emerson and Walls. He states, “Christ’s desire is not Asian-Americans here and Latinos there, Afro-Americans here and Anglo-Americans somewhere else, but rather that we may be brought to complete unity.”¹⁴⁹ In fact, because establishing multiracial churches is “Christ’s design,” Barrs argues that establishing churches that are “purposefully homogenous...for the growth of the church is a sin against Jesus Christ.”¹⁵⁰ Christ’s plan, then, is for people of all races to come together – not separate in different congregations. And when people of different ethnic groups come together will the church be complete in Christ and fulfill God’s plan of racial harmony.

God’s vision and eternal hope for human beings of every race and ethnicity, then, is an equally privileged multiethnic people of God. They will worship the Lamb in perfect unity and racial harmony. However, on this side of heaven, inequality and mistreatment remain, even in the church of Christ. This reality is well-illustrated in the expansion of Christianity from Western Europe to the United States.

Racism in the Church

In *A History of Christian Missions*, church historian Stephen Neill extensively describes the reality of racism and mistreatment of others by the church. In particular, Neil explains that in the fifteenth century, “Europeans are beginning to think that their civilization is the only civilization in the world that is worthy of the name, and to develop

¹⁴⁹ Jerram Barrs, “Bound Together: Racial Reconciliation Begins in the Church,” *Covenant*, Spring 2002, 18.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the strange complex of the superior people.”¹⁵¹ With this “strange complex” of racial superiority, Europe expanded, “and often in advance of it, has gone the expansion of the Church.”¹⁵² Neil further explains the ongoing complex influence of European worldview upon the Christians who expanded the church beyond Europe:

Missionaries in the nineteenth century had to some extent yielded to the colonial complex. Only Western man was wise and good, and members of other races, in so far as they became westernized, might share in this wisdom and goodness. But Western man was the leader, and would remain so for a very long time, perhaps for ever. When voices were raised in criticism of this accepted position, they were liable to be shouted down by an almost unanimous chorus of disapproval.¹⁵³

According to Neil, Christianity expanded through the work of European missionaries, but so did the unchallengeable attitude of racial superiority and the pursuit of dominance over other races.

World renowned Christian anthropologist Paul Hiebert agrees with Neil’s summary of the expansion of the church. Hiebert states:

The Enlightenment deeply influenced Western Christian whites. Christians led the fight against slavery and human exploitation. They were also shaped by the world around them. Enlightenment attitudes were used to justify segregated churches, and even slavery. They supported the mission movement, and saw whites as uniquely called to propagate Christianity and civilization around the world. Missionaries sacrificed their lives to bring the gospel to people around the world, but many took for granted the racial superiority of whites.¹⁵⁴

Thus, Neill and Hiebert concur that the expansion of the church from Western Europe to other continents was complex. As Hiebert specifies, the Western Christian whites were deeply influenced by the Enlightenment attitude of “the racial superiority of the whites”

¹⁵¹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, Second ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 150.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 220.

¹⁵⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, “Western Images of Others and Otherness,” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith*, ed. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford Press University, 2007), 105.

and “led the fight against slavery and human exploitation.” Paradoxically, these Christians were both racist and fought against human inequality. They preached the gospel of freedom and justified slavery.

This attitude of “the racial superiority of the whites” was also present in the growth of the evangelical church in the United States from the beginning. Professor and church historian Douglas Sweeney states, “The evangelical movement has suffered from the sins of racial prejudice ever since it first emerged from the eighteenth-century Great Awakening.”¹⁵⁵ Sweeney explains, “While evangelicals did not invent the sins of racism or ethnocentrism, the slave trade, segregation, discrimination, or racial hate groups, literally millions of white evangelicals have either participated in or sanctioned one or more of these things, distorting their common witness of the gospel.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, the history of the American church also illustrates inequality and power struggles between the white Christians who evangelized and the black Africans who were coerced into slavery. This, Sweeney points out, undermined the witness of the gospel of the unity and equality of all people in Christ. And even when white Christians fought to free the blacks from slavery, Hiebert clarifies, “Many who argued against slavery in the United States did so not on the basis of the equality of all humans, but on the humanitarian argument that the inferior should be helped, not enslaved, by the superiors.”¹⁵⁷

With the hope of the gospel, the church of Christ expanded from Europe to other continents. There were Christians who deeply cared about others of a different race or ethnicity. But there also were Christians who sought dominion over another race. And as a

¹⁵⁵ Sweeney, 108.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Hiebert, 104.

whole, the gospel witness of equal privilege of all peoples was undermined by racism and inequality.

Racialization and the Church

Further complicating the issue, and crucial to understanding the challenges minority pastors encounter in majority congregations today, is the development of a “racialized society” in the United States. In the award-winning book *Divided by Faith*,¹⁵⁸ Michael Emerson and Christian Smith define “racialized society” as “a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships.”¹⁵⁹ Their claim is that America is a racialized society, and the racialization in America has inevitably affected the church in a systemic way.

In the post-Civil Rights era, Emerson and Smith argue that inequality and power struggles, as evident in racial division and racial hierarchy in the United States, are systemic problems, covertly “embedded in normal operations of institutions” and “invisible to most Whites.”¹⁶⁰ In this “new era of race relations in the United States,” Emerson and Smith state, “racism is not merely individual, overt prejudice or the free-floating irrational driver of race problems, but the collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups.”¹⁶¹ That is to say, in this post-Civil Rights era, Emerson and Smith assert that power struggles between racial groups occur within a “social system that is racialized.”¹⁶² An essential argument they make is that “people need not intend their actions to contribute to racial division or inequality for their actions to be so,”

¹⁵⁸ Winner of the 2001 Distinguished Book Award by the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

¹⁵⁹ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 7.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

precisely because “racialization is embedded within the normal, everyday operation of institutions” and social structures.¹⁶³ To them, to do nothing about the status quo is to contribute to the systemic problem of racial inequality.

Their conclusion as it relates to the American evangelical church is not optimistic.

Emerson and Smith state,

We can find numerous positive examples of religious people and groups working to overcome racial division and inequality, but structural forces within the organization of religion undercut these positive actions. In fact, these structural forces often regenerate the very conditions the positive actions work to eliminate.¹⁶⁴

Per Heifetz and Linsky, church organizations cannot merely make technical changes hoping to overcome racial division and inequality. They must make adaptive changes to address the systemic problem of racialization in the church. Specifically, Emerson and Smith point to the evangelical church’s “heavy reliance on...racially homogenous ingroups” to provide “meaning and belonging” and “the segmented market” for growth and survival in the face of unending competition in “the religious marketplace.”¹⁶⁵ These two “primary structural arrangements,” they argue, are the reason why the church “ironically undercuts many of its own best efforts.”¹⁶⁶ As evidence of this, Emerson and Smith claim,

These arrangements partially generate and reproduce the racial fragmentation of American society; they aid the formation and maintenance of group biases, direct altruistic religious impulses to express themselves primarily in racially separate groups, contribute to segregated social networks and identities, help perpetuate socioeconomic inequality by race, and generally fragment and drown out religious prophetic voices calling for an end to racialization.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 168.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

In short, not only is the church not overcoming racial inequality within itself, but it contributes to the problem of racial inequality in American society. Inequality between the white majority and ethnic minorities continues because the evangelical church systemically depends on “homogeneity” and “marketing principles” for its “strength and growth.”¹⁶⁸

In *This Side of Heaven*, Robert Priest agrees with Emerson and Smith that racial division and inequality in the United States, and even in the church, are embedded in a system of social structures. Priest asserts that, although “evangelical Christians insist that the gospel is for everyone,” on “this side of heaven,” they “live and act as members” of “sinfully human societies” that create “powerful social structures.”¹⁶⁹ And, Priest argues, these social structures, “undergirded by strong political, legal, and cultural supports...both separated blacks and whites and subordinated blacks while privileging whites.”¹⁷⁰ Thus, Priest concurs with Emerson and Smith that inequality and power struggles in the American evangelical church exist at the level of social systems, institutions, and structures.

Therefore, to “deconstruct” power struggles between racial groups, Hiebert suggests that Christians not only deal with personal views and attitudes toward race and racism, but also “must work to transform the sociocultural systems that perpetuate racism – to bring reconciliation, love, and peace among the people of the world.”¹⁷¹ Similarly, Ellis states, “There is a lot of talk today about reconciliation. But, if we ignore the dominant/sub-dominant dynamics, we will never bridge the gap [of ethnic-based inequality]. We will wonder why racial reconciliation does not seem to work, and people will continue to

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Robert J. Priest, “Sharing the Gospel in a Racially Segregated Society,” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith*, ed. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Hiebert, 108.

suffer.”¹⁷² Hiebert and Ellis agree that power struggles that lead to inequality based on race or ethnicity must be addressed at systemic and structural levels.

Responses to Inequality in the Church

Given the reality of racial inequality in the church, Stott and Priest call for Christians to respond. On the one hand, Stott calls Christians to repent – for “Christians erect new barriers in place of the old which Christ has demolished.”¹⁷³ Stott urges,

It is simply impossible, with any shred of Christian integrity, to go on proclaiming that Jesus by his cross has abolished the old divisions and created a single new humanity of love, while at the same time we are contradicting our message by tolerating racial or social or other barriers within our church fellowship ... We need to get the failures of the church on our conscience, to feel the offence to Christ ... to weep over the credibility gap between the church’s talk and the church’s walk, to repent of our readiness to excuse and even condone our failures, and to determine to do something about it.¹⁷⁴

Given the church’s condition, Stott reasons, the church’s work of weeping, repenting, and becoming whom Christ has created her to be – a single new humanity – will honor Christ and glorify God.

On the other hand, Priest reminds Christians that they are called by God to suffer and struggle for gospel justice. He states,

On this side of heaven we live in social arenas that call us not to accommodate and conform, but to critique and resist evil (in self and others), to confront powers, and to seek reconciliation. We are called to suffering, to conflict, and to struggle. And yet such suffering and struggle is informed by the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, and in the future he ensures.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Ellis, 129-130.

¹⁷³ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 110.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 111-112.

¹⁷⁵ Priest and Nieves, "Introduction," 3-4.

The hope Christians have is that in heaven there is “no suffering, no sin, no conflict, and no struggle.”¹⁷⁶ Until their hope becomes an eternal reality in Christ – until they “rest” in heaven, Priest argues, Christians will suffer and struggle for righteousness.

Julius Kim agrees with Priest. Kim directs those who suffer inequality as minorities in a dominant majority culture to look to Jesus. Encouraging Asian American pastors, Kim explains:

Providentially, the Lord takes us through this journey, this pilgrim experience. This is not our home ... A pilgrim theology of suffering needs to inform whether or not you get invited [and treated as equals]. So that you can say, “Lord, as a pilgrim who’s been bought by the blood of Christ, who’s on a journey to my heavenly home, this is part of your maturing me, growing me, and making me more and more like Jesus – the first immigrant.” The first one who left His home and became an immigrant. Why? So that we would always have a home.¹⁷⁷

Thus, Kim asserts that, until they reach home, the Lord may call minorities to suffer even as “the first eschatological Immigrant” suffered. And even as Jesus was not invited to be their leader by the leaders of dominant culture of his day, Kim reminds minority pastors that theirs is “a gospel that says, ‘You need to also suffer. You suffer for the gospel’s sake.’”¹⁷⁸ Kim concludes, “Much of Jesus’ own incarnational experience as an eschatological immigrant is helpful for us when often times we face situations in our lives that are very difficult and challenging – when we don’t get invited.”¹⁷⁹ As pilgrims on this side of heaven, minority pastors must find their hope and identity in Jesus.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷⁷ Julius Kim and Stephen Um, “Asian-American Christian Thought and Theological History: Pastoral Implications for Diversity and Innovations in a Multiracial Church,” The Gospel Coalition National Conference, 2011, plenary session audio recording, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/resources/a/asian-american-christian-thought-and-theological-history-pastoral-impl> (accessed July 20, 2012).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Summary of Biblical-Theological Perspective on Human Equality

The Bible explains that, unlike other creatures, God created human beings in his own image. Thus, every person – regardless of race or ethnicity – was to be treated equally with dignity and respect. And together, they were to subdue the earth and seek dominion over God’s creation. But sin changed everything. When the first human beings chose to rebel against God, they also chose to rebel against his will, subduing and seeking dominion, not over God’s creation, but over one another. Human equality vanished. But God’s plan was to send his own Son as a human being to bring sinful human beings to God and restore human equality. Jesus, through his death on the cross, destroyed the hostility between human beings because of pride and created one new human race by his grace. People of all ethnic groups once again have equally privileged standing before God, and together they are to bring God’s gracious rule to people of every language, tribe, and nation. They do so with the eternal hope that one day, sin will be no more, and they will equally share the privileged status as God’s beloved people.

But on this side of heaven, they suffer and struggle because there is still inequality, even in the church. Christianity spread from Western Europe to the rest of the world, but it spread within the vehicle of the Enlightenment worldview that claimed the superiority of the white race. This racial pride also plagued the American evangelical church. Many white Christians justified slavery of African Americans. Many others sought justice – but as a superior race helping an inferior race. And as time passed, the American Christians segregated, and the American society became a racialized society. The Sunday hour is the most segregated hour in America, and people’s quality of life depends on their race. Social

structures were formed that systemically privileged the whites while subordinating others. Churches were established that promoted racial homogeneity and depended on marketing principles within the system of these social structures of inequality. And even when Christians labor to overcome racial division and inequality, their work is undermined because the systems that generate and perpetuate inequality are not undone.

Thus, when minority pastors answer the call to serve in majority culture congregations, they encounter more than leadership challenges. They also encounter systems of structural arrangements within which these congregations exist and perpetuate inequality. Even so, minority pastors serve and lead. Some of the congregations may repent and seek true biblical unity. Many congregations may not be aware of racial inequality or interested in addressing it. Still, minority pastors serve – suffering, struggling, and hoping – to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

In short, the Bible does not specifically address the leadership challenges of minority pastors in majority culture congregations. However, it does explain the reason for their leadership challenges, which is human inequality caused by sin. Paul has the same message for both those who feel ethnically superior and those who have been treated as inferior. He points them to Christ and to his work. Christ put an end to human inequality by creating one new human race. And even though there is still inequality on this side of heaven, God's people serve with the hope of lasting human equality in heaven because of the work of Christ.

Logic Behind Three Literature Areas

In the previous section, a biblical theological explanation of human inequality was examined. With this in mind, the ways minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations can be examined through a broader area of literature. In order to understand the challenges minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations, the logic for the selected literature areas will be explained.

The United States is a country like no other in the world. It features “high levels of cultural diversity, a democratic political tradition, and legal and value systems that place great emphasis on fairness, respect, and equal opportunity” for all.¹⁸⁰ This is what makes living and working the United States great – and challenging. On the surface level, minority pastors overcoming leadership challenges in majority culture congregations is a simple concept to comprehend. One must understand what the challenges are and then take necessary steps to overcome them. On a deeper level, however, overcoming leadership challenges for minority pastors serving in majority culture congregations is a complex issue. This is because minority pastors’ leadership challenges take place within the systems of an organizational culture and a racialized American society. This means that there are no simple solutions. Resolving the leadership challenges that minority pastors face requires taking into account complex interactions and influences between people and their behaviors as well as assumptions and practices of majority culture congregations.

Understanding the challenges minority pastors encounter also requires understanding the dynamics of the system of organizational cultures embedded in the racialized American society within which minority pastors work. Priest states, “America’s

¹⁸⁰ Taylor Cox, *Creating the Multicultural Organization* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 16.

350,000 congregations are both implicated in American racialized patterns and are potentially strategic sites for constructively engaging such racialization.”¹⁸¹ Meaning, the leadership challenges minority pastors face in majority culture congregations are affected not only by complex interactions between pastors, congregants, and practices of majority culture congregations within the church, but also by the influences of “American racialized patterns” without the church. Thus, the potential solutions must be found at the level that effectively addresses the complexity of interactions within and influences without the church. At the same time, however, minority pastors cannot merely look to systemic solutions for their leadership problems. To overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, they need to develop competencies that will help them work effectively in a multicultural environment.

Therefore, to better understand how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, three literature areas will be explored. The first area explores the leadership challenges encountered by minority leaders. The second area explores the importance of understanding organizational culture as the context of minorities in leadership. The third area explores the multicultural leadership competencies necessary for minority leaders working in majority culture organizations. Together these literature areas will provide a framework for understanding how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture organizations.

Minority Leadership Challenges

The struggle of minorities in leadership is a struggle of power. They lack the social power necessary to lead others and make a difference because of their minority status. That

¹⁸¹ Priest and Nieves, "Introduction," 12.

is to say, being lower in rank or inferior in status to Caucasians of the majority culture, minority leaders have less influence in Caucasian-dominant organizations or in broader American society. Pastor Tim Keller, whose PCA church consists of a fairly large number of minority congregants, understands this struggle. Keller asserts that when minority church planters try to raise support, “the [evangelical church] system assumes that everyone who goes out there has equal social power and they don’t.”¹⁸² Keller emphasizes that leaders of organizations need “to recognize the fact that people don’t start with the same amount of social power” because the system “privileges white people.”¹⁸³ This being the case, Um argues, “A person who is part of the dominant culture must invite the other [minority] person and ... engage in power-sharing. That is the only way that you are going to work through these issues [of racism and ethnocentrism].”¹⁸⁴

Why must this be? Why, for instance, would a minority need to be “invited” to be a leader of a predominantly Caucasian church? Brian Howell, professor of anthropology at Wheaton College, asks the following questions to provide his answer:

How does a congregation that is often initially perceived as “white” by people of color manage to attract and retain those members? How do they come to feel included and valued as members? When the head pastor and a majority of the leadership are of one ethnic/racial group (particularly when they are from the socially dominant group) how do they avoid the impression that they are still “in control”?¹⁸⁵

Howell asserts that when Caucasians, who have a higher degree of influence in American racialized society, intentionally act to include into their world and value minorities, “power

¹⁸² During the Q&A segment of *Race and the Christian: An Evening with John Piper and Tim Keller*, moderated by Anthony Bradley and sponsored by Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, March 28, 2012.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Kim and Um.

¹⁸⁵ Brian M. Howell, “Power and Reconciliation in an Urban Church: The Case of New City Fellowship,” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith*, ed. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 294.

relationships and status become reversed and redefined in ways that bring traditionally marginalized people to the center.”¹⁸⁶ In other words, because minorities do not have equal social power in the majority dominant culture, those in the majority culture must share their power and influence by “inviting” minorities into their dominant culture structure. When such an intentional act of “invitation” occurs, social and racial “power relationships and status become reversed and redefined.” Simply put, intentional invitation brings “marginalized people to the center.” Noting the practices of a multicultural PCA church in St. Louis, Howell asserts that “the church has the potential to become a countercultural community in which ‘normal’ [racialized] relations of social and cultural power can be inverted, subverted, and deconstructed” through intentionally inviting minorities to be in positions of influence and control.¹⁸⁷ Intentional invitation begins to undo inequality.

Crucially, what these authors point out is that minorities do not have the same social power as Caucasians in the dominant majority culture. And because minorities do not have the same degree of influence, when they are in leadership without proper “invitation,” they struggle to lead others in majority culture organizations.

What sustains this power struggle for minorities in leadership? Why is it difficult for minorities to exert leadership in majority culture organizations? How do their challenges affect them personally? The available literature on the topic of minorities in leadership explains that there are three barriers that are unique to minority leaders, which non-minority white leaders do not experience. They experience the reality of white

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 305.

privilege, systemic stereotypes, and personal anxiety that result from being treated as minorities. These issues will now be explored.

White Privilege

Anglo American leaders experience what is typically referred to as “white privilege,” even though most of them are not even aware of its existence,¹⁸⁸ and it is a systemic problem. Connerley and Pedersen explain, “White privilege refers to the invisible systems that confer dominance on Whites through being socialized in a racist society, even though none of them may have chosen to be racist or biased or prejudiced.”¹⁸⁹ This being the case, ethnic or racial background matters when it comes to leadership because non-white leaders are not “on the same level playing field from the perspective of advantage.”¹⁹⁰ And because “White privilege is real,” Connerley and Pederson argue, “There is a need to accept responsibility for the consequences of White privilege, however unintentional it may be, and to understand the anger that might well be a consequence of not having that privilege.”¹⁹¹

Similarly, Rah explains, “White privilege is the system that places white culture in American society at the center with all other cultures on the fringes.”¹⁹² Relevant to this research, since white culture is the standard, it also defines and measures what makes someone a competent and effective leader. White privilege matters, Rah argues, because in such a racialized society, white privilege is power.¹⁹³ He explains, “The power of privilege is

¹⁸⁸ Connerley and Pedersen, 35.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁹² Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 72.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

that it can go undetected by those who are oppressed by it and even by those who have it ... White privilege not only deals with an economic benefit, but also speaks to a position of emotional and social power that is oftentimes reserved for white Americans.”¹⁹⁴

Burns recognizes Rah’s analysis of white privilege as power. Burns argues that, because “a dominant way of life” – a standard that measures other ways of life – exists, pastors who hope to lead in a multicultural environment “must recognize dominant cultural perspectives and the tendency to assume that these are correct.”¹⁹⁵ That is, pastors in a multiethnic environment must be able to distinguish white privilege in the system and discern what is culturally white – and thus dominant – in its assumptions and practices. Echoing Burns, Lyght et al. also state, “Discrimination and exclusion of minorities and ethnic minorities do not have to be overt and open – just business as usual is enough.”¹⁹⁶ “Hence,” they urge Anglo pastors, “you need to question the underlying assumption behind the policies, rules, and expectations.”¹⁹⁷

As Asian American pastors and leaders, Um and Kim welcome arguments made by Burns and Lyght et al. regarding the need to challenge dominant cultural perspectives and assumptions in the church. Having experiential understanding of the reality of white privilege in the church, Kim and Um state that while Asian Americans “are emerging as leaders in their respective secular careers, they are not finding the same kind of opportunities for advancement and leadership within American churches that are

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 73.

¹⁹⁵ Burns, 30.

¹⁹⁶ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 103.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

predominantly led and populated by Caucasians.”¹⁹⁸ What is the reason for the lack of opportunities for Asian Americans? Kim and Um assert, for instance, that Asian American leaders who “tend not to be assertive, aggressive, and outspoken as their Caucasian counterparts” are measured against Caucasian leaders, and such “passivity” of Asian Americans is “often misinterpreted to signify a lack of leadership qualities.”¹⁹⁹ This is the reality for minority pastors in majority culture congregations.

Because white privilege is real and systemic, for minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, it must be dealt with by those who sustain the system of white privilege – the Anglo American pastors and leaders. The United Methodist Church in America, a denomination that intentionally appoints minority pastors in its majority culture congregations, has been addressing the systemic problem of white privilege. In a chapter entitled “For Anglo Pastors Only,” Lyght et al. remind Anglo pastors, “Do not believe that racism in the church or denomination is only a figment of people’s imagination. Racism is a power arrangement.”²⁰⁰ Specifically addressing “power and Anglo privilege,” the authors further explain to Anglo pastors that “racism in the church systematically deprives minority and ethnic-minority pastors of their humanity by devaluing their individual and unique identities and talents.”²⁰¹ This happens because

¹⁹⁸ John Starke, *Identity, History, and Passivity: Julius Kim and Stephen Um Discuss Challenges for Asian Americans*, TGC Blog, entry posted March 25, 2011, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2011/03/25/identity-history-and-passivity-julius-kim-and-stephen-um-discuss-challenges-for-asian-americans/> (accessed January 20, 2012).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 101.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 104.

Anglos have “power and control” to “determine ministerial, administrative, and appointment decisions.”²⁰²

Thus, the problem with white privilege is that whites have power and control. They often determine or define the dominant way of life, which is accepted by minorities in American society because they lack the same power and control. This being the case, minority pastors encounter resistance and leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, where the members are not used to minority pastors having power and control. Thus, Lyght et al. explain, “All that minority and ethnic-minority pastors ask from their Anglo colleagues in ministry is tolerance and acceptance, from the local church cooperation and collaboration, from church leadership presence and encouragement, from the denomination belonging and meaning. Sadly, all too often they find these things in short supply.”²⁰³ According to these authors, minority pastors long for a sense of equality in the system of majority culture congregations.

Systemic Prejudice

The flipside of white privilege is prejudice against non-whites. Because white privilege exists in American society, minorities in leadership experience prejudice. Though much of the prejudice experienced by minorities in leadership is unintentional, prejudice exists because it is embedded in the organizational systems of a racialized American society.

In *The New Leaders*, Ann Morrison, whose research and insights informed the FGCC regarding leadership diversity issues in America, simply states, “The most significant barriers [to professional advancement] today are the policies and practices that

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 105.

systematically restrict the opportunities and rewards available to women and people of color.”²⁰⁴ That is, Morrison points out that minorities find it difficult even to advance toward opportunities for leadership in organizations because of existing systems that sustain white privilege for white men. Morrison specifically points out prejudice as the single greatest barrier minorities face in organizations. She explains:

Prejudice is defined here as the tendency to view people who are different from some reference group in terms of sex, ethnic background, or racial characteristics such as skin color as being deficient. In other words, prejudice is the assumption (without evidence) that nontraditional managers are less competent or less suitable than white managers; it is the refusal to accept nontraditional managers as equals.²⁰⁵

In short, because the dominant reference group of leaders in the American workforce is white men, Morrison explains that women and racial or ethnic minorities experience the prejudice of being presumed as weak, less suitable, or less competent simply because they are not white men. That is, because they are not white men, minority leaders in majority culture organizations typically experience not just being viewed as different, but also being viewed as weak.

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie concur with Morrison. They explain “we tend to assume things in a new culture are not merely different but wrong, or at least inadequate.”²⁰⁶ This is so, they argue, because, according to the negative attribution theory, “people tend to attribute negative characteristics to things that are new and not

²⁰⁴ Ann M. Morrison, *The New Leaders: Guidelines on Leadership Diversity in America* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 33-34.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

²⁰⁶ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 213.

understood.”²⁰⁷ While they recognize that making judgments about others before understanding them is a “very human” pattern, they also assert that it is a “harmful pattern.”²⁰⁸

What is the cause of ongoing systemic prejudice that minority leaders experience in majority culture organizations? Morrison and the FGCC both point out that the dynamic force behind the prejudice is wide acceptance of racial stereotypes. Morrison states, “Many people have become aware of cultural differences, the value and the inevitability of diversity. But prejudice continues to permeate organizations in subtle, nearly invisible forms because stereotypic assumptions have been built into their organizational norms and everyday practices.”²⁰⁹ Similarly, the FGCC states, “Though it is mostly covert, our society has developed an extremely sophisticated, and often denied, acceptability index based on gradations in skin color.”²¹⁰ Although “it is not legally permissible,” the FGCC reports, “it persists just beneath the surface and it can be and is used as a basis for decision-making, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously.”²¹¹ Simply put, though “often denied,” stereotypes from the viewpoint of the dominant white culture lead people to assume things about minority leaders “without evidence” because of their race or ethnicity.

Organizations that intentionally integrate minorities to work in their majority culture environment are clearly aware of the prevalence of systemic prejudice that leads to unsubstantiated assumptions. This is why the UMC leaders warn and instruct their Anglo pastors, “Discrimination and exclusion of minorities and ethnic minorities do not have to

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Morrison, 33.

²¹⁰ FGCC, 29.

²¹¹ Ibid.

be overt and open – just business as usual is enough. Hence you need to question the underlying assumptions behind the policies, rules, and expectations.”²¹² That is to say, because “stereotypic assumptions have been built into...everyday practices” of organizations for so long, even in the church, the UMC leaders urge their Anglo pastors to ask questions so that they can begin to see their own cultural biases and assumptions in their everyday ministry practices.

There is evidence that the passage of time has not removed the barrier of systemic prejudice for minority leaders. For many minority leaders in majority culture organizations, it is still “just business as usual.” Twenty years after Morrison’s claim about systemic prejudice, Kim and Um express a similar reality for Asian American pastors in majority culture denominations such as the PCA. They state:

For example, within group settings Asian Americans tend not to be as assertive, aggressive, and outspoken as their Caucasian counterparts. This passivity displayed by many Asian Americans is often misinterpreted to signify a lack of leadership qualities. This apparent passivity, however, is part of a cultural dynamic that is often misunderstood. As such, Asian Americans are often not given opportunities to utilize God-given gifts and talents for the sake of the church.²¹³

In short, in a predominantly majority culture denomination like the PCA, minority pastors are often “not given opportunities to utilize God-given gifts and talents” because of prejudice that exists in the organizational system. Their differences from white men are viewed as weaknesses. Therefore, they are viewed as less competent – “or at least inadequate” – to be leaders. This is a major leadership challenge for minority pastors.

²¹² Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 103.

²¹³ Starke.

Presumed Incompetence

Waters agrees with Morrison's claim that systemic prejudice based on racial or ethnic stereotypes leads to presumed incompetence for minority leaders. In his article "Minority Leadership Problems," echoing Morrison's statement of twenty years prior, Waters states, "One of the problems that virtually all minority managers have to address is the question of competence."²¹⁴ As also asserted by the FGCC and Morrison, Waters adds that "the question of competence" for minority leaders arises because of "the unspoken perception of other organizational members" of the majority culture.²¹⁵ This confirms Morrison's argument that stereotypic prejudice is systemic and unintentional, yet real and evident, because of racialization in American society, as Emerson and Smith have argued.²¹⁶ According to Morrison, the systemic prejudice is rooted in the finding that "whites believe that people of other ethnic backgrounds are less intelligent, less hard working, less likely to be self-supporting, more violence prone, and less patriotic than whites."²¹⁷

Interestingly, however, the reasoning behind the presumed incompetence of minority leaders depends on the particular racial or ethnic background of the leaders. In other words, the reason why, for instance, Asian leaders are presumed incompetent is different than the reasons for the presumption as to African Americans or Hispanics. In Morrison's words, "Some stereotypes apply to certain groups [of minority leaders] in

²¹⁴ Waters, 17.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 7.

²¹⁷ Morrison, 35.

particular,”²¹⁸ or as Waters states, “all minorities will not have the same leadership problems.”²¹⁹ This point is also well articulated by Waters, FGCC, and Zweigenhaft and Domhoff on the subject of challenges or barriers for minority leaders.

“The issue of competence for Asians,” Waters explains, “centers on the problem of their being perceived as competent within a restricted range.”²²⁰ That is to say, “The problem the Asian managers may encounter is that he or she may be perceived as being competent as long as his or her job has a large technical or scientific component.”²²¹ Morrison states, “Asian-Americans are said to be so research oriented and technically focused that they are not able to supervise people or communicate well in general.”²²² Similarly, the FGCC reports that there is “widespread acceptance of the stereotype that Asian and Pacific Islander Americans make superior professionals and technicians but are not suited for management leadership.”²²³

Additionally, Richard Zweigenhaft and William Domhoff explain that “most Asian Americans face difficulties in advancing to the highest levels of large organizations.”²²⁴ And along with Waters, Morrison, and the FGCC, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff state, “They are stereotyped as lacking ‘interpersonal’ and ‘leadership’ skills and in their written or spoken English.”²²⁵ Zweigenhaft and Domhoff further argue, “Thus, despite high levels of educational attainment and considerable evidence of their general acceptance by white

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Waters, 16.

²²⁰ Ibid., 18.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Morrison, 35.

²²³ FGCC, 115.

²²⁴ Richard L. Zweigenhaft and G. William Domhoff, *Diversity in the Power Elite: Have Women and Minorities Reached the Top?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 143.

²²⁵ Ibid.

Americans, there may be limits to just how far Asian Americans can go in the power structures for at least another decade.”²²⁶ But as Kim and Um articulate,²²⁷ at least in the church, things are still “just business as usual” with respect to leadership of Asian Americans in majority culture organizations.

African Americans, on the other hand, are presumed to be incompetent as leaders, according to Morrison, because of the prevailing stereotypical belief that they are “lazy” and “uneducated.”²²⁸ Waters explains Morrison’s point by stating that for African American and Hispanic managers, their challenges are rooted in the practice of affirmative action.

Waters states,

One of the unfortunate legacies of affirmative action is that newly hired or promoted minority managers may have their competencies questioned. These individuals will more than likely be seen as “affirmative action hires,” that is, their selection will be seen as the result of the application of special criteria not available to all. Consequently, these minority managers may be perceived as being less competent because of what was assumed to be an unfair selection process. Thus, the legitimacy of the minority manager’s authority will be called into question, and he or she may be seen as not “truly qualified.”²²⁹

That is to say, African American (and Hispanic) leaders are presumed to be incompetent as leaders because in the minds of many, even though they are “lazy” and “uneducated” – and thus “not ‘truly qualified’” – they are nevertheless in positions of leadership because they were “affirmative action hires.”

On the other hand, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff point out that “social protests and federal legislation opened up opportunities for [well educated] black professionals in

²²⁶ Ibid., 143-144.

²²⁷ Starke.

²²⁸ Morrison, 35.

²²⁹ Waters, 17.

predominantly white corporations.”²³⁰ However, they note, many of these jobs were “racialized” rather than “mainstream” – that is, jobs that were related to or intentionally designed “to administer corporate policies sensitive to blacks and, hence, lessen racial pressures on white corporate environments.”²³¹ Affirming the argument made by Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, Heifetz and Linsky refer to such a practice as “marginalization” and state, “Most of the time organizations marginalize people less directly” than individuals.²³² Heifetz and Linsky recount an example: “An African-American man tells of his frustration at being part of a management team but finding his input limited on any issue other than race.”²³³ Giving a specific example of a mid-1990s diversity initiative of the New England Aquarium, they attribute the experience of marginalization of an African American leader to the organization’s majority culture leadership’s unwillingness to deal with adaptive challenges or not having interest in making deep changes in its “operations, culture, and ways of doing business” to empower minorities and give accessibility to minority communities.²³⁴

In short, minority leaders are presumed to be incompetent because they are not white men. The presumption of incompetence is an issue of marginalization and, as Heifetz and Linsky suggest, requires adaptive change at an organizational level.

Undermined Authority

Minority leaders’ presumed incompetence leads to diminished power and influence necessary to make a difference in their organizations. When minority leaders are viewed as

²³⁰ Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 100. These authors maintain that “blacks have to be better-educated than whites to get ahead.”

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Heifetz and Linsky, 32.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid., 33-35.

weak or inadequate, their ability to exert leadership is additionally challenged because their legitimate authority is undermined, not recognized, not readily accepted, or resisted.

Waters explains the impact of minority leaders being perceived as “different”:

Even if minority managers are not seen to have been hired or promoted because of special criteria, they may still have problems with the subordinate’s perception that in some important and fundamental way the minority manager is “different.” The subordinate may be uncomfortable with the minority manager solely because this manager does not fit the subordinate’s perception of what a manager is supposed to be. The subordinate’s perception could simply be reflective of the fact that there are, proportionately, very few minority managers in either the public or private sectors.²³⁵

That is to say, because subordinates are unaccustomed to seeing minorities as leaders in their organizations, they may not readily accept minorities as leaders who hold authority.

Lyght et al. confirm Waters’s argument and provide their own example of difficulties minority pastors encounter even in the church office: “When a visitor or salesperson comes to a church office, he or she invariably looks to the Anglo secretary or layperson and tries to transact business with that person. They are so familiar with seeing whites in positions of leadership or decision-making that they are blind to obvious disparities.”²³⁶ What majority culture Caucasian pastors take for granted in their leadership is not granted to minority pastors simply because they are “different.”

“The end result,” Waters argues, “is that the minority manager may encounter difficulties in his or her efforts to exert leadership.”²³⁷ Waters further asserts that opposition to their leadership “will reveal itself as reluctance or hesitation [by subordinates]

²³⁵ Waters, 18.

²³⁶ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 104.

²³⁷ Waters, 18.

to accept the authority of the minority manager.”²³⁸ Specifically, “the time frame in which subordinates make a determination that the manager is ‘okay’ is longer.”²³⁹ Also, Waters explains that during this extended period of reluctance and hesitation, “the manager is scrutinized by subordinates (as well as peers and superiors) to see if he or she has the ‘right stuff’ to be the manager.”²⁴⁰ During this extended period of resistance, the subordinates may search for “behaviors that reinforce possible preconceived notions that the manager is not competent.”²⁴¹ Waters thus confirms Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie’s explanation that “we tend to assume things in a new culture are not merely different but wrong, or at least inadequate.”²⁴²

What these authors have articulated and argued is a real experience for minority pastors. Minority pastors find it difficult to exert leadership in majority culture congregations because they are perceived as “different” – thus, not adequate or competent to be leaders. Even though they hold the office of authority as pastors, because they are minorities among majority people who are not used to being led by minority leaders either at work or church, they often experience resistance or hesitation to their leadership.

Personal Anxiety

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee state that “leadership is intrinsically stressful.”²⁴³ Minority pastors, however, may experience additional stress and personal anxiety because they encounter the unique leadership challenges of being presumed incompetent and being undermined as leaders – leadership challenges that majority culture pastors do not

²³⁸ Ibid., 19.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, 213.

²⁴³ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 163.

experience in their own congregations. Goleman et al. explain why minority pastors may experience more stress and personal anxiety. They share:

Positive groups help people make positive changes, particularly if the relationships are filled with candor, trust, and psychological safety. For leaders, such safety may be crucial for authentic learning to occur. Often leaders feel unsafe, as if they're under a microscope, their every action scrutinized by those around them – and so they never take the risk of exploring new habits. Knowing that others are watching with a critical eye provokes them to judge their progress too soon, curtail experimentation, and decrease risk taking. In those ways and others, leadership is intrinsically stressful.²⁴⁴

By nature, because they are viewed as “different,” minority pastors are, in fact, “under a microscope,” and their actions are “scrutinized by those around them” in order to invalidate their leadership. And because this is the typical environment, minority pastors in majority culture congregations may lack relationships “filled with candor, trust, and psychological safety.” This leads to personal anxiety and stress unknown to Caucasian pastors in congregations of their own culture.

Lyght et al. assert that minority pastors indeed encounter personal anxiety and stress simply because they work in majority culture congregations that view them as “different.” They state,

Sadly, minorities and ethnic minorities are often saddled with offensive stereotypes that negatively affect their ministry ... Many ethnic-minority pastors enter ministry with no awareness of racism, ageism, or other host of *isms* that exist. When they encounter such “isms,” they become apprehensive and fearful about expressing their true feelings. Self-doubt and lack of confidence haunt them, and they often become depressed and withdrawn.²⁴⁵

Though minority pastors desire simply to serve and bless their congregations, they often struggle with self-worth and personal anxiety resulting from lack of fruitfulness rooted in

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 55.

resistance to their leadership. “Self-doubt and lack of confidence” is often their experience, as well as becoming “depressed and withdrawn.” Because this experience is a reality for minority pastors, Lyght et al. helpfully exhort their United Methodist Anglo pastors,

Listen when minority and ethnic-minority pastors talk about their frustrations, pain, and feelings of hurt and rejection. Do not ignore them or assume it is their own making. When they talk about racism, prejudice, and the helplessness they experience in their congregations, do not undermine or deny their feelings.²⁴⁶

These UMC leaders validate the necessity of providing minority pastors active support by listening and acknowledging issues that personally affect their work. Thus, Lyght et al. agree with Goleman et al. that “positive groups help people make positive changes.”

Though minority pastors experience personal anxiety and stress, these authors understand the value of relationships that are “filled with candor, trust, and psychological safety” for minority pastors to overcome their leadership challenges and thrive even in majority culture congregations.

Similar to what Lyght et al. articulate for minority pastors in majority culture congregations, Waters also explains the reality of how minority leaders experience anxiety as a result of working with subordinates who doubt their competencies as leaders. Waters states,

Minority managers will more than likely perceive the fact that they are “on display” ... that they are being constantly watched and judged. In response, the manager may feel great pressure not to make any mistakes in order to demonstrate his or her expertise power. This pressure to perform correctly to prove one’s competency (and, hence, legitimate claim to leadership) will create tension and anxiety and may be expressed in how the manager responds in his or her daily dealings with subordinates.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 102.

²⁴⁷ Waters, 19.

Simply put, because they are thought to be incompetent, minority leaders perform to prove that they are competent. This experience of proving their worth is also present in the church. Lyght et al. state,

Unfortunately, even in light of years of pastoral experience, minority and ethnic-minority pastors are asked repeatedly to prove their credibility in direct or indirect ways, both by denominational leadership and church members ... In addition, minority and ethnic-minority pastors are evaluated more harshly than their Anglo counterparts.²⁴⁸

This hard work of repeatedly trying to “prove their credibility” creates anxiety, and this anxiety is unique to minority leaders in majority culture organizations.

Organizational Culture and Leadership

The examination of what the available literature offers in the area of minority leadership problems is now followed by a consideration of the dynamics of organizational culture that minority pastors have to understand. When minority pastors serve in majority culture congregations, they are dealing with leadership in the system of organizational culture. Minority pastors experience leadership challenges because they work in a certain organizational context with a system of a particular culture that may not understand or readily accept leaders from a different culture with different values and practices. Therefore, it is essential that minority pastors understand three concepts: that organizations define leadership based on their culture, that organizations have power dynamics between leaders and subordinates, and that organizations vary in their support for multiculturalism.

²⁴⁸ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 57.

Leadership in the System of Organizational Culture

Relevant to the discussion of leadership in an organization is a nuanced understanding of how leadership is different than management. Although the terms “leader” and “manager” are often used interchangeably to describe responsible individuals in organizations, experts provide a clear understanding of how leadership and management are functionally different.

John Kotter, an acclaimed author and former professor at the Harvard Business School, explains that management “is about coping with complexity” while leadership “is about coping with change.”²⁴⁹ Similarly, Edgar Schein, an expert in organizational culture, states, “If one wishes to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leadership creates and changes culture, while management and administration act within a culture.”²⁵⁰ Both managers and leaders work with people and make decisions, but they do so to carry out different functions within organizations. Kotter summarily states that, on the one hand, management involves activities such as planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving.²⁵¹ On the other hand, leadership activities involve setting a direction for the organization, aligning people to achieve the goals of the new direction for the organization, and motivating and inspiring people so that they keep moving in the right direction even in the face of challenges and change.²⁵² Though leaders and managers serve distinct roles, Kotter

²⁴⁹ John P. Kotter, “What Leaders Really Do,” in *Leadership: Understanding the Dynamics of Power and Influence in Organizations*, ed. Robert P. Vecchio (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 24.

²⁵⁰ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Third ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).

²⁵¹ Kotter, 24-25.

²⁵² Ibid.

points out that they are both complementary and necessary for the success of organizations in complex and volatile times.²⁵³

Burns reiterates Kotter when he states, “Leading and managing are two different things.”²⁵⁴ According to Burns, “leadership is about seeking adaptive and constructive change, while management provides order and consistency to organizations.”²⁵⁵ In the context of the church, Burns points out that while in larger or growing churches these two responsibilities “get divided up,” in smaller churches both leading and managing are the responsibilities of the lone pastor.²⁵⁶ This often creates additional challenges for small church pastors because, as Burns asserts, these two distinct responsibilities require different skill sets and abilities.²⁵⁷

Organizations need responsible individuals who can maintain order and move them in a new direction as necessary. Burns illustrates how a specific aspect of an organization’s culture – the mere size of the church – can define how leadership functions within that organization. In some organizations, leaders are also called to manage and managers must also lead. The following chart summarizes the differences between leadership and management.

²⁵³ Ibid., 23.

²⁵⁴ Burns, *Pastors Summit: Sustaining Fruitful Ministry*, 42.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

Leadership	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deals with change • Creates and changes culture • Seeks adaptive and constructive change • Involves setting a direction for the organization, aligning people to achieve organizational goals, motivating and inspiring people in view of challenges and changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deals with complexity • Acts within a culture • Provides order and consistency • Involves planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving

More broadly, Schein explains the significance of organizational culture in relation to leadership. He states:

I believe that cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group. If that group is successful and the assumptions come to be taken for granted, we then have a culture that will define for later generations of members what kinds of leadership are acceptable. The culture now defines leadership.²⁵⁸

Leaders establish organizational culture over time and, in turn, organizational culture defines leadership.

Schein elaborates, “On the one hand, cultural norms define how a given nation or organization will define leadership – who will get promoted, who will get the attention of followers.”²⁵⁹ “On the other hand,” Schein states, “it can be argued that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage cultures; that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture; and that it is an ultimate act of leadership to destroy culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional.”²⁶⁰ In other words, an organization has a particular culture of values and assumptions originally imposed by the leaders of that organization. And once the culture is established and embraced by its

²⁵⁸ Schein, 2.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

members, Schein argues, that particular culture “will define for later generations what kinds of leadership are acceptable.” Connerley and Pedersen agree with Schein when they also state, “The culture that we are embedded in inevitably influences our views about leadership.”²⁶¹

Schein, Connerley, and Pedersen, then, explain why Waters has argued the following: “The subordinate may be uncomfortable with the minority manager solely because this manager does not fit the subordinate’s perception of what a manager is supposed to be.”²⁶² In view of what Schein, Connerley, and Pedersen claim about organizational culture and leadership, the minority manager “does not fit” the leadership defined by the subordinate’s organizational culture – “what a manager is supposed to be.” This explains why “the subordinate may be uncomfortable with the minority manager” and the subordinate resists or hesitates to follow the leadership of the minority manager.

Schein’s words also give insight into why minority pastors encounter leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. Majority culture congregations have a culture of values and assumptions. This culture has been established by Caucasian pastors and embraced by their Caucasian members. When minority pastors attempt to lead in majority culture congregations, they encounter challenges because they are from a different culture with a different set of values and assumptions. But, according to Schein, minority pastors can overcome leadership challenges by “their ability to understand and work with [the] culture”²⁶³ of the majority in the congregation.

²⁶¹ Connerley and Pedersen, 40.

²⁶² Waters, 18.

²⁶³ Schein, 11.

Authors Jim Harrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor agree with Schein that leaders must “understand and work with culture” if they are to lead effectively. Harrington, Creech, and Taylor, however, challenge leaders to understand their context not just in terms of an organizational culture but also as a living system. They state,

Understanding how people are enmeshed in a living system and how it affects both our congregation and us is vital to transformational leadership. The reason for this is simple: leadership always takes place in the context of a living system, and the system plays by a set of observable rules. If we are to lead in that context, we need to understand the rules.²⁶⁴

In other words, leaders work in a particular context and “are enmeshed” within a system of relationships that interact with “a set of observable rules.” As an organizational culture, Schein would argue, the rules are established by the values and assumptions of that particular living system. Understanding that leadership takes place in the context of a living system that “plays by a set of observable rules” has one major implication. Solving leadership problems and challenges involves diagnosing the living system. Harrington et al. explain,

To say that we are part of a living system is to say that there are forces at work among us that transcend a naïve focus on the cause of a problem (as though any one individual can be labeled as “the problem”). In a living system, whenever a problem is chronic, just about everyone has a part to play in keeping it going.²⁶⁵

In short, because leadership takes place in the context of a living system, leadership problems are systemic problems. Relevant to this research, for minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, they must understand

²⁶⁴ Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 30.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

the “forces at work” in the majority culture congregations and address “everyone [who] has a part to play in keeping it going.”

These authors explain why Connerley and Pedersen define “White privilege” in terms of “the invisible systems that confer dominance on Whites”²⁶⁶ and why Rah defines “White privilege” in terms of “white culture in American society [being] at the center with all other cultures on the fringes.”²⁶⁷ These authors clearly point out that minority leadership problems are systemic problems, and overcoming leadership challenges will involve addressing the dynamic “forces” of the congregations of the majority culture within which they serve.

Power Dynamics in Organizational Culture

One of inevitable dynamics within the system of organizational culture is the politics of power. Yates states, “For most leaders in most organizations, the key to improving organizational effectiveness may lie less in improving long-range plans or rearranging organizational charts than in coming to understand the way political conflicts work in organizations and how they can be better managed.”²⁶⁸ Simply put, leaders of organizations must understand the dynamics of power as a reality and as a part of life in the organizational culture.

Similarly, Robert Vecchio asserts, “In the area of politics, everyone is a player. Subordinates, as well as their managers, can engage in the give-and-take of organizational

²⁶⁶ Connerley and Pedersen, 35.

²⁶⁷ Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*, 72.

²⁶⁸ Douglas Yates, *The Politics of Management* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1985), 7.

politics.”²⁶⁹ Vecchio explains that this is because “to some extent, each member of an organization possesses power.”²⁷⁰ Without power, “a manager would find it very difficult to direct the efforts of subordinates.”²⁷¹ Subordinates also possess some degree of power as evident by their ability to “control the work flow or withhold support from their managers.”²⁷² Therefore, Vecchio argues, “Power is an essential feature of a manager’s role.”²⁷³

Vecchio explains that there are five distinct sources of power in an organization: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power:²⁷⁴

1. *Reward power*: the ability to determine who will receive particular rewards;
2. *Coercive power*: the capacity to produce fear in others;
3. *Legitimate power*: the willingness of others to accept an individual’s direction because of social conditioning or designation;
4. *Referent power*: attractive personalities, special qualities, appearance, poise, interpersonal style, or values that inspire and influence behavior;
5. *Expert power*: the ability to direct others because of perceived knowledge or expertise.

Understanding the nature of these five distinct sources of power is important because it further explains why minority leaders struggle to exert leadership in majority culture organizations. The FGCC states, “It has been pointed out that in the U.S. any population is a minority if it occupies a subordinate power position in relation to another population

²⁶⁹ Robert P. Vecchio, “Power, Politics, and Influence,” in *Leadership: Understanding the Dynamics of Power and Influence in Organizations*, ed. Robert P. Vecchio (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 78.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 69.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 71.

within the same country or society.”²⁷⁵ That is to say, minorities by nature do not have the same level of power; they occupy “a subordinate power position” in the racialized American society. This reality explains in part why minority leaders struggle to exert leadership in majority culture organizations.

Waters argues that when the minority manager recognizes that he or she is being perceived as incompetent, “the manager may feel under great pressure not to make any mistakes in order to demonstrate his or her expertise power.”²⁷⁶ And when his or her leadership decisions are second-guessed or challenged, “the natural response of the minority manager may be to exert managerial ‘rights’ by exercising available sources of power, either coercive or legitimate (e.g. ‘perform the task because I am the boss’), thus undermining the team-building effort.”²⁷⁷ Vecchio clarifies that when minorities are perceived as incompetent leaders, their expert power is undermined and thus they resort to legitimate or coercive power to exert leadership. Rah agrees with Waters’s explanation of the power struggles of minority managers and argues that, in this culture of white privilege, “privilege, therefore, is power”²⁷⁸ because it grants Anglo Americans the power that minority leaders do not have by virtue of being non-white. Similarly, Lyght et al. understand the power struggles of many minority pastors in their majority culture United Methodist congregations. They state, “Power’ and ‘whiteness’ are synonymous in North American culture.”²⁷⁹ They further add, “While it is easy and comfortable for an Anglo to

²⁷⁵ FGCC, 9.

²⁷⁶ Waters, 19.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*, 72.

²⁷⁹ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 104.

be both powerful and pastoral, it is much more difficult to pull off being a pastoral leader as a minority person.”²⁸⁰

Ellis, an African American pastor in the predominantly Anglo PCA, also understands the power struggles faced by minority pastors in majority culture congregations. Ellis resonates with Lyght et al., asserting, “Ethnic-based suffering comes out of these power struggles, out of dominant/sub-dominant dynamics. There is a lot of talk today about reconciliation. But, if we ignore the dominant/sub-dominant dynamics, we will never bridge the gap.”²⁸¹ In other words, unless white privilege is recognized and minorities are empowered, minority leaders will continue to face challenges.

Sherwood Lingenfelter, an expert in cross-cultural ministry, agrees with Ellis regarding the need for Caucasians with power to empower minorities for the sake of Christ. Having observed the history and practices of American missionary leaders, he states, “[White] Missionaries who give their lives to career mission service often understand their role to mean that they will be in control until they leave their ministry. This is tragically the wrong perspective on the empowering of God’s people and the expansion of the work of the kingdom of God.”²⁸² Connerley and Pedersen concur with Ellis, adding that there must be intentional empowerment at an organizational level for minorities to be effective leaders. They state,

In order to move toward cultural competence, organizations must alter the power relations to minimize structural discrimination. This may involve including minorities in decision-making positions and sharing power with them, and developing multicultural programs and practices with the same accountability and maintenance priorities as other valued programs within the organization. More

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ellis, 129-130.

²⁸² Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 128.

importantly, programs that directly address biases, prejudices, and stereotypes of leaders and all employees need to be developed.²⁸³

In short, minority pastors do not have the same level of power because they are viewed as “different” in the system of “white privilege” and, therefore, weaker than majority culture white leaders. Power dynamics in the system of organizational culture explains why minority pastors struggle to exert authority in majority culture congregations.

Types of Organizational Culture

The fact that there are some majority culture congregations that have minority pastors serving them indicates that there is at least some interest in having diversity or multi-ethnicity in these congregations. But how effectively these minority pastors lead and make a difference in these majority culture congregations depends on the type of organizational culture of these congregations. This point is clearly made by Derald Wing Sue in his article “Multicultural Facets of Cultural Competence.”

Sue, a professor at Columbia University and one of the most cited multicultural scholars in the United States, explains that there are three types of organizations on a continuum of multiculturalism in the United States: monocultural organizations, nondiscriminatory organizations, and multicultural organizations. Sue specifies each type of organization as follows:²⁸⁴

Monocultural Organizations. Organizations at this level are primarily Eurocentric and ethnocentric. They operate from the following statements and assumptions: (a) There is an implicit or explicit exclusion of racial minorities, women, and other marginalized groups; (b) they are structured to the advantage of the Euro-American majority; (c) there is only one best way to manage, administrate, or lead; (d) culture is believed to have minimal impact on management, personality, or education; (e)

²⁸³ Connerley and Pedersen, 84.

²⁸⁴ Derald Wing Sue, “Multidimensional Facets of Cultural Competence,” *The Counseling Psychologist* 29 (November 2001): 807.

employees should assimilate; (f) culture-specific ways of doing things are not valued or recognized; (g) everyone should be treated exactly the same; (h) there is a strong belief in the concept of the melting pot.

Nondiscriminatory Organizations. Organizations enter nondiscriminatory stage as they become more culturally relevant and receptive. The following premises and practices represent these types of organizations: (a) there are inconsistent policies and practices regarding multicultural issues – though some departments and some leaders and workers are becoming sensitive to multicultural issues, it is not an organizational priority; (b) although leaders may recognize a need for some action, they lack a systemic program or policy that addresses the issue of prejudice and bias; (c) the changes that are made to address multicultural issues are often superficial and made for public relations purposes; (d) equal employment opportunities, affirmative action, and numerical symmetry of minorities and women are implemented grudgingly.

Multicultural Organizations. Organizations at this level value diversity and attempt to accommodate continuing cultural change. These organizations: (a) work with a vision that reflects multiculturalism; (b) reflect the contributions of diverse cultural groups in their mission, operations, products, and services; (c) value multiculturalism and view it as an asset; (d) actively engage in visioning, planning, and problem-solving activities that allow for equal access and opportunities; (e) realize that equal access and opportunities are not equal treatments; and (f) work to diversify the environment.²⁸⁵

Though addressing psychologists, Sue emphasizes that the point of his analysis is that there is a need for people in organizations,

...to understand how organizational policies and practices may affect them and their clients, how organizational subsystems may impede multicultural development, what changes need to be made so all groups are allowed equal access and opportunity, and finally, that they need to play system intervention roles other than the traditional one that focuses solely on individual change.²⁸⁶

In short, organizational culture systemically impacts the quality of life and interactions of people from different cultures. Monocultural organizations are “primarily Euro-centric and ethnocentric” and “culture-specific ways of doing things are not valued or recognized.”

Nondiscriminatory organizations are “more culturally relevant and receptive” but “they

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 808.

lack a systemic program or policy that addresses the issue of prejudice and bias.”

Multicultural organizations, however, “value diversity and attempt to accommodate continuing cultural change” and “actively engage in visioning, planning, and problem-solving activities that allow for equal access and opportunities.” And according to Sue, these differences in organizational culture systematically affect how people from different cultures relate to and effectively work with one another.

On the other side of the equation, Connerley and Pedersen explain that individuals can make one of four specific adjustments in response to ethnic diversity and organizational culture.²⁸⁷ First, individuals can embrace multiculturalism. Individuals who value multiculturalism focus on “being open to the positive aspects of all cultures” and find “new and meaningful ways” of interacting with others.²⁸⁸ This response, the authors explain, is the most functional approach. Second, individuals can choose the approach of separation, which “involves rejecting all cultural values except its own.”²⁸⁹ This is the least functional “adjustment for dealing with diversity issues in companies” and is “thought of as a form of alienation.”²⁹⁰ Third, individuals can choose to adjust by assimilation. By assimilating, an individual chooses to adopt the organization’s culture. However, assimilation is “usually seen by subordinate groups as conforming to the values of the dominant group.”²⁹¹ And if “the dominant group does not attempt to understand the values of the subordinate group,” the authors argue, this approach “often produces

²⁸⁷ Connerley and Pedersen, 34.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

mistrust in the long run.”²⁹² Lastly, individuals of different ethnic groups may choose to work within their organization with the attitude of deculturation. In this response, “all groups maintain their own values without trying to influence anyone else.”²⁹³ According to Connerley and Pedersen, this approach is “viewed as a weak or benign form of separation.”²⁹⁴

What Sue, Connerley, and Pedersen reveal is that there is an undeniable dynamic between an organization’s culture and its members. Organizations maintain a culture on the spectrum of multiculturalism, and their members adjust to the organizational culture based on their own culture and values. Thus, when minorities lead in an organization, they not only respond to the organizational culture themselves, but they also must handle the forces between the organizational culture and the subordinates’ responses. The following chart summarizes the different types of organizations and the responses to organizational culture.

Types of Organizations	Responses to Ethnic Diversity and Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monocultural Organizations</i>: primarily ethnocentric and culture-specific ways of doing things are not valued • <i>Non-discriminatory Organizations</i>: more culturally receptive but lack policy that address the issue of prejudice and bias • <i>Multicultural Organizations</i>: value diversity and actively engage in activities that allow for equal access and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Multiculturalism</i>: be open to positive aspects of all culture and find meaningful ways of interacting with others • <i>Separation</i>: reject all cultural values except its own • <i>Assimilation</i>: adopt the organization’s culture and conform to the values of the dominant group • <i>Deculturation</i>: maintain separate group values without trying to influence anyone else

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

In *Creating the Multicultural Organization*, Taylor Cox, an African American professor at the University of Michigan Business School, specifically discusses the dynamic interaction between organizational culture and the responses of minorities. Cox concurs with Sue that for minorities to work effectively, a multiethnic organizational culture is essential. However, Cox finds healthy multiethnic organizations lacking. He states, “Most employers have an organizational culture that is somewhere between toxic and deadly when it comes to handling diversity.”²⁹⁵ “The result,” Cox argues, “is that the presence of real diversity is unsustainable as a characteristic of the organization.”²⁹⁶

According to Cox, what makes organizations “toxic and deadly,” and thus challenging places for minorities to work with effectiveness, is the lack of a system-wide approach to multiculturalism. That is to say, instead of changing or aligning the organizational culture as a system that addresses systemic barriers and supports ethnic diversity, Cox points out that many organizations focus merely on “changing inputs to the system.”²⁹⁷ Organizations, for instance, “tend to hire people who are perceived as fitting the existing culture” of the firm.²⁹⁸ But, without a system-wide alignment that values and supports cultural diversity, such a practice minimizes real cultural differences by essentially “exerting strong pressure on new employees to assimilate to existing organizational norms (acculturation by assimilation).”²⁹⁹ Over time, those who do not assimilate or want to assimilate to “prevailing norms of the work culture tend to either leave the organization or

²⁹⁵ Cox, 12.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

modify their thinking – and their behavior – to achieve acceptance.”³⁰⁰ When such an approach is adopted by many, Cox argues, organizations are left “somewhere between toxic and deadly” when it comes to handling ethnic diversity. Therefore, organizational culture matters when it comes to sustaining healthy interactions of minorities in organizations.

Rebecca Kim, professor of sociology at Pepperdine University, explains that there is still a lack of healthy multiculturalism among evangelical ministries and churches.³⁰¹ In her research among Second Generation Korean American (SGKA) evangelical Christians, Kim set out to understand why SGKAs still form their own ministry organizations and churches instead of joining existing ministries and churches in the majority culture. Based on her research, Kim concludes:

Having made inroads into mainstream institutions and organizations, SGKAs want the benefits and privileges that the white majority enjoys. They find, however, that they are continuously marginalized as an ethnic/racial minority and lack relative power. This interactive process then makes it more likely that SGKAs will form and participate in separate ethnic religious organizations of their own.³⁰²

Being well-educated and socio-economically successful, SGKAs desire to be treated like the majority – as equals. However, Kim argues, they are “marginalized as relatively inferior and find limited opportunities for [leadership] mobility within a diverse or white-dominant setting.”³⁰³ Kim quotes one SGKA ministry leader whose experience illustrates her argument:

We are separate because whites welcome Asians, but not into leadership positions, and they don't realize that by being status quo, they discriminate and make it hard

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

³⁰¹ Rebecca Y. Kim, "Second-Generation Korean American Evangelicals: Ethnic, Multiethnic, or White Campus Ministries?," *Sociology of Religion* 65, no. 1 (2004).

³⁰² Ibid., 31.

³⁰³ Ibid., 30.

for Asians to move up ... They are used to having leadership...so if Asians start their own separate organizations, they are more able to take on leadership positions.³⁰⁴

Being “welcomed” into an organization but “not into leadership positions” has made starting their own ministries a desirable necessity for SGKA ministry leadership mobility and development. Kim’s research findings support Cox’s argument that merely “changing inputs to the system” without a system-wide adaptive change to foster multiculturalism creates a “toxic and deadly” organizational culture and makes it difficult for minorities seeking leadership to “survive and prosper.”³⁰⁵

Furthermore, organizational culture matters to both minority leaders and subordinates. Echoing Sue’s point that multicultural development impacts the dynamics of leaders and followers, Connerley and Pedersen make a simple yet crucial point: “For leaders and employees to act with multicultural competence, the organizational system must support and reward those actions.”³⁰⁶ “And in order to move toward cultural competence,” they argue, “programs that directly address the biases, prejudices, and stereotypes of leaders and all employees need to be developed.”³⁰⁷ Thus, Connerley and Pederson agree with Cox, who argues that organizations must align all the elements within the organizational system to create a healthy working environment for minorities “to survive and prosper.”³⁰⁸ Simply put, multiethnic organizations that provide systemic support for minorities and address their challenges help create an environment that allows

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Cox, 12-13.

³⁰⁶ Connerley and Pedersen, 80.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 84.

³⁰⁸ Cox, 13.

minority leaders and subordinates to cooperate and achieve their organizational goals more effectively.

In short, organizational culture is not neutral to minority leaders. Organizational culture can be “toxic and deadly” for minority leaders and subordinates alike. Unless organizations intentionally address bias, prejudice, and systemic stereotypes to move toward multicultural organizational culture, a healthy multicultural environment may not be attainable or sustainable.

Understanding the nature and dynamics of organizational culture is crucial to understanding how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. Organizational culture is a living system that has forces that systemically impact its leaders and members. One of the systemic forces at play is organizational politics. Both leaders and subordinates have power in organizations. Minority leaders, however, have diminished power in majority culture organizations because these living systems “privilege” the white leaders who built these systems. Even so, organizations that actively work to minimize the “toxic and deadly” forces of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes to create multiethnic systems provide minority leaders more favorable opportunities to make things happen for their organizations. For minority leaders to effectively lead in organizations, the organizational culture must welcome, support, and submit to minority leaders and foster a culture of mutual learning.

Multicultural Leadership Competencies

The last area of literature focuses on minority leadership competencies. Minority pastors serving in majority culture congregations are engaged in a multicultural endeavor.

It is one thing for leaders to lead in their own cultural context, where the values and assumptions are familiar and understood by the leaders. But it is a whole different experience for them to lead in a multicultural environment in which they are interacting with people with different values and assumptions. To work effectively in a multicultural environment, minority pastors need multicultural leadership competencies.

Necessity of Multicultural Leadership Competencies – Socialization

Richard Brislin explains why people from different cultural backgrounds find it challenging to work with each other: people are socialized within their own cultural context. In *Working with Cultural Differences*, Brislin states,

With the certainty of increasing intercultural contact, it is reasonable to ask the question, “Are we well-prepared?” Often, the answer is “no.” Many people grew up and were socialized in areas of the world where they interacted only with people very much like themselves. There was not anything that could be called ethnic or cultural diversity, and so people did not learn to interact in a respectful way to those who were different. Even if they did live in areas where culturally diverse individuals were present, social norms may have limited the types of interaction they could have.³⁰⁹

The impact of growing up and interacting mostly with people of the same cultural background, Brislin asserts, is that it limits one’s ability to interact with people from different cultures. More importantly, when one enters the multicultural workforce and works with people from different backgrounds, Brislin argues, it has a negative effect. He explains,

At times, these social norms involved labeling culturally diverse people in negative terms and involved denying them privileges reserved for preferred cultural groups. In such cases, people are not only unprepared for effective intercultural interactions, but also, in addition to a lack of preparation, they may have to reverse and correct some of the cultural norms they learned during childhood.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ Richard Brislin, *Working with Cultural Differences* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 2-3.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

Simply put, people's socialization impacts their intercultural interactions. Even in a culturally diverse society like the United States, "people did not learn to interact in a respectful way to those who were different" because they were socialized in a racialized society.³¹¹ Thus, in order for people of different cultures to work together in a meaningful and respectful way, "they may have to reverse and correct some of the cultural norms they learned." This is the reality of working in a multicultural environment, and it directly applies to the work of minority pastors.

Similar to Brislin's point that people's socialization impacts their intercultural interactions, Kim asserts that the assimilation experiences of minorities in the dominant majority culture also matter in how they interact with others. For instance, describing the experiences of Asian American immigrants, Kim states:

[They] are going to be shaped by the value systems that they hold that have been shaped by their own immigration experiences and their assimilation experiences. Did they encounter a lot of racism as they were trying to assimilate into the dominant culture? Did they assimilate into large cities or places where there are other Asian American communities? Or did they immigrate to flyover cities like in Nebraska?³¹²

At least for Asian Americans, Kim argues, immigration history and assimilation experiences matter greatly because they "shape the way Asians view themselves and their relationships."³¹³ Not only, according to Brislin, does socialization impact people's interactions with others from different cultures, but, according to Kim, the assimilation experiences of immigrants shape their self-identity and their relationships with others.

³¹¹ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 7.

³¹² Kim and Um, "Asian-American Christian Thought and Theological History: Pastoral Implications for Diversity and Innovations in a Multiracial Church,"

³¹³ Ibid.

Um makes an even stronger argument than Kim. While Kim explains that the assimilation experiences of some – Asian Americans – shape their identity and their relationships, Um argues that any ethnic group that assimilates shares a common experience that impacts their identity and life in American society. He states, “Any ethnic group that is trying to assimilate into a dominant culture, that experience is very similar – in the sense that they realize they are minorities.”³¹⁴

Thus, Kim and Um agree with Brislin regarding how socialization impacts people’s identity and relationships. Experiences of immigration and assimilation, to what extent minorities experienced racism or whether they lived among their own ethnic communities, shape their views and how they interact with others. Assimilation into the dominant majority culture is a common experience for all ethnic minorities. But according to Um, “assimilation is not necessarily a healthy thing.”³¹⁵ Why? Um reasons, “We [Christians] ought not to be ethnocentric.”³¹⁶

This has implications for minority pastors. Even though they live in the same society, minority pastors serving in majority cultural congregations work with people from a distinct dominant culture. Thus, for them to make a difference, they need to discern and understand the different culture of their congregations. Lyght et al. agree with Brislin, stating, “Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments require minority and ethnic-minority pastors to disengage from their own culture and social baggage willingly and deliberately in order to minister to the people they have been called to lead.”³¹⁷ Accordingly, the authors

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 78.

challenge the minority pastors, “Try to understand mainstream American cultural assumptions and values ... No culture is superior to another. Every culture has both good and bad elements. Culture is the water in which you catch fish. Yet, you have to catch them on their own terms, where they are, not where we want them to be.”³¹⁸

Minority pastors must be culturally aware if they hope to connect with their majority cultural congregants and be relevant. To lead with effectiveness in majority culture congregations, minority pastors need to understand the “cultural assumptions and values” of their congregations. To do so, they need to develop multicultural leadership competencies of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Leadership in a Multicultural Environment – “playing several instruments”

Hofstede, a world-renowned expert of cultural influence in organizations, uses the metaphor of playing musical instruments to help people understand the nature and challenge of leading in a multicultural environment. He states,

Learning to become an effective leader is like learning to play music: Besides talent, it demands persistence and the opportunity to practice. Effective monocultural leaders have learned to play one instrument; they often have proven themselves by a strong drive and quick and firm opinions. Leading in a multicultural and diverse environment is like playing several instruments. It partly calls for different attitudes and skills: restraint in passing judgment and the ability to recognize that familiar tunes may have to be played differently. The very qualities that made someone an effective monocultural leader may make her or him less qualified for a multicultural environment.³¹⁹

Simply put, effective and competent monocultural leaders may not be effective leaders without multicultural leadership competencies.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 78-79.

³¹⁹ Hofstede in *Preface* to Connerley and Pedersen, ix.

Connerley and Pedersen agree with Hofstede and explain why Hofstede's argument is reasonable. They state,

No matter how highly skilled, well trained, or intelligent you are, if you are making wrong or culturally inappropriate assumptions, you will not be accurate in your assessment, meaningful in your understanding, or appropriate in your interactions as a leader ... It is difficult to know the cultures of others until and unless you have an awareness of your own culturally learned assumptions as they control your life ... Leaders who disregard others' cultural contexts are unlikely to interpret their behavior accurately.³²⁰

That is to say, cultural differences between leaders and followers matter. The reason why monocultural leaders may be incompetent as multicultural leaders is because of the plausibility of their "making wrong or culturally inappropriate assumptions" about others or their "disregard [for] others' cultural contexts" that may lead to "inappropriate" – thus ineffective – interactions as leaders.

Plueddemann concurs with Hostede, Connerley, and Pedersen, adding, "being an effective multicultural leader is not easy, especially when false expectations and hidden assumptions exist about what it means to be a leader or follower."³²¹ Leaders lead with assumptions. Multicultural leaders must have the ability to understand and respect the cultural differences of their followers, as well as remaining aware of their own cultural assumptions, in order to lead with effectiveness. This being the case, Connerley and Pedersen state, "An organizational leader has only two choices: to ignore the influence of culture or to attend to it."³²² They conclude, "It is a given...that to lead successfully in a multicultural environment, leaders must develop and possess a foundation of multicultural

³²⁰ Ibid., xi.

³²¹ Plueddemann, 22.

³²² Connerley and Pedersen, xi.

competencies.”³²³ Multicultural leaders, therefore, must learn the skill of “playing several instruments.”

Rah also concurs with Connerly and Pedersen’s argument that leading and working in a multicultural environment requires multicultural competencies. Addressing Christians, Rah states, “As the church in the United States seeks to fulfill the biblical mandate for unity, we are coming to the realization that we desperately need proper motivation, spiritual depth, interpersonal skills, and gracious communication in order to live into God’s hope for the church.”³²⁴ “In short,” Rah argues, “the church needs to develop cultural intelligence in order to fully realize the many-colored tapestry that God is weaving together.”³²⁵ Therefore, minority pastors leading in majority culture congregations – as well as the congregations themselves – need to develop cultural intelligence.

Cultural Intelligence

To understand and appreciate the importance of cultural intelligence (CQ), there must be an understanding of what people mean by the term “culture.” On the one hand, Earley, Ang, and Tan succinctly state, “Culture is, simply defined, a group of people’s worldview.”³²⁶ That is, culture explains how a group of people – and individuals within the group – view themselves and make sense of their actions, attitudes, and values in the world.

On the other hand, Livermore asserts that culture is “an elusive concept that shapes everything we do.”³²⁷ He explains that “things as basic as how we eat, sleep, and bathe

³²³ Ibid., 90.

³²⁴ Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church*, 11-12.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Earley, Ang, and Tan, vii.

³²⁷ David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 90.

ourselves and as abstract as how we read the Scriptures, relate to God, and communicate truth are all related in our cultural context.”³²⁸ That is, eating with chopsticks, sleeping on the bed, bathing in the river, and standing up when the scriptures are read – as well as how congregants treat their pastors and how pastors relate to their congregants – are all activities explained by culture, as well as by the values and attitudes that are shaped by culture.

Rah agrees with Earley et al., asserting that culture is “a human attempt to understand the world around us.”³²⁹ He also concurs with Livermore that culture “shapes and forms individuals.” However, Rah also adds and argues that “culture is shaped by humans”³³⁰ – that it is “a corporate social creation.”³³¹ Thus, given the influence of culture on individuals and the influence of individuals on culture, Rah defines culture as both “the programming that shapes who we are and who we are becoming” and “a social system that is shaped by individuals and that also has the capacity to shape the individual.”³³² Simply, culture defines people, and people influence culture.

In short, culture is what explains what people do and why they do it in a given family, group, organization, or society. Culture also gives people a sense of identity, and it makes a particular group of people different than another group of people in their behavior, attitude, assumptions, and values.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church*, 23.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid., 32.

³³² Ibid., 38.

Defining Cultural Intelligence

Earley, Ang, and Tan define cultural intelligence (CQ) as “a person’s capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context.”³³³ The authors clarify, “Simply stated, cultural intelligence refers to a manager’s capability to adapt to new cultural environment.”³³⁴ That is, CQ gives minority pastors, for instance, the ability to lead and work in majority culture congregations. Earley et al. explain that there are three facets of CQ: cultural strategic thinking (awareness of cultural differences), motivation (confidence and desire to work with others from different cultural backgrounds), and behavior (acting in culturally appropriate ways).³³⁵ Practically, this means that culturally intelligent minority pastors, for instance, are aware of differences between their culture and the culture of their congregants, that they have the desire and confidence (rooted in cultural awareness) to lead and serve those in the majority culture congregations, and that they lead in ways that are appropriate in majority culture congregations.

Echoing Earley et al., Livermore explains that cultural intelligence is the “capability to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures.”³³⁶ Livermore elaborates on Earley, Ang, and Tan’s context of “new cultural environment” to specify that CQ is applicable in all cultures, be they national, ethnic, or organizational cultures.³³⁷ Burns further applies these definitions, explaining that cultural intelligence is “the ability to understand, acknowledge, and appreciate current contextual forces as well as the

³³³ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 5.

³³⁴ Ibid., vii.

³³⁵ Ibid., 5.

³³⁶ David A. Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success* (New York: AMACOM, 2010), 4.

³³⁷ Ibid.

cultural background of oneself and others.”³³⁸ That is, the “capability” CQ gives leaders is the “ability to understand, acknowledge, and appreciate” cultural differences and dynamics that inevitably exist due to cultural differences.

These definitions of cultural intelligence, then, clarify how CQ would enable minority pastors to lead and work more effectively in majority culture congregations. Culturally intelligent minority pastors have greater understanding and awareness of cultural differences between themselves and their majority culture congregations, they have greater motivation to lead in majority culture congregations, and they are able to lead and serve in ways that are appropriate in majority culture congregations.

Cultural Awareness

Culturally intelligent leaders have greater understanding and awareness of cultural differences between themselves and those with whom they work. Earley et al. state that CQ enables leaders to have greater awareness of their own culture and other people’s cultures, which helps them to understand how and why do people do what they do.³³⁹ For instance, CQ enables leaders to discern whether people are from a team-oriented culture that values team identity or a power-based culture that values authority and hierarchy.³⁴⁰

“Ideally,” Earley et al. assert, “a manager knows his or her own identities and how they are interrelated but has the flexibility to adjust, reprioritize them, and so on, as the situation demands.”³⁴¹ That is to say, leaders with high CQ are flexible “since new cultural

³³⁸ Burns, *Pastors Summit: Sustaining Fruitful Ministry*, 29.

³³⁹ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 23.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 25.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 26.

experiences require [them] to constantly reshape and adapt to the new situation.”³⁴²

Further, for high CQ leaders, an increased understanding of new cultures “may require abandoning preexisting ideas of how and why people act the way they do.”³⁴³

Burns agrees with Earley et al. that flexibility and “abandoning preexisting ideas” is a crucial part of being a culturally intelligent pastor. He states, “If pastors are going to lead more effectively now and in the coming years, it is vital that they develop cultural intelligence and equip others to serve in a multi-cultural environment.”³⁴⁴ “They must,” Burns insists, “recognize dominant cultural perspectives and the tendencies to assume that these are correct.”³⁴⁵ Further, culturally intelligent pastors are able to “make careful distinctions between biblical expectations and cultural assumptions.”³⁴⁶ Earley et al. argue that culturally intelligent leaders not only recognize and distinguish cultural differences but are flexible and adapt by “abandoning preexisting ideas” about how others from different cultures are and why they act the way they do. Culturally intelligent pastors do so because they not only “acknowledge” cultural differences, but also “appreciate” how cultural differences play a role in their context.

Livermore affirms, “Cultural intelligence helps a leader develop an overall repertoire and perspective that results in more effective leaders.”³⁴⁷ But, Livermore argues, without CQ, leaders in multicultural settings experience “increased time to get the job

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Burns, *Pastors Summit: Sustaining Fruitful Ministry*, 30.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success*, 14.

done,” “growing frustration and confusion,” “poor job performance,” as well as “poor working relationships.”³⁴⁸

Motivation for Multicultural Interactions

Cultural intelligence involves more than just cultural awareness. It also requires the motivation to learn, persist, and grow in confidence to work in a multicultural environment. Earley et al. state, “Cultural intelligence means that a person is energetic and willing to persevere in the face of difficulty and possible failure.”³⁴⁹ Culturally intelligent leaders, then, are not merely aware of cultural challenges – they are motivated to face those cultural challenges.

Burns agrees and provides a real life example of the motivation facet of cultural intelligence among pastors. Given the prospect that minorities in the U.S. are expected to become the majority in 2042, Burns challenges pastors, “The implications for the church of this [2008] U.S. Census Bureau report are profound. This information underscores the importance of pastors’ developing cultural intelligence for long-term ministry viability.”³⁵⁰ In view of this challenge, one pastor-participant of Burns’s research confesses, “My whole ministry DNA is white middle class. And there’s a train coming down the tracks that shows this will no longer be the dominant culture.”³⁵¹ The pastor is now faced with the options of becoming culturally intelligent or remaining culturally challenged. The difference between the two, according to Earley et al., is motivation. Thus, Burns motivates pastors by quoting another participant of his research, who stated, “It is vital to our ministry to understand

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 28.

³⁵⁰ Burns, *Pastors Summit: Sustaining Fruitful Ministry*, 28.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

cultural norms and nuances in order to discern between what we accept as correct in culture and what is truth as defined in scripture.”³⁵²

According to Earley, Ang, and Tan, culturally intelligent leaders ask, “Am I motivated to do something here?”³⁵³ They answer “yes” because they see the value of learning other people’s cultural norms and values in order to lead and work more effectively in a multicultural environment. Having a greater understanding of other people’s cultural norms and values gives them confidence to interact in a multicultural environment. Livermore concurs. He asserts, “Leaders with high CQ drive are motivated to learn and adapt to new and diverse cultural settings.”³⁵⁴ Though often challenging, cultural intelligence motivates leaders to endure multicultural challenges and attain greater confidence to lead others with a different cultural orientation.

Culturally Appropriate Behavior

Lastly, culturally intelligent minority pastors are able to appropriately lead and serve in majority culture congregations. Earley et al. explain the importance of the behavior aspect of CQ when they state, “How you present yourself, how you act, and how you behave in the presence of people from other cultures in different cultural encounters will affect how others perceive and relate to you. Ultimately, your self-presentation can help or hinder you when you engage in social interactions in different cultures.”³⁵⁵ Simply put, actions leave impressions. This reality is heightened when leaders interact with others from different cultures. How leaders behave in a particular culture “will affect how others

³⁵² Ibid., 24.

³⁵³ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 23.

³⁵⁴ Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success*, 41.

³⁵⁵ Earley, Ang, and Tan, 98.

perceive and relate” to them. When culturally intelligent leaders wonder, “Can I do the right thing?” in a multicultural context, they have the confidence to answer “yes” because CQ gives them cultural awareness, motivation, and the ability to “do the right thing.”

Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj concur with Earley, Ang, and Tan. Lyght et al. understand the importance of acting in a culturally appropriate manner, and they coach their UMC minority pastors to lead and act appropriately because it does make a difference in how they are perceived by the Anglo parishioners. Thus, they instruct,

When you are being watched and under pressure, you will be tempted to make a rapid change. Restraint is the self-imposed motto. Avoid being bossy or authoritative. As part of their cultural background, some minority and ethnic-minority pastors are known for being in charge. However, being a pastor in the U.S. is much different from being a pastor in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. Know and identify the difference between authority and power. Pastors have authority but not unlimited power without the support of the congregation! ... Avoid letting [English as a second language] be used as an evidence to show that you are an ineffective communicator ... Be friendly. Smile! Be authentic and transparent ... Do not use “you Americans,” “your country,” or other terminology that might create a wedge between you and your parishioners. You are one of them ... Be biblically knowledgeable, theologically informed, politically unbiased, ethically above reproach, administratively thorough, programmatically a team player.³⁵⁶

This real-life instruction to minority pastors shows that culturally appropriate behavior consists of verbal and non-verbal, direct and indirect, formal and informal, hierarchical and team-oriented, attitudinal and behavioral ways of presenting oneself in a particular cultural context. It also shows that how biblical, theological, political, and ethical issues are presented is just as important as what is communicated in a particular culture. The point is that cultural intelligence enables leaders to act in culturally appropriate ways to make their leadership count.

³⁵⁶ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 82-84.

As these authors have shown, acting with high CQ is a great challenge for leaders who hope to develop cultural intelligence to make a difference. But, lest leaders become discouraged, Livermore states,

We can enjoy and respect norms and customs of others without thinking we have to conform to everything we observe. The point isn't to accomplish flawless cross-cultural behavior. In fact, some of the greatest lessons to be learned happen in our cultural faux pas. But as we build on our perseverance, understanding, and interpretation, we come closer to behaving in ways that allow for effective leadership.³⁵⁷

In short, being culturally intelligent is not about perfection, but about progress. Leaders develop cultural intelligence only by repeatedly experiencing, learning, persevering, and, interacting with others from different cultures. “Just as leaders can grow in their social, emotional, and technical competence, they can grow in their ability to effectively lead across various ethnic and organizational cultures.”³⁵⁸ Cultural intelligence is an indispensable competency that minority pastors must develop if they desire to overcome leadership challenges and make a difference in majority culture congregations.

Emotional Intelligence

Another competency that is vital to multicultural leadership is emotional intelligence, which has been defined as “how leaders handle themselves and their relationships.”³⁵⁹ Minority pastors leading in majority culture congregations is about people working with people. Minority pastors have emotions, and they live and work in relationship with other people who have emotions. Both minority pastors and majority culture congregants have positive and negative emotions that directly impact how they

³⁵⁷ Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success*, 158.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁵⁹ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 6.

relate to and work with each other. Thus, emotional intelligence is vital for minority pastors, as it enables them to manage themselves and their relationships with others.

According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, emotional intelligence (EQ) consists of two areas of competencies that leaders can develop and apply, namely, personal competency and social competency. Personal competency helps leaders with their self-awareness and self-confidence. Social competency helps leaders with their awareness of others and their relationships with others. Relevant to this particular research, EQ is crucial to minority pastors because it gives them the ability to manage their self-confidence.³⁶⁰ EQ is also vital to minority pastors because it enables minority pastors who lack social power or authority to inspire and influence others.³⁶¹

Self-Confidence

Lyght et al. point out that minority pastors serving in majority culture congregations experience emotional stress when they encounter systemic prejudice in the church.³⁶² They state, “Self-doubt and lack of confidence haunt them, and they often become depressed and withdrawn.”³⁶³ Similarly, Waters explains that when minority managers are perceived by their subordinates as being incompetent, they “may feel under great pressure not to make any mistakes.”³⁶⁴ And when they feel this “pressure to perform correctly to prove” their leadership competency, it “will create tension and anxiety,” thus, ultimately, “undermining the team-building effort.”³⁶⁵ That is, minority leaders working in

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 39.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 55.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Waters, 19.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

a cross-cultural context often experience emotional anxiety that negatively impacts their work performance.

Emotional intelligence, however, gives leaders under emotional stress the capability to manage their emotions and work with steady self-confidence. Goleman et al. assert that leaders with EQ have strong self-awareness that leads to self-confidence.³⁶⁶ That is, emotionally intelligent leaders have a “deep understanding” of their emotions, their strengths and limitations, as well as their values and motives.³⁶⁷ And because they have such strong self-awareness, they are “realistic – neither overly self-critical nor naively hopeful.”³⁶⁸ Therefore, instead of reacting impulsively when faced with self-doubt, lack of confidence, or anxiety, leaders with EQ are able to self-reflect and “think things over”³⁶⁹ to see “the big picture in a complex situation.”³⁷⁰ This self-assuredness allows emotionally intelligent leaders to engage others with self-confidence. Goleman et al. assert that this, in turn, creates “an environment of trust, comfort, and fairness” – and provides opportunities for resonance.³⁷¹ In other words, not being self-absorbed, leaders with EQ have the capacity to empathize with others and provide “supportive emotional connection.”³⁷² Goleman et al. reason, “By being attuned to how others feel in the moment, a leader can say and do what’s appropriate – whether it be to calm fears, assuage anger, or join in good spirits.”³⁷³

However, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie point out that “EQ-self” – proactively managing one’s emotions – “is not easy” because it is “hard for any of us (pastors included)

³⁶⁶ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 39.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 40.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 253.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 47.

³⁷² Ibid., 5.

³⁷³ Ibid., 49.

to identify our feelings.”³⁷⁴ Nevertheless, they argue that it is necessary to develop “the ability to understand our emotions – as well as our strengths, limitations, values and motives,” for otherwise, “we will be poor at managing them and less able to understand the emotions of others.”³⁷⁵ Simply put, “EQ-self” is a vital competency for leaders. And to develop “EQ-self,” Burns et al. suggest that leaders may “need outside feedback to heighten and to clarify” their self-awareness.³⁷⁶

“EQ-self,” then, is essential to minority leaders who encounter self-doubt and anxiety in majority culture congregations. Minority leaders with emotional intelligence have the ability to manage their personal anxiety and work with self-confidence.

Influence Without Authority

Emotional intelligence also gives minority pastors the capacity to lead even though their authority is resisted. This is because high-EQ leaders have influence without authority.³⁷⁷ According to Goleman, et al., emotionally intelligent leaders rely not on their authority or status but rather on the power of their emotional and relational capacity to inspire and lead others effectively. Thus, they argue, “Great leaders work through the emotions.”³⁷⁸ This is so because they use their emotions – their heart – to resonate, relate, and “inspire the best” in those they lead. They resonate with others by using a whole range of “the leadership repertoire” such as visionary, coaching, affiliative, and democratic styles

³⁷⁴ Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*, 148.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 150.

³⁷⁷ Robert K. Cooper and Ayman Sawaf, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership & Organizations* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1997), 182.

³⁷⁸ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 3.

of leadership.³⁷⁹ These styles rely on the power of the leader's emotional and relational capacity and not on formal authority.

Robert Cooper and Ayman Sawaf agree with Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee. They state, "At its best, emotional intelligence is about influence without manipulation or authority. It's about perceiving, learning, relating, innovating, prioritizing, and acting in ways that take into account emotional valence."³⁸⁰ That is, when minority pastors' formal authority is resisted, they can still lead by building relational capital and by utilizing the informal authority available to them through relationships.

Along with Cooper and Sawaf, Burns recognizes the vital importance of EQ and building relationship capital. Burns specifies what is gained through relationships, namely, "power." He states, "Power is ultimately rooted in relationship."³⁸¹ He defines power as "the 'dynamic' – the capacity to act – coming from enduring social relationships that allows people to do or not do something."³⁸² "In every situation," Burns asserts, "there are power dynamics going on – formal or informal."³⁸³ This is also true for minority pastors leading in majority culture congregations. Emotionally intelligent leaders can use informal power "rooted in relationship" to lead or influence others.

Even though minority pastors may be perceived as incompetent by their majority culture congregants, they can still build trust and resonance through empathy. Goleman et al. state, "empathy" in the context of leadership "means taking employees' feelings into thoughtful consideration and then making intelligent decisions that work those feelings"

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 55.

³⁸⁰ Cooper and Sawaf, 182.

³⁸¹ Bob Burns, "Comprehensive View of Power," class lecture, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, 9 August 2012.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

into building relationships toward achieving the common goal.³⁸⁴ Emotionally intelligent leaders may, for instance, “tear up or cry when their employees have cried,” whether they cry because of personal tragedy or “even during a reprimand or firing.”³⁸⁵ It is the capacity for empathy that “makes resonance possible.”³⁸⁶ Emotionally intelligent leaders build resonance with others because they are “superb at recognizing and meeting” other people’s needs, they are “approachable,” and they “listen carefully” to what people have to say.³⁸⁷ Empathy, which is pertinent to minority pastors leading in majority culture congregations, “...is a critical skill for both getting along with diverse workmates and doing business with people from other cultures.”³⁸⁸ EQ gives leaders the capacity to read non-verbal language or “allows them to hear the emotional message beneath the words” in multicultural leadership contexts.³⁸⁹

Connerley and Pedersen agree with Goleman et al. that EQ is vital to multicultural leadership. They summarize and state,

Leaders who are emotionally intelligent are thought to be happier and more committed to their organizations, perform better in their workplace, and maybe most important in a multicultural and diverse environment, utilize their emotions to improve their decision-making skills and to instill a sense of enthusiasm, trust, and cooperation in their employees by using interpersonal relationships.³⁹⁰

Simply put, Connerley and Pedersen argue, EQ “may be the most important” competency for leaders in a multicultural and diverse environment because it allows them to use the power of relationships to make things happen. Not only is EQ important for multicultural

³⁸⁴ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 50.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Connerley and Pedersen, 63.

leadership, Connerley and Pedersen further argue that EQ may make it easier for leaders to develop multicultural skills. They state, “Leaders who are more emotionally intelligent are more likely to find developing multicultural skills easier compared to leaders who score lower on emotional intelligence.”³⁹¹

Emotional intelligence, then, is an essential competency for minority pastors working in majority culture congregations. EQ gives them the capacity to be self-aware and manage the anxiety that is inherent in their leadership context. EQ is also important to minority pastors because it gives them the capacity to build resonance with those they serve and influence them even when their formal authority is undermined. Rather than feeling inferior as leaders because of the challenges they face, minority pastors can be “great leaders” when they resonate and “work through the emotions” of people in their majority culture congregations.

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter has been a review of literature that provides the proper framework to understand how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. Although the Bible does not directly address this problem, it does point to the problem of human inequality as the reason behind the leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations. Instead of subduing and ruling over God’s creation, people subdued and ruled over one another. Even though Christ restored human equality, this continued in church history. Christianity spread from Western Europe to the rest of the world with the worldview that claimed the superiority of

³⁹¹ Ibid., 66.

the white race. This racial pride also plagued the American evangelical church. American Christians segregated by race and the American society became a racialized society.

With this context in mind, literature on being aware of minority leadership problems, understanding the dynamics of organizational culture, and developing multicultural leadership competencies was also reviewed. It noted that minority leaders experience personal and systemic leadership challenges. Minorities are often presumed to be incompetent as leaders, which leads to their leadership being undermined or resisted. As a result, they feel personal anxiety and the pressure to prove their competence. Organizational culture is not neutral to minority leaders. For minority leaders to effectively lead in organizations, the organizational culture must welcome, support, and submit to minority leaders and foster a culture of mutual learning. Minority leaders themselves must develop multicultural competencies of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence to survive – and even thrive – in majority culture organizations.

This review of literature allowed the researcher to examine how the areas covered address the four research questions that have guided this project: What personal leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations? What systemic leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations? How do minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations? What motivates minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations? Various themes that emerged in this literature review served as sections which directly or indirectly addressed and responded to these research questions. The themes of this literature review can now be compared to or contrasted with

the findings from the rest of the research study. In the next chapter, the methodology of this research will be explained.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. The researcher identified three literature areas that were important to understanding the challenges minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations. These areas include minority leadership challenges, organizational culture, and multicultural leadership competencies. These important areas provided a foundation for the four research questions that guided this research:

1. What personal leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with personal anxiety?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with self-confidence?
2. What systemic leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors recognize being presumed as incompetent by others in their congregations?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors recognize challenges to their authority by others in their congregations?
3. How do minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors overcome challenges on their own?
 - b. In what ways and to what extent do others play a role in helping minority pastors overcome leadership challenges?
4. What motivates minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?

The assumption of the study was that, though it is a difficult experience, minority pastors do overcome leadership challenges to effectively serve in majority culture congregations. Minority pastors who overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations have valuable experiences that offer much-needed wisdom and insight to

those wanting to understand minority leadership challenges or seeking to effectively minister in majority culture congregations. Therefore, a qualitative research design was used to understand the experiences of minority pastors overcoming leadership challenges to effectively serve in majority culture congregations.

Design of the Study

Sharan B. Merriam, in her book *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, states, “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.”³⁹² In this study, then, a qualitative research design was utilized to provide the researcher an opportunity to understand and learn from the unique experiences and insights of minority pastors who are pioneering, learning, and overcoming challenges to serve in majority culture congregations. Merriam identifies four key characteristics of the nature of qualitative research: “the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive.”³⁹³ These characteristics were ideal for studying how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

Minority pastors who minister in majority culture congregations have unique experiences and challenges that are unfamiliar to many pastors who serve in same culture congregations. Because the purpose of this study was to understand a process, namely, how minority pastors overcome challenges, the qualitative research design allowed the

³⁹² Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 13.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 14.

researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of minority pastors and how they make sense of their unique experiences of overcoming leadership challenges.

As unique individuals in particular settings, the experiences of minority pastors ministering in majority culture congregations vary depending on their personalities, skill sets, and contexts. But since the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in a qualitative research study, the researcher was able to adapt to different responses and even “explore unusual or unanticipated responses” of the pastors while collecting data during the interviews.³⁹⁴

The researcher in this study was not interested in “deductively testing hypotheses” already conceived or known. Rather, the researcher’s interest was to explore what was unclear or unknown about how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. By design, the data gathered and gleaned from the interviews allowed the researcher the opportunity to analyze common themes and inductively build concepts or theories regarding the dynamics of minority pastors overcoming leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. The scarcity of literature available on the subject means that the findings of this study will be more valuable to those seeking to better understand the experiences of minority pastors who lead in uniquely challenging ministries.

Finally, qualitative research was beneficial for the purpose of this study because it provided the researcher data that was “richly descriptive.” Merriam states, “Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 15.

phenomenon.”³⁹⁵ Quotes and descriptive words from minority pastors with years of challenging leadership experiences were deeply meaningful and insightful. It is the hope of the researcher that this study will provide non-minority pastors much-needed understanding and that it will encourage minority pastors. For these reasons, a qualitative research approach was determined to be the most appropriate methodology for studying how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

Participant Sample Selection

In order to find research participants, the researcher used the following criteria: pastors who are either African American or Korean American, who lead in predominantly Anglo American congregations by preaching and teaching in their official capacity as senior, associate, or assistant pastors, and who have served in their congregations for four years or longer. By narrowing the sample of participants to only African American and Korean American pastors, the researcher aimed to gather rich data to compare and contrast how leadership challenges and experiences were similar or different based on their racial backgrounds. Just as important, it was the researcher’s belief that minority pastors need to have spent a reasonable length of time in the ministry to process their leadership challenges and gain valuable perspective in order to make sense of their unique experiences of leadership in majority culture congregations. Thus, African American and Korean American pastors with a minimum of four years of leadership experience in majority culture congregations were selected for this search. Because theological position and differences in church governance was not of major interest in the research, participants

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 16.

were chosen from the same denomination, thus limiting the theological and governance variables.

In addition, because the organizational culture of these minority pastors is crucial to understanding the uniqueness of their challenges and experiences, all six minority pastors selected for this study were from the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA), which has been predominantly Anglo American ever since its foundation in 1973. In *Ministering Among the Changing Cultures in North America*, written in 2008, the writers admit, “With some exceptions, the PCA has ministered effectively mostly among people groups in North America who have the following characteristics: Anglo, educated and middle to upper income.”³⁹⁶ Minority pastors who serve in majority culture PCA congregations encounter unique leadership challenges. And because of the PCA’s history and ethos, there are few minority pastors serving in its majority culture congregations. Therefore, collecting data from these few minority pastors ministering in the predominantly Anglo PCA was invaluable to this study.

To gather meaningful data, the researcher interviewed six minority pastors who presently lead or have led congregations in the PCA. Because such a small number of minority pastors minister in the PCA, and since the particular size of the congregation is of less importance for the purposes of this study, the participating minority pastors were selected from congregations of various sizes, ranging from seventy-five to four thousand members. The most important criteria was that all participants be minority pastors ministering in a predominantly Anglo American context.

³⁹⁶ MNA, 13-14.

The researcher considered his network of pastoral acquaintances and contacted professors from Covenant Theological Seminary for recommendations of minority pastors to find potential participants in the PCA. When a list of potential participants was developed, the researcher emailed the pastors to explain the nature of the research project and request their participation. A week after contacting potential participants through email, the researcher followed up with a phone call to find out if the individuals were willing to participate in the research project and be interviewed. After all of the phone calls, six pastors gladly agreed to participate in the research project. All of these minority pastors lived in metro areas. Two of them had pastored in churches of about one hundred members for eight years. Three of them had pastored in churches of about three hundred members for four years to twelve years. One of them had pastored in a church of over four thousand members for six years. All of them had led PCA congregations as minority pastors.

Data Collection

All of the pastors were interviewed from a distance via internet based video and audio technology due to budget limitations for travel expenses. All six interviews were conducted over a period of six weeks.

Before the interviews, the researcher sent each interview participant a questionnaire requesting information about his calling to the church, the size of the congregation, the demographics of the congregation, the nature of his responsibilities, the years of service at the church, and any specific ministry challenges of the church, so that the interview responses could be contextualized. Also, before each interview began, the researcher had

the interview participant fill out a consent form in compliance with the research guidelines at Covenant Theological Seminary. The interviews took between one to one and a half hours, depending on the breadth and depth of the experiences the pastors desired to share.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format. Merriam describes the benefits of this particular approach, explaining, “In this type of interview either all of the questions are more flexibly worded or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions ... This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic.”³⁹⁷ In other words, the advantage of a semi-structured format is the flexibility it gives the researcher to immediately adapt and thoughtfully respond in order to mine rich insights and data during the interview process.

To gather data from the participating minority pastors, the following questions served as the interview protocol:

1. Tell me about a time when you felt like a minority pastor in your own church.
 - a. How did your experience of being treated as a minority pastor affect you personally?
 - b. What words would you use to describe how you felt as a minority pastor?
 - c. In what ways did your experience affect your confidence as a pastor?
2. Think of a time when you felt that your ability to lead effectively seemed compromised because you are a minority pastor.
 - a. To what extent do you think people believed you were incompetent as their pastor?
 - b. To what extent did you experience people being hesitant to follow you as their pastor?
3. How did you respond to the challenges of being a minority pastor?
 - a. What did you do personally to overcome the reality of being a minority pastor in your own church?
 - b. In what ways did others help you to overcome your unique leadership challenges?
4. What motivates you to keep serving as a minority pastor in your church?

³⁹⁷ Merriam, 90.

5. What advice would you give to a minority pastor seeking to serve in an Anglo church?

Because the interviews followed a semi-structured format, some questions were left out or asked in different order, depending on the nature and direction of the interview. The interviews were digitally recorded by the researcher and transcribed by the researcher's wife as soon after the interview as possible.

Data Analysis

The researcher studied the transcriptions of the interviews using a constant comparative method. Merriam defines this method as follows:

Basically, the constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. The dimension is tentatively given a name; it then becomes a category. The overall object of this analysis is to identify patterns in the data. These patterns are arranged in relationships to each other in the building of a grounded theory.³⁹⁸

In short, "The end result of this type of qualitative study is a theory that emerges from, or is "grounded" in, the data."³⁹⁹ The constant comparative method, therefore, helped the researcher analyze the unique experiences of one minority pastor in comparison to other minority pastors thematically or categorically in order to make sense of their experiences and formulate a theory about minority pastors overcoming leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

Researcher Position

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection. Given this important aspect, some challenge the trustworthiness of qualitative research,

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 29.

raising questions regarding the validity and reliability of the instrument, since researchers bring their own biases, assumptions, and worldviews into their analyses. In order to address this concern and enhance the internal validity of research, Merriam suggests that the researcher's "assumptions, experiences, worldview, and theoretical orientation" should be clarified at the outset of the study.⁴⁰⁰

The researcher of this study, being a first generation Korean American immigrant Christian, has served as an associate pastor of a majority culture PCA congregation in the United States for eight years. This being the case, the researcher was biased towards two concerns: first, the need to raise awareness of the unique leadership challenges minority pastors face in the ministry, and second, the goal of seeing minority pastors overcome leadership challenges to thrive in majority culture congregations for the sake of the gospel.

The researcher's bias could have the effect of unintentionally minimizing the efforts of church leaders, congregations, and denominations in helping minority pastors to serve effectively in majority culture congregations. However, minimizing such efforts would not ultimately have encouraged minority pastors to serve in majority culture congregations or supported majority culture congregations to empower minority pastors to serve them. Therefore, the aim to help minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations led to greater honesty about the prevalent issues that must be addressed in today's multiethnic environment. It also motivated the researcher to explore how minority pastors and majority culture congregations can be united as one to benefit God's kingdom and bless the society at large.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 219.

Study Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, it focused on Korean American and African American minority pastors serving in predominantly Anglo American congregations of a conservative evangelical Reformed denomination in the United States. As minorities, there are women who lead and minister in other denominations, as well as pastors of other ethnic backgrounds who serve in Anglo American culture congregations. Though rare, there are Anglo American pastors who serve cross-culturally in minority culture congregations in the United States. All of these pastors encounter unique leadership challenges while pastoring as minorities in their particular ministry context, but they are not the focus of this study.

Due to the constraints of time and money, this study was limited to six ethnic minority pastors who minister in major metro areas of the United States. Because it was difficult for the researcher, who resides in the Pacific Northwest, to travel coast-to-coast in the United States to interview all participants in person, all pastors were interviewed using the video conferencing technology made available by Skype. Therefore, the researcher was able to observe only what he saw and heard through the video conference.

This study was also limited by the availability of the interview participants. Due to the time zone differences and the busy ministry schedules of their ministry, most pastors were only available to interview for one and one half hours. Because of this limitation, not all the issues raised by the interview participants could be explored in great depth, other than what the researcher was able to gather in the natural course of the interview.

Further, to understand the impact of working within a dominant majority organizational culture, all the pastors were also selected from the PCA denomination, which ordains only male ministers. This means that this study will not be universally applicable to women and ethnic minority pastors ministering in other denominations or majority culture congregations. Because of the limited scope of this study, readers must determine for themselves how much is applicable for their own particular situations.

Lastly, this study was conducted from the viewpoint of each minority pastor's own perceptions and perspectives. Congregants were not interviewed for their perspectives. The role the congregation plays in hindering or helping a minority pastor overcome leadership challenges was not explored unless a participant mentioned this aspect as being particularly important or relevant to his experience. While there are applications for majority culture congregations hoping to better support their minority pastors, the focus of this study was limited to understanding the experiences of minority pastors and their leadership challenges.

Summary of the Project Methodology

This chapter described the qualitative research approach used to study how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. It utilized semi-structured interviews with six participants from a very limited number of minority pastors in the PCA who met the criteria, and the interview transcripts were studied using a constant comparative analysis. Despite the study limitations and biases of the researcher, richly descriptive data was gathered in answer to the research questions of this study. The findings from the interviews will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. In order to research this subject, three areas were important to understand: the leadership problems that minority leaders face, the organizational culture that systemically impacts minorities in leadership, and the competencies that enable minority leaders to lead effectively in majority culture organizations. Together, these three areas provide the proper framework to understand the subject.

To explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, four research questions guided this study:

1. What personal leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with personal anxiety?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with self-confidence?
2. What systemic leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors recognize being presumed as incompetent by others in their congregations?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors recognize challenges to their authority by others in their congregations?
3. How do minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors overcome challenges on their own?
 - b. In what ways and to what extent do others play a role in helping minority pastors overcome leadership challenges?
4. What motivates minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?

In search of answers to these four research questions, six pastors were interviewed. This chapter reports the findings of the six pastoral interviews based on common themes and relevant insights pertaining to the research questions for this study.

Introduction to Research Participants

Six pastors were selected to participate in this study: three Korean American pastors and three African American pastors. To maximize the richness of the data and minimize variables not relevant to the research focus, all six pastors were selected from the same denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The researcher was able to identify these six minority pastors who fit the specific criteria of this research from a very limited number of PCA minority pastors because of the uniqueness and rarity of ministering in predominantly Caucasian congregations of the PCA.

This section briefly introduces each pastor, including their cultural background and ministerial context. It is important to understand the cultural backgrounds and ministerial contexts of the pastors so that their comments can be more accurately understood. This brief introduction will also allow comparisons to be made among those serving in similar contexts and contrasts to be made among those serving in different contexts. In addition, this introduction will be helpful in making comparisons and contrasts based on racial differences, as one's race makes a significant impact on one's leadership experiences. All names and identifiable information of the pastors and their churches, however, have been changed to preserve the confidentiality of the interviews.

Allen, a Korean American, has been serving as the solo pastor of Suburban Presbyterian Church (SPC), a congregation of about one hundred people in a suburban

town of a large West Coast city for eight years. He described his congregation as mostly Caucasian, with the exception of his family and few other Asian families. Allen immigrated to the United States during his high school years and had very close Caucasian friends, mostly because he “had no choice” in his West Coast suburban neighborhood. While he had many Asian friends during his college years, Allen intentionally chose to befriend Caucasians during his seminary years. He stated that his Caucasian friends remain his best friends to this day. Allen was mentored by Tim, the founding pastor of SPC and a respected seminary professor, for about a year and a half before being called as a “co-pastor.” Allen said, “We intentionally avoided calling me an ‘associate’ because Tim’s desire was to gradually step back from the ministry and have it be that I can make a smooth and gradual transition to the sole pastor role in the church. So they called me and Tim together as co-pastors at that point, and I came on board.” After this intentional decision to call Allen as a co-pastor, he was eventually called as the pastor of SPC with the assurance that Tim would continue to mentor Allen, even after his departure. Allen’s primary leadership responsibilities include weekly preaching, pastoral counseling, and moderating elder meetings. He has led his congregation for eight years along with three Caucasian elders.

Brian, a Bahamian-born “African American,” has been serving as an assistant pastor at Metropolitan Presbyterian Church (MPC), a large church of four thousand and five hundred members in a major Southern city for nearly six years. Even though he is a Bahamian, Brian explained, “I don’t mind being characterized as an African American because racialization forces me to represent the African American community.” He

described his background as being from an “achiever” culture and stated, “I deeply value my hybrid culture of Bahamian, British, and American all in one.” Brian lived in neighborhoods and went to private schools that were “always racially mixed.” He also comes from a “very strong two-parent family that instilled certain spiritual values” that have guided him throughout his life. While pastoring a multiethnic PCA church that he planted, Brian was contacted by the leaders of MPC and was encouraged to apply for his position. Having become “more aware” of his role as a “bridge person” in Anglo dominant North America, Brian responded and was called to the assistant pastor role in his current congregation, which is “predominantly Anglo-Saxon, (approximately ninety-nine percent).” He has led in his capacity as an assistant pastor for more than six years.

Colin is an African American senior and organizing pastor of City Presbyterian Church (CPC), a predominantly Anglo (seventy-five percent) congregation of about 275 members in a major city in the Southeast. Colin’s parents were both involved with the Civil Rights Movement and both have earned masters’ degrees. Colin grew up in his middle class family in the Southeast and “attended schools in a suburban area with diversity.” While Colin had “Asian, Italian, Jewish, and Anglo neighbors,” he explained that he “continued to attend and be raised in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.” Colin was intentionally sought out to be the senior pastor of a new church plant by Ray, a Caucasian pastor who desired to serve as Colin’s associate pastor. After two years of being pursued, Colin stated that he and his wife realized that they “were truly called to a peculiar work to cross and bridge cultural and ethnic lines with the gospel.” He has been serving as the senior pastor of CPC for more than eight years.

Dean is a Korean American associate pastor of Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPC), a predominantly Caucasian (ninety-nine percent) congregation of about one hundred members in a major West Coast city. He came to the United States from South Korea when he was in elementary school and grew up in a predominantly Caucasian suburban neighborhood. While he attended Korean American churches throughout his school years, his friends were primarily Caucasians until his college years. After attending seminary, Dean intentionally sought to serve in an Anglo PCA church to gain cross-cultural ministry experience. While searching for a full-time position, he was recruited to be the associate pastor by Randy, the senior pastor of RPC. At the time, the congregation consisted of about 120 people and about sixty-five percent of them were seniors. Dean was eager to partner and lead with Randy who had a “vision to grow younger and ethnically diverse to reflect the church community’s current demographics.” About his calling and opportunity, Dean stated, “I was very enthusiastic about the possibility of making a big difference in moving the church forward.” However, regarding his call to RPC, he stated, “The elders had no intention of calling a non-Caucasian and only went along with the wishes of the senior pastor to have an associate.” Dean has served as the associate pastor of RPC for eight years along with three Caucasian elders and two different senior pastors, Randy and Jim.

Evan is an African American “co-pastor” of New Presbyterian Church (NPC), a majority culture congregation (sixty-five percent Caucasian) of about 350 people in a major East Coast city. He describes himself as a “cross-cultural African American” and a “product of urban black Baptist church” and “suburban multiethnic middle class” experiences. After

nine years of pastoring an African American church, Evan “came to a deep commitment regarding the benefits and necessity of the multi-ethnic church and the multi-ethnic staff configuration as a biblical paradigm.” When Scott, a longtime Caucasian pastor friend, who “from the beginning desired an African American partner in ministry,” pursued Evan to be his co-pastor, he welcomed the opportunity to live out his commitment. Evan has been serving as the co-pastor of NPC for twelve years.

Franklin is an American-born Korean American assistant pastor of Innovation Presbyterian Church (IPC) in a major city on the West Coast. IPC is comprised of about ninety-five percent Caucasians, and has about three hundred people in regular Sunday attendance. Franklin grew up in the Southeast in a predominantly Caucasian community. However, he came to faith in Jesus and learned much about Christian ministry and leadership while attending Korean American churches. After graduating from seminary, he served as a youth pastor in a Korean American church. But to build on his ministry experiences from the Korean American church and develop further as a pastor through “upper level experience of ministry,” Franklin sought an opportunity at IPC and found a position as an assistant pastor. Within in two years, he became the functional “number two guy,” with the responsibility of overseeing a majority of the ministries at IPC. Franklin has served as an assistant pastor of IPC for over four years with his senior pastor Greg and six Caucasian elders.

All of these six minority pastors encountered challenges that are invisible to most people who have not experienced them. As the literature review has shown, many Caucasians who live in a society of “white privilege” often deny the reality of these

challenges that minority leaders experience.⁴⁰¹ Yet, these minority pastors have told stories of personal and systemic leadership challenges in real life ministry within the context of majority culture congregations. Most of these pastors articulated their thoughts and feelings for the first time during the interviews. Accordingly, the researcher found it necessary at times to capture their words and report specific incidents in depth to provide the necessary context to understand the challenges as they developed in the ministries of these minority pastors.

Personal Leadership Challenges

The first research question addressed personal challenges minority pastors encounter because they lead people in majority culture congregations. The literature review has shown that minority leaders in majority culture contexts experience personal anxiety that comes with the need to prove themselves, and they struggle with self-worth and self-confidence because they are viewed as different or inadequate. The first question seeks to find out what personal leadership challenges the participating pastors encountered in their majority culture ministry context. Several interview questions gave opportunities for pastors to address their personal leadership challenges. The interviews have revealed that most of their personal leadership struggles stemmed from cultural differences and misperceptions by those in the majority culture who view these minority pastors as “different” – as inferior minorities. Dean summarizes the issue with leading as minority pastors in majority culture congregations: “My struggles were so difficult and so challenging because I felt like nobody understood what I was going through. It was a world that they didn’t know because they’d never lived it.” The personal leadership challenges that were

⁴⁰¹ FGCC, 31; Connerley and Pedersen, 35; Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 101.

identified through the interviews are categorized into four common themes: struggling with cultural identity, dealing with presumed incompetence, being self-confident, and handling cultural differences.

Struggling with Cultural Identity – “I Felt Like the Lonely Kryptonian on Earth”

All six pastors interviewed discussed the issue of identity. Allen and Evan, who were both intentionally called as “co-pastors,” reported that they did not struggle with their identity while serving as minority pastors. Allen embraced ministering as a Korean pastor in his predominantly Caucasian church as “a part and parcel of being in pastoral ministry” with people from different backgrounds. Evan said that, being a “co-pastor,” he was treated as an equal to the founding Caucasian pastor even though he is an African American. The other four pastors, however, expressed struggling with their cultural identity.

Franklin, Colin, Dean, and Brian reported struggling with their ethnic identity as a result of being minority pastors in their respective majority culture congregations. Their identity struggle was not about “Who am I?” but rather “Why am here?” or “Why am I doing this?” They fully know that they are pastors like all the other Caucasian pastors in the PCA. And yet, because they are treated differently as inferior than Caucasian pastors, or because they feel no one really understood them, they struggle with their identity. The percentage of the number of Caucasians in their congregations varied from seventy-five to ninety-nine percent. Nonetheless, these pastors’ struggles were similar in nature because of their social status as minorities.

Franklin reported that serving as a minority pastor of a predominantly Caucasian congregation made him feel like “Clark Kent from the TV show Smallville,” where no one really understood his true identity as a Korean American pastor. He said,

I remember saying over and over to people I felt like I was Clark Kent from the TV show Smallville. I felt like the lonely Kryptonian on earth. I still had friends at the church, people that I cared for deeply, and I felt like they cared for me, but yet there was that sense of cultural isolation where you definitely felt there was a part of you that was just utterly dormant – that was just not being accessed by anybody.

Although Franklin admitted that he was “very comfortable” and has a “pretty good skill at assimilating well into Western white culture,” he, nonetheless, felt “that sense of cultural isolation” because culturally “there wasn’t this sense of common ground” and mutual understanding.

For Colin and Dean, their identity struggle was more enduring and deeper than it was for Franklin. They struggled with their identity because they felt they were treated differently as inferior than Caucasian pastors. When asked what leadership challenges he faced that a Caucasian pastor would not have experienced at his church, Colin revealed, “When I get up on Sunday morning to preach or to lead an event and it’s predominantly white, I think, “Why am I doing this? ... I don’t think there’s ever been a Sunday I haven’t gotten in the pulpit and had to go through the identity struggle when I stand up there.”

For Colin, not a week goes by without an identity crisis. His identity struggle involves whether he is genuinely respected as a pastor or whether he is “just a novelty” for the Caucasians of his church who want to be different in the PCA, which is ninety-five percent Anglo. At the core of his identity struggle is what it means to be true to himself as a minority pastor in a predominantly Caucasian congregation who may not respect him. He

is well aware that his race may be an issue for Caucasians in his church. Thus, Colin struggles within himself to be authentic and not cave to the pressure to assimilate “to be white.” Though most Caucasian congregants may not recognize it, Colin reported the impact of his weekly identity struggle: “And a lot of times I feel alone.”

Even after seven years of leading as the senior pastor, Colin struggled with his identity because he was unsure whether people genuinely respect him as a leader. After the Caucasian associate pastor left the church, if there was any disagreement during a meeting, he wondered, “Is it because the white guy’s gone, or is it they can’t follow the black guy?”

Similar to Colin, Dean was keenly aware that he was a minority in his church. Even if “nobody else really even thought” about Dean’s identity struggle, his struggle was always present. Dean’s awareness as a minority pastor was heightened because of how he was “regularly being critiqued” by some members of his predominantly Caucasian congregation. When he faced challenges, he often wondered, “Why in the world am I here? Why don’t I go back to the Korean church and serve where I would be respected?” Dean, like Colin, confessed, “I constantly had a struggle with my own identity.”

Unlike Dean, Brian was respected as a pastor at his predominantly Caucasian congregation. However, Brian, who is well-educated and from a well-established family in the Bahamas, also revealed that being a minority pastor has often led him to pray, “God, why am I here? Why am I not in a country that I grew up in, where I was groomed to lead?” He explained, “If I was there, by now I’m certain I would have been in a key leadership role.” Though it was less of a struggle for Brian than it was for Colin and Dean, Brian was

fully aware that his identity as a minority pastor has a bearing on the impact and influence of his leadership in his majority culture congregation.

Dealing with Presumed Incompetence – “I Felt Like I Had to Prove Myself as a Pastor”

All six pastors commented on the issue of being presumed incompetent as minority pastors. Of the four pastors who were intentionally invited by the Caucasian leadership to be pastors of their respective churches, three of them reported that they did not specifically experience being presumed as incompetent leaders. When asked if he felt people presumed he was incompetent because he is an African American pastor, Evan replied, “I guess not.” He reasoned, “When I started here, the way was paved so well for me [by the leadership] that I don’t feel that.” Brian understood that people thinking that minorities are incompetent is simply a “sin issue.” He added that “if folks make assertions,” he is not afraid to “meet them head on.” Noting that he is “comfortable” with his level of giftedness, Allen stated, “Competence is not something that comes up as an issue.” Thus, for these three pastors, congregation’s preparedness, understanding the impact of sin, and self-awareness minimized potential dealings with presumed incompetence.

Colin, Dean, and Franklin, on the other hand, reported that, at some point in their ministry, they felt they had to prove themselves as pastors because they were viewed as incompetent minority pastors. Colin was also intentionally invited to be the senior pastor of his church. However, he reported that one of the challenges of being a minority pastor in a majority culture congregation is dealing with feelings of inferiority, which often results in the pastor wanting to prove himself to be competent. He said, “When I first came, I thought I had to be a certain way to prove something, and there was just a certain point – I

cannot tell you when – I just decided that I don't have anything to prove, and I just left the inferiority complex at the door." After two years of struggling with the burden to prove himself, with God's help, Colin simply decided that he didn't "have anything to prove" to his leaders or congregation.

In contrast, Franklin and Dean felt a greater burden to prove themselves as pastors. When asked whether he had any personal leadership challenges as a minority pastor, Franklin reported that one of the greatest personal challenges he faced in his predominantly Caucasian congregation was dealing with cultural differences in leadership styles. He said, "I would say one of the things that I was really taken aback by was...you know, in Korean culture deference is the appropriate posture that you're to have towards your leaders, right? But I've noticed that Greg [the senior pastor] didn't really respect that – he didn't really see that as a virtue." Franklin was perceived to be an incompetent leader by his senior pastor. And even though the Western style of leadership felt "very awkward" – even "inappropriate" for Franklin, he learned how to contextualize to "a Western context of doing church ministry." About that experience of "growing in proactive" leadership style, he stated, "But that sense of pressure, that sense of performance, that sense of having to prove myself was definitely there." And then Franklin added, "One of the things that I was very disappointed in, in my experience at IPC, is that I did feel that you were more rewarded for your competence rather than your character...I feel like, as long you were useful, you were accepted, and you were well received, and you were valued."

Franklin's style of leadership was not respected because of his posture of deference. Thus, he felt it was necessary to prove himself as a good leader in the eyes of his Caucasian

leadership. This experience of being valued and rewarded for his competence more than his character was a disappointing experience. How did Franklin feel when he didn't "perform" well? He revealed, "If I felt like I'd done something not as well as I'd hoped, I would notice I would definitely go through seasons of discouragement, depression, frustration, wanting to be isolated."

Similar to Franklin, Dean also reported that he felt he had to prove himself as a pastor because of ongoing criticism by some members of his predominantly Caucasian congregation. Because a minority's ethnicity is an inseparable aspect of his identity, whenever Dean received a critique or a comment, he had a personal identity struggle. However, Dean stated that because he felt called by God to serve these people, he pressed on by doing what he thought he needed to do to gain their respect. He said, "I felt still called to pastor there – but with all these criticisms that I received, I felt like I had to prove myself instead of simply ministering as a pastor." That struggle of wanting to be faithful to God's call and feeling he had to prove himself as a pastor was "tiring" and "exhausting."

Being Confident as Minority Pastors – "I Wonder Whether I'm Doing Things Right"

All six minority pastors discussed the subject of self-confidence as it related to their particular ministries in majority culture congregations. However, they discussed this challenge in two very different manners. The Korean American pastors struggled with being confident as pastors in their context. The African American pastors expressed growing in their self-confidence or it being a non-issue in their ministry as minority pastors.

Dean revealed that the pressure to prove himself as a competent pastor "greatly affected" his self-confidence. He said, "Instead of teaching and preaching, I felt like I had

to say the right things in order to show my competence – instead of simply ministering to people, I felt like I had to show that I can do this job. And that was very difficult.”

Similarly, Franklin reported that while he was confident in his theological understanding, he struggled with confidence in his leadership because his Caucasian senior pastor and elders perceived him as a weak leader for not “being more decisive” or “being more willing to take risks.” He recalled, “I remember having this one conversation with Greg. He was like, ‘You know, Franklin, you have this steel spine when it comes to contending for theological doctrine, and I feel that, and you’re willing to challenge me about that, but when it comes to like, leadership and making decisions and standing by those decisions, you’re so soft, you know? Where is that steel?’ he would say to me.” One of his elders also said to Franklin, “I don’t get it, you’re like Jekyll and Hyde – behind the pulpit you speak with such authority, but outside you’re very unsure of yourself.” When asked whether these conversations impacted his self-confidence, he said, “Of course, definitely.”

Even though Allen felt loved and “at home” as a pastor of his predominantly Caucasian congregation, when discussing leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter, he too reported that he struggled with feeling self-confident. He stated, “I’m struggling with ‘Why isn’t the church growing?’ or ‘Why aren’t people maturing?...I don’t know whether, beyond the sin issues, it’s their lack of confidence in me, or whether they view me as inadequate.” Allen revealed, “Do I feel, do I wonder whether I’m doing things right? Yeah, I do.” Thus, Allen acknowledged that people’s “lack of confidence” or of their view of him as “inadequate” may be a factor in his leadership effectiveness.

By contrast, all three African American pastors reported growing in self-confidence as minority pastors. When asked to what extent being a minority pastor affected his self-confidence, Evan reported that pastoring at his majority culture congregation has raised his self-confidence. He stated,

Part of being an African American in America is that you always wonder, “Will I be accepted by the majority culture?” There’s always that thought in your mind, “I can lead black people, will white people follow me, or will I be perceived as someone who’s not worthy of being followed?” That’s crazy, but that’s just what segregation and racism has done for us – the subtle inferiority.

When he came to pastor his church twelve years ago, Evan continued, “I was embraced, people learned from me and accepted me, and I was really encouraged there, and that has not changed – I’m clearly perceived as one of the pastors here.” What is surprising to Evan is that he has a “very educated congregation” with about seventy-five to eighty percent of the people with masters degrees or working towards one. Thus, Evan remarked, “That’s one thing that sometimes I pinch myself – ‘Gosh, man, you’re a pastor of all these smart people.’” Even though he is a minority pastor of a majority culture congregation, not only does Evan not feel inferior, he feels “jacked up” as a confident pastor of a church of a “very educated” people because of their ongoing reception and respect for him as a pastor.

While Brian reported that self-confidence as a minority pastor was not an issue for him because he “comes from a family that instilled a lot of confidence” in him as a child, Colin reported that his self-confidence as a minority pastor has grown over the years as a result of “being able to enter that world” of Anglo culture and “just pastoring people.” In fact, he revealed that his self-confidence increased as he gained valuable insight into how culture plays a role in the lives of Caucasians in his congregation. He stated, “I’m able to

see their culture as a lay over their hearts, and how they've kind of embraced that to cover a lot of areas, to compensate for a lot of areas. And so it's just taken a while [to gain self-confidence]."

Dealing With Cultural Differences – “We’re Culturally in Parallel Universes”

Four of the six pastors reported personal leadership challenges related to cultural differences. Colin revealed that a significant amount of his personal struggle was a result of dealing with pastoring in a different culture. He reported,

I have to intentionally cross over into their world. I feel like we think differently – we’re culturally in parallel universes, even though we can agree on scripture. We don’t watch the same things on TV necessarily. We don’t listen to the same music – now some of that – some crossover things – but intentionally getting to know them, I think a lot gets lost in translation in preaching – illustrations – those sorts of things have been difficult. And I figure that the one unique challenge is just the sheer amount of work it takes to communicate.

Though they “can agree on scripture,” the cultural divide between Colin and his majority culture congregation has been “one unique challenge” for Colin as a minority pastor because of “the sheer amount of work it takes to communicate” and understand each other.

Evan, like Colin, reported that cultural differences made him feel like a minority pastor. When asked whether he ever felt like a minority pastor in his own church, he replied, “Happens a lot. You get used to it.” He explained,

I remember – when you’re preaching, there are always certain points when you are just clearly reminded that you’re not in a black church; you’re in a church that is sixty-five percent white. There’s less feedback when you’re preaching – there’s less enthusiasm when you’re clapping – there’s more of a “politeness” in worship...I’m reminded all the time.

Evan realizes that part of God's calling for minority pastors requires them to sacrifice cultural preferences to serve in majority culture congregations. He asserted, "It's part of the price we have to pay if we believe that God's called the church to be one church and not to be a divided church – we all have to give up something, and that's part of what we give up."

Though he mainly reported twelve years of positive experiences as a minority pastor, Evan admitted that sometimes cultural differences have affected him. He pointed out, for example, that the Anglo members of his congregation have a "different perception of pastors" and call them by their first name, which he has "never gotten used to" and believes he never will. It "bugs" Evan when Caucasians in his congregation do not address him as "Pastor Evan." While laughing, though, Evan said, "So sometimes when people call me by my first name – for half a second it's, 'Yep, white church, they call you by your first name, just get over it.'" Although he realizes that being called by his first name is part of "white church" culture, Evan has felt less respected as a result.

As for Dean, who reported having eight years of challenging experiences, not being called by his first name was of a more serious concern than it was for Evan. He felt that there was intentionality behind the practice. He wondered, "Why would they call their senior pastor, 'Pastor Randy,' but their associate pastor just by his first name? I mean, why is that? That's unthinkable in the Korean Church." Dean understood that there was a cultural difference in the manner of addressing pastors in Anglo churches, but he felt it was an intentional way of communicating how his congregation felt about his position.

While the other three pastors struggled with the majority culture, Allen reported that his own "Korean mindset" affected his leadership approach among his elders, who

were all older, despite their apparent respect for him. He stated, “I find it difficult to tell them what to do – in the sense that you grow up in the Korean culture, you don’t dare command or order older people around.” Allen reasoned,

What that means, I suppose, I feel that things don’t happen as quickly as I’d like them to happen – and I don’t know what the cause of that is – whether I’m doing the right thing by trying to build consensus and shepherd them along or whether I’m not being faithful in my pastoral duty to push them where they need to be pushed because I have that Korean mindset of not ordering older people around. I just don’t know.

Allen struggled with how his cultural difference – “that Korean mindset” – might be a factor in his leadership effectiveness in his predominantly Caucasian congregation.

In summary, four common themes were identified as personal leadership challenges for these six minority pastors: identity struggle, perceived incompetence, self-confidence, and cultural differences. The participants felt that these personal leadership challenges stemmed from much broader, systemic problems existing in majority culture congregations. These will be the focus of the following findings.

Systemic Leadership Challenges

The second research question was designed to discover what systemic leadership challenges minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations. That is, these minority pastors experienced leadership challenges that involve complex interactions within the church between pastors, congregants, and practices of majority culture congregations, as well as the influences of American racialized patterns without the church. Brian summarizes the systemic challenges that minority pastors experience in majority culture congregations. About his experience of working in the PCA churches, he said,

What I've noticed in churches where I work now is that I'm prejudged...I don't wake up in the morning thinking, "Well, I know God's called me here, I know people are going to follow me." I wake up in the morning thinking, "I know the Lord has called me. I know that this is a country that is racially sensitized and they work hard at denying it." So it's – I operate with that understanding – that people are judging me every minute of my day – some people, not everyone – but some people who don't know me will tend to judge me on the fact that I'm different.

Minority pastors are often "prejudged" as inferior by those in the majority culture because they are racially different. Yet this experience is often denied.

Similar to personal leadership challenges, the particular nature of systemic challenges of these six pastors depended on deliberate actions and support of the Caucasian leadership or the congregants. However, regardless of their support or lack thereof, all six pastors encountered leadership challenges because of racialization, systemic prejudice, or misperceptions of minorities as they were measured against the standards and values of Caucasian leaders. Beyond these general issues, more precise reasons behind the particular challenges though were not easily identifiable because these challenges occurred in the context of complex interactions within and powerful influences without the church. Nonetheless, the interviews identified three categories of systemic challenges: presumed incompetence, undermined authority, and dominant culture assumptions. The particular challenges of the pastors, therefore, are grouped under these three main categories. Several questions gave opportunities for pastors to address their experiences related to systemic leadership challenges.

Presumed Incompetence

All six pastors discussed the potential challenge of being presumed as incompetent pastors. Though their experiences varied in nature and in degree of seriousness, Brian,

Colin, Franklin, Dean, and Allen reported that they were treated differently because of their minority status or because their minority perspectives and ministry practices were neglected or deemed inappropriate. Evan, however, reported that he did not encounter the issue and attributed his positive experience to the readiness of his leadership and congregation. That is, Evan's Caucasian leadership and congregants were willing to submit to and learn from Evan as much as they would from their Caucasian founding pastor. Thus, Evan felt the potential of facing systemic challenges were minimized. This was not the case for other pastors.

"They Would Listen to My Assistant"

When asked if there was a time when he felt that his ability to lead effectively seemed affected by his minority status, Brian recalled an incident when he felt he was being perceived as incompetent during a meeting to discuss how to organize and present a missions conference. Even though he was a pastor of the church with expertise and experience in the area, the people of his congregation wouldn't ask him for his input and talked to each other instead. Brian reported, "And in the meeting, they would listen to my assistant, who understood because she and I talked. And so I realized that for me to communicate to them, I needed to talk to her." When asked how he thinks they viewed him as a pastor, Brian answered that he thought they would say, "He is a token fella...And he's only here to help us when we need him." Brian perceived that he was disrespected and disregarded because he is a minority pastor.

“Why Don’t They Call Me?”

Similar to Brian, Colin recalled an incident that made him feel incompetent as a pastor. It involved most of his Anglo congregation going to his Caucasian associate pastor for counseling. Colin stated,

“Oh, man, Colin, you’re a good preacher,” but then when something would really break down in their family, they would call him to pastor. And I started to feel like, “Why don’t they call me?” Not that I necessarily wanted to do it, but why is that? Is there a breakdown? Is there some way they don’t feel I can speak into their lives in more intimate ways? And so that kind of bugged me for a while.

“That didn’t last forever,” he admitted, “but it made me wonder.” Even though, Colin acknowledged, for some Caucasian members it was about having “deeper friendships,” he felt he was being perceived as an incompetent senior pastor.

“God Doesn’t Want You to Be a Weenie”

While Brian recognized that they were being perceived as incompetent pastors by the way they were treated, Franklin was directly told that he was a weak leader. When asked whether he experienced being perceived as incompetent because he is a minority pastor, Franklin reported in depth that his “Eastern” style of leadership was “misperceived” by his senior pastor Greg and elders as “incompetence or weakness.” That is, they didn’t recognize his style as “valid, genuine, good leadership” because they didn’t see “that stereotypical alpha male leader” in Franklin. He was simply told, “Franklin, God doesn’t want you to be a weenie.”

Franklin admitted that his Eastern style of leadership is a “passive” style of leadership. But far from not caring, he explained, “I was also trying to exhibit real biblical leadership traits, deference, being soft-spoken, not necessarily being very opinionated,

keeping things to myself, being slow to speak, quick to hear, as Proverbs says.” Franklin believed that he was being biblical about his leadership style, not just cultural. However, the Caucasian leadership didn’t recognize Franklin’s style as being a biblical issue. And when asked how his senior pastor responded to a discussion regarding his approach to leadership, Franklin replied, “I definitely felt there wasn’t very much interest.” In fact, he concluded, “I think for him, he saw his understanding of leadership to be the best method of leadership...and I definitely felt the pressure to conform to that, of course.”

“He Spoke as if He Was the Authority on Preaching and Korean Preachers”

Like Franklin, Dean was also perceived as being incompetent as a pastor. In Dean’s case, it involved his second Anglo senior pastor’s insistence that his passionate style of preaching was ineffective and “inappropriate.” Dean knew that to Korean American preachers, “passionate” preaching was a given. Thus, Dean thought it was “silly” for the Anglo senior pastor to characterize a stylistic aspect of Korean preachers – a cultural difference – as “inappropriate” or as a “matter of effectiveness.” Having pastored in two different cultures, Korean American churches and Anglo PCA churches, Dean was aware of the stylistic differences between Korean American preachers and Anglo American preachers. Yet, when he tried to explain his point of view and cultural nuances, the Anglo senior pastor denied Dean’s point of view. Dean said, “He spoke as if he was the authority on preaching and Korean preachers.” He deemed Dean’s style of preaching as “ineffective and improper and getting in the way of people hearing the gospel.” Dean found the exchange “frustrating.”

“Committed to Mentoring Me as We Made the Transition”

To a much lesser degree than Franklin or Dean, Allen experienced being perceived as an incompetent pastor who needed further training. Allen, who was mentored by Tim, the founding pastor, was eventually invited by Tim to be the “co-pastor” as he made his transition to leave. Allen reported that, on the one hand, he did not believe that his elders or his congregation perceived him to be an incompetent minority pastor. On the other hand, he stated that when he was called to the church, “I know that it was a great source of comfort and security for them that Tim was committed to mentoring me as we made the transition.” Though Allen believed his elders didn’t view his ethnicity as an issue, Allen acknowledged Tim’s influence upon his call and Tim’s ongoing mentorship as being “a great source of comfort and security” to the elders regarding his preparedness for sole ministry to his congregation.

“You Are Not Ready”

For Dean and Franklin, being presumed as incompetent leaders meant they were also disregarded as potential candidates for senior or solo pastor opportunities. Dean stated, “Unless there is a church that is intentionally looking to become multiethnic, I recognized after four years that being an associate pastor in a predominantly white church is the highest I would go in the PCA.” He shared one specific incident that occurred a number of years ago when his Caucasian elders decided to look for another senior pastor. But when he asked whether the elders would consider him for the position, they said, “No, you are not ready.” Dean recalled, “But the problem was, when I asked them, ‘How am I not ready to be the pastor or the senior pastor of this church?’ they had no explanation.

They just simply said, ‘We’re looking for another guy to be the senior pastor.’” They called a younger, less experienced Caucasian pastor instead.

Franklin had a similar experience. Even after Franklin tried to “conform” and become more “proactive” in his leadership style for nearly four years, he stated, “I started sensing I was going to become the permanent secondary guy, which I didn’t necessarily feel called to.” And when an opportunity came up to lead the existing church while his senior pastor expanded a new satellite site, Franklin said, “He had other guys in mind.” He added, “I was a little bit actually upset that he didn’t even consider me for the site.” Franklin also was overlooked for younger, less experienced recent seminary graduates. Thus, these pastors were presumed as incompetent because they were minorities and viewed as inferior, inexperienced, inadequate, or in need of further training.

Undermined Authority

The second category of systemic challenges encountered by minority pastors is being resisted or undermined as pastors because of their minority status. Being undermined as pastors is related to being presumed incompetent as pastors. This was evident in Brian’s experience of being presumed incompetent to organize a mission conference. Instead of looking to Brian for his expertise and leadership, the Caucasians at the meeting talked to his assistant instead. This experience of being presumed incompetent was simultaneously an experience of being undermined as a pastor of the congregation. Thus, there is a correlation between the two categories. Overall, however, the pastors reported fewer instances of being resisted or undermined than being perceived as incompetent as minority pastors in majority culture congregations. When asked to what

extent they believe their pastoral authority was undermined because they are minority pastors, four of the six pastors reported how they felt their leadership was resisted or directly challenged, while one pastor explained the reality of the difficult nature of ministerial leadership regardless of cultural differences.

“Took a Straw Poll”

When asked if people in his congregation made him feel incompetent or tried to undermine his authority, Colin replied, “Yeah, that happened.” He recounted,

I remember I preached something or said something and somebody called me and said, “Hey, we took a little straw poll on what you said and a lot of people thought...” And I’m like, “A straw poll?!”... And I went right at it, “A straw poll? You can’t take a straw poll! A straw poll is another word for gossip!” You know, and then you deal with it, and you got the white lady crying and you got the husband concerned.

Colin discovered that such an experience of being undermined was “just par for the course” for minority pastors.

“I Don’t Think You Should Be a Pastor Here”

A member of Dean’s congregation was even more direct with Dean regarding how they felt about his leadership. He briefly described “this very vocal and influential woman” who would critique him regularly after he preached “as if she came not to sit under” his preaching but was “just there to critique” him. Dean had the same credentials as the Anglo senior pastor of his church, and yet he felt he was “treated differently” because he was a minority pastor. His sense of being undermined as a pastor was heightened when he was even told, “I don’t think you should be a pastor here.” It was a “shocking” experience for Dean. He felt that he was being treated like an “intern” rather than an ordained pastor.

Would this have happened to him in a Korean American church? Dean offered a cultural perspective when he clarified,

I am not saying that in Korean American churches pastors have no pastoral issues. But I think this is one of those cases where this would not have happened had I served at a Korean church, and certainly not women coming up to me – they were mostly women – criticizing my leadership. That would not have happened in a Korean church. So there were certainly things culturally that made me feel like I'm certainly a minority, and it was hard for me to process that.

Pastors in Korean American churches also face leadership challenges. They are not perfect either. But Dean believes that his experience of being treated like an intern and being told "I don't think you should be a pastor here" were based on his being a minority pastor.

"When I talk, no one's really listening"

As was the focus, while the other pastors reported experiences of being undermined as pastors of their respective congregations, Colin reported that there is also a great challenge at the presbytery level. He reported, "I'm running into the presbytery level, where when I talk, no one's really listening. If it's not about some racial issue or something that's another discussion, but that's probably where I feel more disrespect than at my church. Kind of like the bigger stage – 'Oh, it's the black guy talking, that's great' – and that's it." Colin recognizes that in order for him to make an impact and have influence as a minority pastor, he not only has to gain the trust of his Anglo congregation, but also the respect of Anglo colleagues in his presbytery.

"People Are Going To Have Conflicts"

In contrast to all other pastors, when asked whether he experienced being perceived as incompetent or having his authority undermined, Evan replied, "When I started here, the way was paved so well for me that I didn't feel that." He added, "Much of the

[leadership] challenges I face are because I'm a pastor like any other pastor." Evan, however, was aware of potential leadership challenges for minority pastors in majority culture congregations. He stated,

We're one body knit together in Christ, and the conflicts we have – and people are going to have conflicts – and some of those conflicts are because of cultural misperceptions and some of them are just because one person is an introvert and one person is not. It sometimes – it really doesn't matter what the source of that conflict is – it's that you really want to be right with one another, and you really want to just try to love each other, and you figure it as you go on down to the road to glory.

Having been embraced, loved, and respected by his majority culture congregation, Evan has met his leadership challenges as part of the journey of any pastor.

Dominant Culture Assumptions

By design, the second research question sought to examine the extent of two specific systemic leadership challenges experienced by minority pastors, namely, presumed incompetence and undermined authority. However, in the course of exploring these two systemic challenges, the researcher discovered yet another important category that some pastors have repeatedly identified as a systemic leadership challenge. It is the challenge of dominant culture assumptions.

Specifically, four pastors reported that the Caucasian leadership or congregants assumed that their values, perspectives, or practices were right and proper while showing little to no respect for the values, perspectives, or practices of the minority pastors. The dominant culture assumptions challenged these pastors in a number of ways. Some pastors struggled with the expectation that minorities assimilate to the majority culture way of life without the consideration of changing their culture by integrating the values, perspectives,

or practices of the minority culture. Other pastors struggled with being misperceived by the Caucasian leadership or congregants because of their lack of interest in distinguishing the difference between biblical principles and cultural differences.

“They Don’t Get It”

During the interview, Colin reported in length about a recent discussion he’s had with his all-Caucasian session of elders regarding how they think the church is “too white” and they “want to see more diversity.” Colin expressed his struggle with the challenge of helping them realize how growing more diverse under his leadership would mean a systemic change of the dominant culture of their church. He stated,

Now, whether they know exactly what that means – because there are points along the way where in session meeting they’ll say, “Man, that song, I didn’t know what was going on” because our music director’s an African American guy. And I was like, “Um, yeah, you guys want more black folk at the church, do you know this is what it’s going to mean?” And they’re like, “Oh, okay.”

He remarked, “They don’t get it, but I won’t let it slide.” That is, his elders expect minorities to assimilate.

As Colin began to preach more extensively in preparation for his Caucasian associate’s departure in the past year, his congregation began to grow more diverse under his preaching, with African Americans and non-PCA “Anglo folk” who were less educated and less wealthy than typical PCA Caucasians. As these new people began to come, Colin pointed out, “I think my elders saw themselves as the minority for the first time.” He continued, “So now they have a new challenge. So when that happens, it gets scary. And I think part of that is scary like, ‘We’re going to have to commit to doing this church knowing that we’re the minorities here, even though we’re the leaders’...So that’s the big

challenge lately.” Colin is fully aware that becoming more diverse means systemic changes. The current predominant Anglo congregational culture, values, and practices would not remain the same. But his elders “don’t get it.” Colin can sense that they assume that new people would assimilate to the current majority culture, but he won’t let that assumption go unchallenged.

“PCA Pastors Don’t Know What They’re Asking”

While Colin encountered his elders’ assuming that minorities assimilate to the majority culture, Evan shared his concerns regarding the Anglo PCA pastors’ assumptions and approach to multiethnic ministry opportunities in their congregations. He stated,

I think there are a lot of PCA young pastors who would say in their mind, “Yeah, we gotta do something about the browning of America, and I would love to have somebody on my staff to help me figure that out” – and I think that majority of PCA pastors don’t know what they’re asking. Their heart is right, but they don’t realize how hard that is – to find the right person, and for them to be the right person to create the right environment where that person can thrive and succeed.

As an experienced African American PCA pastor who has thrived in a majority culture congregation, Evan is concerned with PCA pastors who do not understand that it requires a healthy, supportive system and intentionality for minority pastors to “thrive and succeed” in such a challenging ministry. He knows that healthy, multicultural congregations require more than just competent minority pastors. They also require humble and courageous Caucasian pastors and elders who are willing to challenge the majority culture way of life and cultivate an environment of mutual respect, submission, and posture of learning from each other.

“They Don’t Recognize that There Is Inequality”

In contrast to Colin and Evan who worked with Caucasian leaders that valued mutual learning and submission, Dean and Franklin felt that their minority values and perspectives were rejected and not given proper consideration because of dominant culture assumptions. Dean expressed, “I think one of the challenges for minority pastors working in a predominantly white culture is that what is the dominant culture point of view is what is assumed to be correct, and proper, and right – and so when the dominant cultural views are challenged, they are immediately shut down as wrong.” This was the case for Dean when his view on “passionate” preaching was disregarded by the senior pastor as being “inappropriate” and “ineffective” in communicating the gospel. Such lack of interest in discussing cultural differences and discerning biblical mandates from cultural nuances was a great challenge for Dean.

Franklin was even more forceful about the nature of the problem. He viewed it as a matter of inequality. Regarding the attitude of those in the dominant culture, Franklin expressed,

There has to be this sense of invitation – there has to be this sense of coming to, not expecting for people to come to them. People just don’t get that. I don’t think people of the dominant culture mindset see that they’re being dominant in their assumptions. And they think it’s absurd for them to even have to do all those things, have to be that considerate, have to be that sensitive – to them it’s just like, “It is what it is” – there is no distinction. I think that’s the major blind spot of dominant culture people is that they don’t, first of all, recognize that there is inequality, and that they’re not sensitive to that.

Because of inequality, Franklin believes that the dominant culture with greater influence and power should show deference to the minority culture that is on the margins of society,

instead of assuming or expecting the minority culture to ascend to the expectations of the dominant culture.

In summary, these minority pastors reported experiencing systemic leadership challenges of being perceived as incompetent and having their authority undermined or challenged because they were minority pastors. And in the process of exploring these two systemic challenges, the researcher identified a third systemic challenge. In fact, in varying degrees, all six pastors expressed this particular challenge to be the underlying systemic problem for minority pastors in majority culture congregations, namely, the assumptions and practice of the dominant culture point of view as the right point of view, without consideration of cultural aspects from biblical principles because of racialization.

Overcoming Leadership Challenges

The third research question sought to understand how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges to survive and thrive in majority culture congregations. The literature review has shown that minority leaders can be effective leaders, depending on the organizational culture and multicultural leadership competencies. The interviews have revealed that congregations that cultivated a culture of proper respect and support for the leadership of the minority pastors was crucial to their success. Such a culture was created by deliberate and purposeful actions of the Caucasian leadership and ongoing support of the congregants. The interviews also revealed that, even when such a healthy environment was lacking, minority pastors can overcome by developing and using multicultural competencies to navigate through their leadership challenges. The interview questions gave the six minority pastors opportunities to articulate specific factors that enable them to

overcome personal and systemic leadership challenges. Six common themes were identified as to what has helped these pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations: intentional invitation, supportive leadership and congregation, trusted confidants, use of multicultural leadership skills, having hard conversations, and times of solitude. These common themes are organized under two main categories, namely, overcoming leadership challenges with the involvement of others and overcoming leadership challenges through personal growth and adaptability.

Overcoming Leadership Challenges through the Involvement of Others

All six pastors specified that they overcame their leadership challenges as a result of the involvement of others. Their involvement ranged from intentional actions to address the impact of racialization in the church to simply being present to listen to the struggles of the pastors. Three common themes under this main category include intentional invitation, support of leadership and congregations, and trusted confidants.

Intentional Invitation

All three African American pastors noted that intentional invitations by Caucasian leadership were key to their leadership success from the beginning. That is, they reported thriving as pastors because the Caucasian leaders deliberately and purposely acted to address racial inequality. Their actions involved intentionally calling minority pastors and submitting to their leadership to change the assumptions and practices of majority culture congregations and create a new congregational culture. These actions were taken in view of racialized patterns in the church and transforming their majority culture congregations to multicultural congregations.

Colin was deliberately called to be the lead pastor of a predominantly Caucasian church. He acknowledged that, even though he was committed to pastoring African Americans, the key to his call and success as a senior pastor was being pursued by an Anglo PCA church that had a specific vision to plant a multiethnic church. Colin said, “They wanted an African American lead pastor, with Ray as associate pastor.” After Ray pursued Colin for two years with the opportunity, he responded to the call. And even though Colin faced numerous challenges, he was aware that the intentionality behind his call as the lead pastor with an Anglo associate pastor who faithfully helped him “navigate” through cultural differences was essential to his leadership and ministry success as a minority pastor.

While Colin was intentionally called as a senior pastor, Evan was intentionally called as a “co-pastor” to equally share the ministry of his majority culture congregation with the Caucasian founding pastor. Throughout his interview, Evan attributed much of his success as a minority pastor to the founding pastor’s pursuit of an equal partnership with an African American pastor. He explained, from the very beginning, “For twenty years, Scott was seeking a partner who was African American and who could be his peer.” It also became the vision of the church leadership. Evan recalled a conversation with a leader who said to him, “We need someone who could take the church if Scott goes on sabbatical and who could run the church. We’re not looking for someone who’s under Scott, we’re looking for someone who’s his equal.” When Evan decided to answer the call, the church called him to be a “co-pastor.” Regarding his call as a co-pastor, he remarked, “That was very, very, very intentional.” The term would establish him as an “equal” to and

not “under” the Anglo pastor. Even though Scott “got a little flack” from other Anglo pastors in his presbytery, nevertheless he used the title because he knew it mattered.

More important than the title of “co-pastor,” Evan reported the role of his Anglo pastor as being crucial to his success. When describing why he believes the partnership has worked well for them, he said that “part of it is personality,” as well as the leadership style. He explained, “Scott is a strong leader but...he tries to sit in the background more and lift others up, so he’s not the man who’s got to have his fingers in everything. And some of that’s just his city experience.” Thus, for Evan, it wasn’t just the title that helped him thrive as a minority pastor in his majority culture congregation for twelve years; it was also the heart and preparedness of the Anglo pastor to submit to his leadership.

Similar to Colin and Evan, Brian was intentionally “invited” by the leaders of his large, predominantly Caucasian church who were prepared to submit to his leadership as the pastor of urban ministries. Brian, who enjoyed his role as the pastor of urban ministries, stated, “And even today when people treat me like a pastor, I’m still blown away by that because my expectation is that, ‘Your culture dictates against this.’ But the reality is, my experience has been just the opposite.” Brian has had some challenges along the way. However, his experience of being treated “like a pastor” is so overwhelmingly positive that he feels “it’s almost impossible” for him to leave the church.

Of the three Korean American pastors interviewed, only Allen mentioned being deliberately called by the leadership as a “co-pastor” of his predominantly Caucasian church. Throughout the interview, Allen reflected on how Tim, the respected seminary

professor and founding pastor, “was very gracious to accept [him] and take [him] under his wings” to mentor and prepare him to become the sole pastor.

On the other hand, Dean reported that, while his senior pastor recruited him with the vision of becoming more ethnically diverse as a church, the elders did not share the senior pastor’s vision. Thus, he was called to fulfill the typical duties of an associate pastor of a traditional PCA church. And in contrast to all other pastors, Franklin himself sought an opportunity to minister in a majority culture congregation without any expectation that his predominantly Caucasian congregation would become a multicultural congregation.

Supportive Leadership and Congregation

The same four pastors who received intentional invitations reported that steady support of the leadership and congregants was essential to their ongoing leadership success. For Allen, the support of his elders involved consistent encouragement and affirmation. He stated that, even when he was “unsure of what to do” or when he “felt very inadequate,” he has “been fortunate and blessed to have constant affirmation in terms of [his] giftedness” in preaching and in counseling. Allen summarized the impact of their support by stating, “I think my elders think well enough of me that they support me, that they speak well of me to the congregation and to the outsiders.”

Allen also attributed his leadership success to the support of his congregation. Their support involved “wholeheartedly” embracing Allen and his wife with love and appreciation. So genuine and authentic was their support, he asserted, “This is probably the first church that I really felt that I belong to, in so many ways, that I felt comfortable,

that I felt a part of.” Simply put, Allen felt respected and appreciated as a competent pastor.

Brian received similar support from his leadership and congregants that made him feel respected as a pastor of his predominantly Caucasian church. Brian reported that having what he called “ambassadors” in his congregation helped him overcome leadership challenges much more quickly. He defined “ambassadors” as influential people who knew him well and spoke well of him to “sponsor” and “recommend” him to others who may doubt him or his abilities. Crucially, their actions backed up their words of support. Brian recounted an incident in which a Caucasian staff member was hesitant to follow him, and even “tried to denigrate” and “degrade” Brian’s leadership. It ended when the staff member was asked to leave. Recalling how the situation ended, Brian stated, “And so when it came to head, this person was so shocked that the church, the session, committees, families, and individuals literally pounced on that person and told him, ‘You can’t do this, you gotta go, and if you come back here, you need to repent.’” So unexpected and reassuring were their supportive words and actions, Brian stated, “It reinforced my commitment to this church.” Having supportive “ambassadors” was vital to Brian overcoming of his leadership challenges as a minority pastor.

Drastic actions weren’t necessary, however, to provide meaningful support for these pastors. Simply taking the time to understand that minority pastors face unique leadership challenges was also essential to their overcoming and success. About his elders, Colin stated, “They all are aware of what I go through because I’ve told them. I’ve shared it in detail, and I continue to share with them what I go through.” Evan also reported that such

support of listening and understanding was instrumental in his success as a minority pastor for twelve years. He stated,

The congregation and leadership are very understanding of some of the difficulties of the cost that an African American in general faces to be part of church like ours...they're very alert to that. I get a lot of feedback, complimentary feedback. Sometimes I scratch my head and say, "Man, I wonder if other pastors get this much compliments about their ministry," because for every one critique, I must get 20-25 "Hey, man, that was really helpful." I don't get a lot of negative.

Because of the unique difficulties and challenges, Evan, like Allen, found ongoing support of affirmation and complimentary feedback to be very meaningful and reassuring. Thus, consistent and steady support of the leadership and congregation was essential to these minority pastors in overcoming their leadership challenges.

Trusted Confidants

Three of the six pastors interviewed specified that having trusted confidants who could relate to their struggles was of great benefit in helping them overcome their unique leadership challenges. On the one hand, Colin regularly shared his struggles with older African American pastors, his African American friends, and "white or black" pastors in the denominations who believe in his work. On the other hand, Dean trusted and leaned on his Caucasian wife to navigate through "a lot of cultural differences." He said, "She helped me understand and discern what was cultural and what was biblical – and that I needed to know because oftentimes they were very confusing." Thus, his wife provided both care and cultural insights.

Crucially, all three pastors acknowledged the value of talking with friends of their own ethnicity and race. They provided "respite" and cultural familiarity without the need to explain or prove anything. Colin stated, "Having people of your own race – and hanging

out and talking and laughing – it’s almost like a Sabbath to go and not have stuff lost in translation.” Similarly, regarding the value of spending time with friends who understood his identity as a Korean American pastor, Frankllin said, “[It was] like an oasis moment for me culturally because it definitely got me a sense of refreshment and a sense of, ‘Ah, yeah, this is very familiar.’ And it was definitely a respite for me.” Thus, sharing and spending time with trusted confidants within and without the church helped these pastors overcome their leadership challenges.

Overcoming Leadership Challenges through Personal Growth and Adaptability

These minority pastors couldn’t rely on the involvement of others alone to help them overcome their leadership challenges. They also needed to personally grow and learn to be adaptable in the majority culture. This being the case, all six pastors also reported that they overcame leadership challenges by growing in their faith in God, by developing leadership skills, and by applying their skills as necessary in the course of dealing with various challenges. Three common themes under this category include times of solitude, use of multicultural skills, and having hard conversations.

Times of Solitude – Prayer, Journaling & Self-Study

Five of the six pastors interviewed reported that times with God were important in dealing with and overcoming their leadership challenges. For example, when asked what he did personally to overcome leadership challenges, Colin reported, “I take a walk almost every night.” He added, “I mean, you know, what you go through – what your mind has to go through up and down just by being a pastor – what your mind goes through crazily being a pastor with all the challenges you have culturally. You just need some quiet with

the Lord. And that's been very helpful – a quiet prayer life.” When Evan was asked the same questions, he simply said, “I tend to just process stuff myself and pray and read scripture.” Brian concurred when he said, “Rather than my confidence being shaken, I go to God.”

Dean saw his leadership challenges as God-given opportunities to deal with and overcome his identity struggles so that he could simply serve as a pastor. Dean said,

I wanted to be sure that my confidence was in God and God alone, and out of that identity, I wanted to serve. Even when I was shaken and I was down about what I was going through, those were opportunities that led me to pray more and grow stronger in my faith in him.

Times with God allowed these pastors to not only process their unique challenges, but also grow in Christ through their challenges.

For Franklin, however, it wasn't just time in prayer that helped him overcome his leadership challenges as a minority pastor. He also spent time in solitude to strengthen his leadership skills through self-study and journaling. Franklin stated, “I did a lot of my own independent reading – a lot of stuff, just more books on leadership, books on self-management, books on productivity.” He added, “I was very vigilant about keeping a journal and just really thinking through some things and just really trying to develop my own system of management, leadership, and administration.” To overcome numerous leadership challenges, these pastors found it necessary to grow in their faith and further develop their leadership skills.

Use of Multicultural Skills - Cultural Intelligence & Emotional Intelligence

All six pastors showed evidence of using multicultural leadership skills of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence to navigate the challenges to their leadership. These

skills allowed the pastors to adapt and work in the majority culture more effectively as minorities in leadership. Cultural intelligence gave the minority pastors the ability to understand and adapt to the practices of majority culture congregations, while emotional intelligence gave the minority pastors the capacity to be confident as pastors and relate to and influence those in the majority culture with empathy and care.

Franklin exemplifies how vital the use of cultural intelligence was to the survival of these minority pastors in majority culture congregations. While he experienced deep internal struggles personally as a minority pastor, Franklin was able to pastor people effectively because of his ability to function in the majority culture. He said, “I have a pretty good skill at assimilating well into Western white culture....I think because I’m able to kind of fit more, behaviorally, psychologically as a Westerner, I didn’t sense they felt any compulsion or recognition to even see if I had this [Korean] side to me – which I did – and therefore it never came up [as an issue].” Given his vast years of life and work experience in five different countries, Brian simply asserted, “You need to develop your cross-cultural intelligence” to minister cross-culturally in majority culture congregations. Cultural intelligence was the key to Brian’s survival and success in his predominantly Caucasian congregation.

However, not all pastors were able to adapt as readily as Franklin or be as skilled as Brian to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. Dean, for instance, needed to continue his development of cultural intelligence, which he began to develop over thirty years ago as a Korean American immigrant. In God’s good providence, Dean had a Caucasian wife who helped him navigate through cultural differences. He said,

“To have a wife who understood the church culture and the people of that church, and was able to understand my own struggles and help me process things in view of the differences in the two cultures was a tremendous benefit to me.”

Similar to Dean, Colin reported that one of things that helped him the most in overcoming leadership challenges as a minority pastor was having Ray, his Caucasian associate pastor, who would be “honest about what was going on culturally.” For instance, Colin was able to ask his associate pastor questions such as, “‘Why don’t they say much when I preach?’ or ‘What does this mean?’ or ‘Why are they so serious about their schedules or their babies going to sleep at this time?’ and ‘Why can’t they take a forty minute or forty-five minute sermon?’ and ‘Why does a song only have to go through once?’” Colin remarked, “It was good to have him navigate that with me for seven and a half years, and that’s been very helpful.” These pastors continued to develop cultural intelligence and learned to overcome challenges to become more effective as pastors.

In addition to the use of cultural intelligence, there were times when these minority pastors needed to rely on their emotional intelligence to overcome their leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. On the one hand, it gave pastors the capacity to lead with self-assurance. Allen’s awareness of his giftedness and ministerial challenges in majority culture congregations, for instance, has allowed him to manage his emotions and shepherd his people with compassion and care, without the struggle of self-worth as a minority pastor. As a result, he has experienced their steady support and appreciation. On the other hand, emotional intelligence allowed minority pastors to resolve difficult situations with patience and face difficult people with grace. Such emotional intelligence

was evident in Brian's leadership repertoire, and it helped him overcome his leadership challenges. When Brian's assistant was frustrated with him for not speaking out against those who undermined his authority and treated him as an incompetent pastor, he told her, "It takes time." He stated that he realized that people who mistreat him "grew up in a secluded community" and "didn't grow up with any African Americans." So instead of being frustrated at those who mistreat him, Brian patiently allows them to get to know him. Confidence in his abilities and understanding of how people are socialized have enabled Brian to thrive as a pastor in his church. Thus, the use of multicultural leadership skills enabled these minority pastors to overcome various leadership challenges and influence their majority culture congregations over time.

Having Hard Conversations

Part of being adaptive in majority culture congregations is having the personal courage to confront difficult issues of racial stereotypes and systemic prejudice. Unlike the Korean American pastors who prefer to overcome their leadership challenges by giving deference to others, the African American pastors engaged in difficult conversations with those who challenged their leadership because of their minority status. For example, Brian reported that, when he experiences being treated as "different" because of his race, he confronts the person who mistreats him. He stated,

My knee-jerk reaction is to become, not defensive, but to retaliate, to deflect things and say, "You really meant that? That's what you just said." – not to argue with them, but to deflect it and maybe have a conversation and use it as a teaching moment. So rather than absorb it and feel a certain way, I quickly deflect it.

The point of such hard conversations is not just confronting others, but using the opportunity as a "teaching moment" to learn from each other. Similarly, Colin reported

that, if he felt uncomfortable about issues that arise because he is a minority pastor or issues dealing with race, he “didn’t mind having hard conversations.”

Importantly, Colin emphasized that these hard conversations need to take place among God’s people to deal with racial stereotypes or prejudice in the church. Colin would tell people who join his church, for instance, “We believe in authentic relationship, and that means if we have cultural differences, we are going to go right at it. This is not Ebony and Ivory; this is not Promise Keepers. This is the church.” Thus, Colin’s approach to overcoming leadership challenges as a minority pastor involved engaging people to have hard conversations with the hope of nurturing authentic relationships and reconciliation in the church.

In summary, these minority pastors overcame their leadership challenges through the involvement of others and through personal growth and adaptability in majority culture congregations. Six common themes were identified as keys to helping the interview subjects overcome their leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. These included intentional invitation, support of Anglo leadership and congregation, trusted confidants, times of solitude, use of multicultural skills, and having hard conversations. Though the pastors honestly discussed what helped them overcome their unique leadership challenges, they seemed more eager to talk about what motivated them to serve as minority pastors.

Motivation to Serve in Majority Culture Congregations

The last research question was designed to discover why minority pastors desire to serve and lead majority culture congregations. The available literature on minority

leadership challenges did not address what motivates minority leaders to overcome personal and systemic leadership challenges and continue to lead in majority culture organizations. What it did address, however, is what may motivate minorities to leave their organizations. The literature noted that minorities often leave organizations that assume minorities assimilate without addressing systemic prejudice and racial bias,⁴⁰² or church organizations that may welcome minorities but continuously marginalize them as inferior and inadequate to lead in the majority culture.⁴⁰³ Thus, the researcher was keenly interested in discovering what motivated these six minority pastors to endure leadership challenges and keep serving in majority culture congregations.

The interviews revealed one overarching reason that motivated these pastors to serve in majority culture congregations, namely, their desire to faithfully pursue God's calling as pastors and Christians. Brian articulated the deep conviction of all six minority pastors when he said, "At the end of the day, there's a uniqueness about what we're doing and the unique God who has called us. He wants to show us some things, he wants to use us for his glory, and that's my excitement." God calls minority pastors to majority culture congregations in order to display the glory of different ethnic groups being united in Christ as they persevere and pastor God's people. As was evident in their personal and systemic leadership challenges, their calling involved difficulties that are unfamiliar to Caucasian PCA pastors. Nonetheless, they pressed on to pursue God's calling.

And in view of God's unique calling upon these minority pastors, the researcher identified five common themes reported by at least two pastors as well as one outlying

⁴⁰² Cox, 12-13.

⁴⁰³ Kim, "Second-Generation Korean American Evangelicals: Ethnic, Multiethnic, or White Campus Ministries?," 31.

theme that delineated specific ways in which the six pastors felt called to pursue God's calling: living out the gospel, shepherding God's flock, being pioneers, preparing future generations, and gaining a more complete ministry experience. These common themes reflected what seemed to be the most pressing and enduring motivations depending on their specific situations and particular roles. Even before specific interview questions pertaining to their motivations were asked, most pastors were eager to share what motivated them to minister even in the face of unique leadership challenges. Without prompting them to share, their particular motivations for overcoming leadership challenges and continuing to serve as minority pastors were expressed and weaved throughout their remarks and reflections. This was true of the pastors who enjoyed various successes in their ministries, as well as those pastors who expressed enduring difficult challenges over the years. They remain convinced that they were doing God's will.

Living Out the Gospel

Two of the six pastors specified living out the gospel as their ongoing motivation for their ministry. That is, they desired to see God uniting people from different ethnicities and race in their congregations through Jesus who destroys the sin of pride. While this may have been the longing for all six pastors, Colin reported that what motivated him to serve as a minority pastor is the impact of the gospel in his church. He stated, "I think CPC has an opportunity to impact with the gospel in a way other churches can, but in a peculiar way because we're multiethnic." Specifically, Colin gave one example of how the gospel has made a unique difference in the lives of people because of the multiethnic nature of his church, namely, mutual submission of people from different races and cultures. He said,

“To say, ‘Wow these people are submitting to each other in a country that the racial lines and issues and problems and socioeconomic divides and political divides are so deep – but look what the Lord has done.’ So every Sunday I can look out at the congregation and say that the Spirit of God is at work.” Colin remarked, “It’s just a joy being there for that.” Even in the midst of ongoing leadership challenges, the joy and blessing of seeing God use the gospel to change racialized patterns and people’s lives keeps Colin enduring as a minority pastor.

In common with other minority pastors interviewed, Allen was compelled to go “outside of the Korean community” to serve as a minority pastor “for the sake of the gospel.” Hoping to “not contribute to the problem” of racial segregation in the church, he wanted to personally live out and model what it looks like for the gospel to “break down walls between people.” Although Allen has not yet seen much fruit of his vision of a multiethnic church because his church was located in a predominantly Anglo neighborhood, he hopes that his example and his teaching will bear fruit in due time.

Shepherding God’s Flock

Three of the six pastors interviewed reported that shepherding God’s flock was the motivation for their ongoing ministry as minority pastors. When Brian was asked about what motivates him to serve as a minority pastor in an all-white church, he simply replied, “Jesus.” He elaborated,

There are times I don’t want to be here - not because of here, but because I want to be elsewhere. And then I remember how good he’s been to me, and I repent, and my gratitude drives me to get up every day and serve him ... He’s gonna bless people, and hopefully he’ll use me to do that ... So that’s my personal philosophy of ministry. That’s what drives me on a daily basis. “Brian, do you love me?” “Yes, I love you, Jesus.” “Feed my sheep.”

Even though Brian, like other pastors, longs to minister within his own culture, he is committed to overcoming challenges and shepherding God's flock with the expectation that God will bless people of all ethnicities through him.

Unlike Brian, who enjoyed steady support and ministry success as a minority pastor, Dean often felt that he was treated like an intern in his predominantly Caucasian congregation. However, Dean also reported that, even when ministry was especially difficult, he was motivated to simply serve as a faithful pastor of God's flock. Dean revealed, "There were times when I questioned, 'I should move on; I should move on to some other church,' because the grass always looks greener on the other side." "But," he continued, "I remember hearing John Piper's sermon about how our job as pastors is simply to prepare people to delight in God forever." He said, "I think at that point [the motivation] became pastoral and not just a desire to be a pioneer, but I...wanted to be a faithful pastor to this particular flock that God had given me."

At times, God provided seasons of sweetness to remind Dean of the joy of shepherding God's flock. He recalled one "special season" when he had the opportunity to serve as the interim pastor with the responsibilities of a solo pastor, "I felt like for the first time, 'I am welcomed as a pastor,' and when they treated me like a pastor, that was great. That was freeing and very rewarding. And it was one of those seasons that will stay with me for a long time – the memories of that season." Regardless of enduring challenges or ongoing success, the desire to simply shepherd God's flock as pastors motivated these minority pastors and sustained them in majority culture congregations. Dean captured the deepest desire for these pastors when he said, "Ultimately, the goal is to just be a pastor. I

don't have to worry about being a minority pastor. I could just simply pastor a church, and hoping that I would get there, I just pressed on and dealt with a lot of the challenges that I faced."

Being Pioneers

Being fully aware that there are very few minority pastors serving in majority culture congregations in the PCA due to influences of racialization, two of the six pastors revealed that being pioneers motivated them to serve in majority culture congregations. Aware of his unique opportunity as a pastor of a large predominantly Caucasian congregation, Brian shared that his desire is to pave the way for future generations of minority pastors and leaders. Brian stated, "I see myself as a pioneer." He continued,

So Neil Armstrong went to the moon. Somebody has got to come into this church, help folk understand folk. I don't welcome the role - at times it gets repetitive - but when you think of the long term, in terms of my son, who's in seminary, and I have a grandson, and future grandson - I'd like people to see them - it's like Martin Luther King's dream that one day black kids, white kids playing together and not necessarily staring at each other. And so if I could reduce the amount of dissonance it brings, that's what keeps me going.

For Brian, what he was doing was life changing - like when "Neil Armstrong went to the moon." Being a pioneer, according to Brian, means to have the privilege to "help folk understand folk." He explained, "I am here to educate. I'm here to make people aware. And I'm here to incarnate the love of God - something that is foreign to them, but once they see it and embrace it, I'm hoping it will help them deal with other people who look like me and people of other races." Simply put, Brian desires to undo the patterns of racialization in the church.

Even though Dean's convictions about breaking racialized patterns in the church were not as pronounced as Brian's, Dean also reported that, despite his leadership challenges, his position as a pioneer motivated him to keep serving. He stated, "I remember having my friends ask me, 'What are you doing there? Why don't you leave there and go somewhere else?' But I felt compelled to keep pressing on and learn as much as I could – learn as much as I can learn in order to be a pioneer." Dean's desire is "to pave the way – in order to eventually become a resource for other pastors." Thus, these pastors view their suffering and overcoming leadership challenges as part of the cost of following Jesus. They are motivated as pioneers to "pave the way" for future Christians and pastors to worship and serve in biblically integrated multiethnic churches.

Preparing Future Generations

Two of the six pastors interviewed reported that their motivation to keep serving as minority pastors in majority culture congregations is the exciting work of preparing future generations of Christians who treasure and establish multiethnic churches to impact racially segregated communities. While Brian and Dean were breaking new ground as pioneers in predominantly Caucasian congregations, Colin and Evan were enjoying the results of their leadership influences in their increasingly diverse congregations. Colin continues to pastor because he realizes the impact of the gospel work in his church upon the next generation. He stated,

And so the next generation, my kids, the kids at [our church], white kids that I've baptized and have grown up over the last seven or eight years, are not going to be afraid of having a non-white leader. And they're going to look at their less diverse churches and say, "What's wrong here?" Or if they go to all-white churches or all-black churches, they're going to challenge some of the thinking. And that to me has been a huge blessing.

By God's grace, even in the midst of ongoing leadership challenges, Colin has begun to experience the reward of his hard labors as a minority senior pastor. He feels richly blessed as he anticipates the next generation of black and white Christians living and sharing life together in Christ by the power of the gospel.

After twelve years of enduring and overcoming leadership challenges, Evan has gone a step further than Colin. Evan "has a new burst of motivation" because of the unique work of his multiethnic church, which God has blessed to grow and multiply in his city. With an enthusiastic laugh, he stated, "So we're thinking about expanding to different sites if we can ever finish our strategic planning process." Multiplying a church that he helped shape and grow in the last twelve years means more than just another site. It is also an opportunity for Evan to equip more leaders who will continue the multiethnic church work that he has had the privilege of growing. Thinking about the work that lies ahead for him, Evan stated, "I'm excited about that....and part of that multi-site vision for me," he shared, "is to raise up and bring in new leadership who can learn from Scott and I - and then we can sit in the rocking chair one day." Having seen what God has done through a group that is committed to being a united multiethnic church, Evan, like Colin, expressed great joy in planning to bless the next generation of leaders who will make a difference in his city. While other pastors are motivated by the hope of experiencing rewards of their hard labors, these pastors are motivated to keep going as their hopes of leading and shaping multiethnic congregations have become a reality.

Gaining A More Complete Ministry Experience

Lastly, in contrast to other minority pastors that were interviewed, Franklin reported that, for him, overcoming leadership challenges and ministering as a minority pastor in a majority culture congregation was about becoming a more mature leader, pastor, and Christian while learning from his unique cross-cultural leadership experiences. He explained,

I do think that God created every culture uniquely, and there are wonderful things about that culture that are good, that really complement well with the weakness of another culture. So for me, I sensed a weakness in Korean Christianity where I saw strengths in white Christianity that I wanted to learn. And so my objective in coming to IPC was not to contribute my Eastern Christian cultural mindset and assumptions to IPC. My mentality is, let me do what I'm very good at, which is assimilate into that culture. Let me learn and grow from those weaknesses....If IPC was interested in seeing how the strengths of Eastern culture could help their weaknesses, I'd be open to that.

Franklin believed that God created different cultures for his people to gain a fuller understanding of the body of Christ. And knowing that he would face leadership challenges as a minority pastor, he was motivated to overcome his challenges to serve and learn with the hope of making a unique difference in the church according to God's will.

In summary, the six minority pastors interviewed were all motivated to pursue God's calling upon their lives. Recognizing that God has given them a unique calling as minority pastors in majority culture congregations of the PCA, they reported living out the gospel, shepherding God's flock, being pioneers, preparing future generations, and gaining a more complete ministry experience as motivations for overcoming leadership challenges and ministering in majority culture congregations. While most pastors were motivated to overcome challenges by the hope of seeing God break forth in gospel power to undo

racialization in the church through their leadership, a few pastors were motivated by actually seeing God use them, despite many years of difficulties, to make a tangible difference to address influences of racialization in their majority culture congregations.

Advice to Pastors

Even though it was not a formal research question, the researcher was able to take this unique opportunity to learn what advice the six pastors would give to future minority pastors and to pastors in general seeking to lead in majority culture congregations. The interview question provided the opportunity for the pastors to reflect on their unique leadership experiences and share the insights they have gained from such a rare ministry. Their advice to minority pastors seeking to lead in majority culture congregations included the following: know yourself, know what you are getting into, have thick skin, have an Anglo confidant, gain cross-cultural ministry experience, realize that it's not a quick thing, and love the people God has placed under your leadership. Their sole advice to Caucasian pastors seeking to work with minority pastors is to submit to minority leadership. Their advice provides further understanding of the deepest values and perspectives on the challenges of minority pastors ministering in majority culture congregations, so the summary of their reflections and reminders follows.

Know Yourself

When asked what advice he would give to minority pastors seeking to serve in majority culture congregations, the first thing Brian mentioned was, "Know yourself. Know your heart buttons. Know your calling." More specifically, he remarked,

Don't pursue it for any other reason than Ephesians 4, to build up the body, to edify the body. Because after a while, you will see the sin in people, the normal sin

that exists in every culture will manifest in your relationship, but the additional sin that a minority pastor will experience is the sin of racism, the sin of pride – it's the center of all of that stuff. And so as pastors, we have to be mindful that we are not there yet, and God has gifted us to the church to educate the church, to edify the church, to build up the body, until the church looks like Jesus Christ.

Brian understands that minority pastors will experience the sin of racism rooted in pride.

Thus, he advises minority pastors to know themselves culturally and spiritually in order to fulfill their unique calling as minority pastors – to educate the church regarding racial sins and to edify the body.

Similarly, Evan's advice to minority pastors is, "Know yourself." Like Brian, Evan emphasized how minority pastors can uniquely contribute to the life of the majority culture congregation. He said,

When you're homogenous, you can only reach your arms out to so many people. But when you're more diverse, your arms get broader, and you're able to reach not just more people, but more different types of people. And so one of the things you've got to figure out is, "What do I bring to the team?" and "What don't I bring to the team?" and "Is what I bring a good match for the team?"....So know yourself, not just your cultural stuff – know your culture and be content with who you are culturally.

Evan is aware that congregations vary in their readiness for multicultural ministry, thus his advice encourages minority pastors to consider not just their own "cultural stuff," but also the preparedness of the team they will join to serve.

Similar to what Brian and Evan advised minority pastors about knowing themselves as God has made them, Franklin's advice to minority pastors was to remember their lasting identity in Christ. He said, "I would tell them, 'Remember, you go back to your theology.' We're defined ultimately not by our ethnicity; we're defined by our relationship with

God.” He added, “We are first and foremost image bearers of God before we’re Korean American, African American, or whatever.”

Know What You’re Getting Into

Franklin, who was fully aware that minorities face leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, said he would advise minority pastors, “Recognize what you’re getting into...have this mindset of just learning, because you can learn from a dominant culture even if the way they dominate is not very Christian.” Though a minority pastor’s point of view may not be recognized or valued, Franklin understands that there is still a great benefit to serving and learning from the majority culture.

Similarly, when asked what advice he would give to minority pastors, Dean replied, “Understand what you are getting into.” He explained,

As a minority pastor, you will face challenges, and it will depend on how prepared the congregation is to have a minority pastor. The difficulty is, no one will know unless they’ve had other minority leaders in that church. Unless they’ve had another Asian pastor or an African American pastor, they’re not going to know what it’s like to work with you. They’re just going to assume you are a pastor and expect you to act like a white pastor, and when you don’t, then you will be criticized; your leadership will be resisted.

Dean’s advice was based on his own experience of facing leadership challenges because of not understanding the environment into which he was entering. Thus, he pointed out the importance of gauging the preparedness of the congregation to have a minority pastor and their experience working with minority pastors to minimize leadership challenges.

Have Thick Skin

Brian expressed, “I am sure there are people who despise me. I’m sure there are people who question my capabilities.” Given his experience, one piece of advice he would

give to minority pastors is to “have thick skin” to endure the challenges of serving in majority culture congregations. Brian stated,

At the end of the day, I’d say to brothers like you and me, “Hey, you’re unique as God has gifted you in your unique role, and like Jesus, you’re one of a kind. Because you’ve come to a very foreign territory to a work that is so radical that it could only work unless the Lord’s in it.” It’s hard work, but somebody has to do it.

Echoing Brian’s point regarding what it takes to do the “hard work” of ministering as minority pastors, Franklin advises minority pastors, “Be willing to develop a little bit of a thick skin.” He reflected on leadership experiences and explained, “One of the things I’ve learned is that as much as the gospel obligates the dominant culture to be loving and sensitive to me, it goes the other way around where I’m called to be forgiving and loving towards them as well.” For Franklin, having “thick skin” isn’t just about being mistreated or misperceived, but also about actively “forgiving and loving” those who are insensitive to cultural assumptions and realities.

Have an Anglo Confidant

When asked what advice he would give to minority pastors hoping to do what he is doing, Colin replied, “Who is their Anglo confidant? What Anglo person loves you and is submitted to you?” He explained why it is important to have an Anglo confidant, saying, “You have to have some so that they can be a mirror to you. Having a mirror held up by someone of the other race in a situation like that – that you trust – is very important, because you will not know who you are or how you’re seen and lose your identity.” Colin gives this advice because it was invaluable for him to have a Caucasian associate pastor and friend who lovingly and honestly helped him deal with cultural differences along the way.

Gain Cross-Cultural Ministry Experience

When asked what advice he would give to Korean American pastors seeking to serve in majority culture congregations, Allen answered,

I would say, “Start attending a non-Korean church right now. Go there to learn and go there to serve. You start practicing in your personal life – the beauty of the gospel to break down walls – the cultural barriers, and if non-Koreans won’t come to Korean churches, then you go be a part of a church where you can live out the gospel.”

Allen believes that Korean American pastors are “culturally conditioned” to respect the elderly and to have an attitude of humility towards others, and they would do well to bless people in a cross-cultural ministry context and also to learn from Anglo congregations.

It’s Not a Quick Thing

In the form of a reminder, Colin offered “another piece of advice” to minority pastors interested in ministering in majority culture congregations: “It is not a quick thing.” He explained,

You won’t have the relational collateral to really make differences in people’s lives until five years. And that’s supposedly true in any kind of church, but how much more true with African American leadership or non-dominant leadership. Not for five years will you know who you are, and who you’ve become, and who they’ve become, and I think after four or five years you’ll know if you’re supposed to stay there or if you need to go.

Colin knows from experience that it takes time for minority pastors to discover what they hold on to for their identity, how they need to change in Christ, and how people in the majority culture congregations in varying degrees change because of their presence and ministry. He advises minority pastors to consider the years it takes to make a difference as minority pastors and to discern whether this is the ministry to which they are called.

Similarly, Dean shared, “I would say, ‘Be patient and persevere – it’s hard work.’”

He remarked,

It takes a long time for the leadership to understand you, for the congregation to understand you and what you are going through. I would say talk to them, share with them and share your struggles....I think part of the problem is, because we are so not used to interacting and living week by week and doing life together with people of different ethnic backgrounds or different race, that we don’t know each other well.

Being aware of how socialization has shaped people’s interactions even in the church, Dean advises minority pastors to take the “long time” necessary to get to know people and allow time for people to get to know them as their pastor.

Love the People God Has Placed Under Your Leadership

When asked if he had any other advice for minority pastors, Dean said,

This advice I give because this was so helpful to me in my ministry as a minority pastor, is, “Love the people that has God has placed under your leadership.” Because at the end of the day, our calling, whether we are serving in the comforts of our own culture or outside of our culture with all kinds of challenges, our calling is still the same, and Jesus calls us to do the same thing, and that is, “Do you truly love me more than these?”

He then added,

I think that’s something that every minority pastor going into this majority culture context needs to think about. You are just going to have to love the people God places with you and not wish that it was more multiethnic, although you know you’re there to see God bring people of diversity there – but day in and day out, your motivation is to love these people that God has given you.

Thus, Dean advises minority pastors to simply be pastors who love their people, regardless of their ethnicity.

Submit to Minority Leadership

Having had only Caucasian interns serve under his leadership in the past eight years, Colin also had advice for Caucasian pastors seeking to pursue a multiethnic ministry.

He said,

When I hear white guys say, “I want to do multiethnic church planting,” what do I do? I always say, “You need to tell me – when you’re able to tell me one or two African American – or whatever group you want to work with – Korean guys – who taught you something about character, faith, and theology, that you’ve submitted to, then you might be ready. But you can’t go having not submitted, or been under, or learned from the group that you think you’re going to minister to and somehow be superman. That won’t – that will come out patronizing, and you’ll be lost.”

Colin fully understands that Caucasian pastors have a different challenge. They have always been in the dominant culture and had a choice not to submit to minorities in leadership. Thus, having had to submit to and learn from Caucasian leaders as preparation for his ministry, he would ask Caucasian pastors to submit and learn from minority pastors.

In summary, the advice these six pastors offered to other minority pastors seeking to serve in majority culture congregations included: know yourself, know what you’re getting into, develop a thick skin, gain cross-cultural ministry experience, remember that it takes time, and love the people God has placed in your leadership. Anglo pastors seeking to do multicultural ministry were advised to submit to minority leadership.

Summary of Findings

This chapter examined what personal and systemic leadership challenges the six minority pastors encountered, how they overcome their leadership challenges, and what motivated them to overcome and serve as minority pastors in majority culture

congregations. The interviews gave these six pastors a rare opportunity to process and articulate in detail their unique experiences as minority pastors in majority culture congregations in the PCA. In addition, the researcher provided the six pastors an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and offer advice to other minority pastors seeking to lead in majority culture congregations. A compare and contrast method was used to analyze the interview data with the four research questions in mind. The next chapter is devoted to consolidating the research from the literature review in chapter two and the pastoral interviews that were compared and contrasted in chapter four, in order to summarize the common themes and conclude the research with implications for both minority pastors and majority culture congregations.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. The assumption behind the study was that, with increasing ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in the United States, more minority pastors will likely serve in what have been traditionally Anglo American congregations. Inevitably, minority pastors who lead and minister in majority culture congregations encounter unique leadership challenges. While there was some literature available on the leadership problems that minorities encounter in majority culture contexts, there was very little literature available that specifically addressed how minority leaders overcome their challenges in majority culture organizations. Only one book on the topic of minority pastors ministering in majority culture congregations was identified as a resource for this research.⁴⁰⁴

There is, however, increased interest in the topic, as well as the inevitability of minority leadership in the institutions established by Anglo Americans. And relevant to this research, there is also a growing awareness for the need for more diverse leadership in the church, as is evident in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) 2010 Strategic Plan.⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, the researcher aimed to discover how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations to raise awareness of minority leadership challenges in the PCA and provide solutions to the challenges. This research is

⁴⁰⁴ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj.

⁴⁰⁵ PCA, *2010 Strategic Plan*.

also relevant to lay leaders and congregants, as the interview analysis confirms the importance of the active support of the Anglo leadership and the congregation.

Four research questions guided the study:

1. What personal leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with personal anxiety?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors struggle with self-confidence?
2. What systemic leadership challenges do minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors recognize being presumed as incompetent by others in their congregations?
 - b. To what extent do minority pastors recognize challenges to their authority by others in their congregations?
3. How do minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?
 - a. To what extent do minority pastors overcome challenges on their own?
 - b. In what ways and to what extent do others play a role in helping minority pastors overcome leadership challenges?
4. What motivates minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations?

First, available literature on minority leadership problems, organizational culture, and multicultural leadership competencies were reviewed to gain insight into these research questions. Then, interviews were conducted with six PCA minority pastors ministering in majority culture congregations. The interviewees included three African American pastors and three Korean American pastors, all of whom had four to twelve years of leadership experience, and all of whom ministered in congregations where the percentage of Caucasians varied from sixty-five percent to ninety-nine percent. Their answers to the four research questions were analyzed and presented in the previous chapter. This chapter brings the data from the literature review together with the findings

of the interviews in order to draw conclusions from the study and make recommendations for minority pastors, Caucasian leaders, and majority culture congregations.

Summary of the Study

In chapter two, the review of literature provided insight into the minority leadership challenges encountered in majority culture organizations. Although the Bible does not directly address this issue, it does point to the problem of human inequality caused by the sin of pride⁴⁰⁶ as the reason behind the leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations. Instead of subduing and ruling over God's creation as equally privileged human beings made in God's image,⁴⁰⁷ people choose to rebel against God by subduing and ruling over each other. This results in human inequality that manifests itself in dominant versus subdominant power struggles.⁴⁰⁸ And even though Christ has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility to undo the sin of human inequality by creating one unified multiethnic church through faith in his grace,⁴⁰⁹ "Christians erect new barriers in place of the old which Christ has demolished."⁴¹⁰ The church is divided by race – thus, it does not experience its maturity as a unified multiethnic church⁴¹¹ and its gospel witness to Christ's glorious work is hindered.⁴¹²

Christian historians have noted that Christianity spread from Western Europe to the rest of the world with the worldview that claimed the superiority of the white race.⁴¹³ In

⁴⁰⁶ Piper, 90.

⁴⁰⁷ Kendagor, 6.

⁴⁰⁸ Ellis, 124-125.

⁴⁰⁹ Ephesians 2:11-22.

⁴¹⁰ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 110.

⁴¹¹ Walls, 76-77.

⁴¹² Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 111-112.

⁴¹³ Neill, 220.

time, this racial pride also plagued the American evangelical church.⁴¹⁴ Emerson and Smith have argued that inequality and power struggles, as evident in racial division and racial hierarchy in the United States, are systemic problems, covertly “embedded in normal operations of institutions” and “invisible to most Whites.”⁴¹⁵ Crucially, they point out that “people need not intend their actions to contribute to racial division or inequality for their actions to be so” because “racialization is embedded within the normal, everyday operation of institutions” and social structures.⁴¹⁶ They conclude that the American evangelical church is plagued by racialization, which further complicates the problem for minorities. Inequality between the white majority and ethnic minorities continues in the church because it systemically depends on racial “homogeneity” and “marketing principles” for its “strength and growth.”⁴¹⁷ Because there is a lack of intentional and meaningful interaction between whites and minorities in the church, ethnic minorities experience inequality and power struggles. This is the context within which minority pastors serve in majority culture congregations.

With the backdrop of this pervasive environment of racialization, Waters has argued that minority leaders face systemic leadership challenges of presumed incompetence and resistance to their leadership because of widespread acceptance of racial stereotypes, prejudice, and bias in majority culture organizations.⁴¹⁸ As minority leaders encounter these systemic leadership challenges and perceptions of being “weak”⁴¹⁹ or “inadequate”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ Sweeney, 108.

⁴¹⁵ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 9.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 168.

⁴¹⁸ Waters, 17-19.

⁴¹⁹ Morrison, 34-35.

⁴²⁰ Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*, 213.

as leaders, they experience personal anxiety and feel the need to prove themselves.⁴²¹ Indeed, even in the church, Lyght et al. have revealed, “Sadly, minorities and ethnic minorities are often saddled with offensive stereotypes that negatively affect their ministry.”⁴²² As a result, minority pastors in majority culture congregations experience personal anxiety and lack of self-confidence: “Self-doubt and lack of confidence haunt them, and they often become depressed and withdrawn.”⁴²³

The interviews in this study revealed that minority pastors in the PCA experience personal and systemic leadership challenges in their majority culture congregations. Their personal leadership challenges included struggling with cultural identity, dealing with presumed incompetence, being self-confident, and handling cultural differences that affect their pastoral leadership. Their systemic leadership challenges included being presumed incompetent, being undermined as pastors because they are minorities, and dominant culture assumptions that devalue minority culture perspectives and values.

All six pastors, however, have overcome their leadership challenges over time. They relied on the involvement of others as well as their own leadership skills to navigate through personal and systemic challenges. Intentional invitation, supportive leadership and congregation, trusted confidants, use of multicultural leadership skills, having hard conversations, and times of solitude in prayer, journaling, and self-study were identified as factors that have helped the interviewees overcome their leadership challenges. Some of them even thrived as pastors because of the preparedness of the Caucasian leaders and congregants to submit to and learn from their leadership.

⁴²¹ Waters, 19.

⁴²² Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 55.

⁴²³ Ibid.

In addition, the interviews revealed the motivation for these minority pastors to overcome their leadership challenges and serve in majority culture congregations. The research subjects were motivated by the opportunity to live out the gospel of ethnic unity, faithfulness to God's call to shepherd his flock, pioneering for other minority pastors, preparing future generations of multicultural Christians, and gaining a more complete ministry and Christian experience in a majority culture congregation to enrich the body of Christ.

Finally, the interviews also allowed the pastors to reflect on their unique leadership experiences and offer advice to other minority pastors seeking to minister in similar situations. All of them shared insights gained from the most important lessons they had learned: know yourself, know what you're getting into, develop a thick skin, gain cross-cultural ministry experience, remember that it takes time, and love the people God has placed under your leadership. For Anglo pastors seeking to do multicultural ministry, the only advice offered was that they submit to minority leadership.

This study has shown that although minority pastors encounter personal and systemic leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, they overcome their challenges by growing in multicultural leadership competencies, sharing with trusted confidants, and having intentional support of Anglo leadership and congregations. The experiences of the six pastors interviewed revealed two underlying issues that make the leadership challenges of minority pastors in majority culture congregations especially difficult. The first of these is a general lack of cultural intelligence. Anglo leaders and congregants lack the ability to understand why minority pastors struggle in their

congregations due to cultural differences or how racialized patterns in the church affect the leadership of minority pastors. The second foundational issue is the general assumption that the dominant culture's perspectives and practices are correct. This assumption results in the inability of Anglo leaders and congregants to distinguish well between biblical principles and cultural assumptions. Dominant culture assumptions, in fact, reveal how the existence of racialized patterns in the church directly impact minority pastors. Yet, even with these issues that complicate their ministry, minority pastors can overcome their leadership challenges when they are motivated by God's grace to be faithful as pastors, to pave the way as pioneers, and to prepare future generations of multicultural Christians. Ultimately, this study has shown that simply being accepted and appreciated as competent pastors gives minority pastors the deepest satisfaction and the greatest source of strength to keep pastoring in majority culture congregations.

Discussion of Findings

The struggle faced by minority pastors overcoming leadership challenges is a complex issue. This was my first discovery as a researcher of this study. When I began my research, I initially thought the issue was about leadership competence and cultural differences. As I began to read more literature, however, I discovered that underneath these two issues, there are ongoing underlying problems of systemic prejudice,⁴²⁴ the church's careless acceptance of and heavy reliance upon racial and ethnic homogeneity for church growth and sustenance,⁴²⁵ and powerful influences of racialization in the church

⁴²⁴ Morrison, 33-34.

⁴²⁵ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 168.

rooted in the American evangelical church's involvement with racism,⁴²⁶ and unresolved consequences stemming from church history as evident in segregation of congregations by race and ethnicity in the twenty-first century. This also led to the discovery of literature that discussed how the church has become something other than what God intends it to be, namely, a unified multiethnic church comprised of equally privileged people⁴²⁷ as his solution to sinful pride between people groups.⁴²⁸ These were eye-opening and heart-breaking discoveries. Many tears were shed and prayers offered up as I discovered how the church has existed for so long with all these complexities and realities undermining the power of the gospel, which is meant to be displayed clearly through the witness of the church in a sinful and broken American society.

Thus, understanding how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges involves more than understanding the leadership competence of minority pastors and the challenges created by cultural differences. It also requires an understanding of the complex interactions between minority pastors and majority culture leadership and congregations, as well as their assumptions and practices that are shaped by pervasive influences of racialization in the broader American society. Arguably, the lack of understanding of the reality of such complexity between the interactions within the church and influences of racialization without the church has made the leadership challenges of minority pastors an invisible issue to most Caucasian pastors. They may view the struggles of minority pastors in majority culture congregations as merely a dynamic between leadership competence and cultural differences. This study has revealed that such thinking is naïve. The literature and

⁴²⁶ Sweeney, 108.

⁴²⁷ Walls, 76-77.

⁴²⁸ Emerson and others, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, 184.

the interviews amply show that racialization is alive and well in the life of majority culture congregations.⁴²⁹ To deny this reality is to deny that the enemy is still working to systemically undermine the work of Christ in the church. Minority pastors suffer, in large part, because of ongoing systemic prejudice and racial bias, which are racialized patterns that are systematized or institutionalized in the American evangelical church.

However, this study has also shown that there is great hope for minority pastors leading in majority culture congregations. The interviews revealed that there are Caucasian pastors, lay leaders, and congregants who understand that deliberate actions must be taken to reverse racialized patterns of marginalizing minorities and to reestablish the equality of pastors regardless of race or ethnicity. God richly rewarded their actions by transforming their lives and congregations to display the power of the gospel, with great potential for multiplying many multiracial congregations to impact their racialized cities. And even in the absence of such intentional actions by Caucasian leadership to undo the influences of racialization, God was present with the minority pastors. He provided the means of grace to endure and overcome difficult leadership challenges in majority culture congregations to fulfill his purpose.

With these important discoveries in mind, I offer eight conclusions to the study of how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations: racism and influences of racialization must be addressed in the church in order to be in step with the gospel and provide equality to minority pastors; the gospel of Christ is the only solution to racism and influences of racialization that affect minority pastors in the church; minority pastors struggle with cultural identity because of cultural differences

⁴²⁹ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 104.

maintained by racialization in the church; minority pastors sense a burden to prove themselves as competent pastors because of dominant culture assumptions; organizational culture directly affects the survival and success of minority pastors in majority culture congregations; humble and courageous Caucasian pastors and leaders are necessary to address racialized patterns of leadership in majority culture congregations; lay leaders and congregants play a key role in the success of minority pastors; and God calls minority pastors to fulfill his purpose through the church. These eight conclusions will be discussed in view of the literature reviewed and interview findings.

Racism and influences of racialization must be addressed in the church in order to be in step with the gospel and provide minority pastors equality as pastors.

This study of how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations is ultimately an issue of how they overcome the challenges of institutionalized racism and racialized patterns in majority culture congregations. Thus, it was important to understand their leadership challenges in view of this overarching issue of inequality based on race. The literature on minority leadership challenges plainly noted the existence of leadership barriers for minorities embedded in ordinary day-to-day operations⁴³⁰ because of systemic racial prejudice and bias in organizations that privilege whites.⁴³¹ The FGCC report, in particular, was blunt about what perpetuates these systemic barriers for minorities in leadership, namely, white leaders and managers in powerful positions fear loss of control and opportunity to minorities.⁴³² Authors have argued that unless organizations intentionally address racial bias, prejudice, and systemic stereotypes to

⁴³⁰ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 9.

⁴³¹ Connerley and Pedersen, 35.

⁴³² FGCC, 31.

cultivate a multicultural environment,⁴³³ success of minority leaders may not be attainable or sustainable.⁴³⁴

It would be to our shame that Christians, of all people, and churches, of all the organizations in our society, do not candidly discuss, repent of, and address the reality of racism and racialized patterns in the church in view of the gospel. Stott laments, “It is simply impossible, with any shred of Christian integrity, to go on proclaiming that Jesus by his cross has abolished the old divisions and created a single new humanity of love, while at the same time we are contradicting our message by tolerating racial or social or other barriers within our church fellowship.”⁴³⁵

Thankfully, some Christian authors and pastors have raised the issue in the literature reviewed. The denominational leaders of UMC frankly expose and address the reality of racism in the church and challenge their leaders and pastors to deal with it head on in local congregations by questioning their Anglo-centric assumptions and practices.⁴³⁶ Kim and Um, both Korean American PCA pastors, have raised the awareness of leadership challenges for Asian American pastors in majority culture congregations because their leadership style of deference is often misperceived as a weakness.⁴³⁷ The interviewees also have raised their concerns regarding deep underlying issues of inequality and dominant culture assumptions rooted in racialization of minorities.

To its credit, the PCA has responded to its involvement in racism by publically confessing and repenting of its pride, complacency, and complicity in its past history of

⁴³³ Connerley and Pedersen, 84.

⁴³⁴ Cox, 12.

⁴³⁵ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 111.

⁴³⁶ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 103.

⁴³⁷ Starke.

oppression and racism.⁴³⁸ However, a public apology for past actions is not enough. Ellis reminds us, “There is a lot of talk today about reconciliation. But, if we ignore the dominant/sub-dominant dynamics, we will never bridge the gap.”⁴³⁹ Thus, true repentance requires turning away from the same old patterns and turning toward the new patterns outlined by Christ. Caucasian Christian leaders, in particular, “must work to transform the sociocultural systems that perpetuate racism”⁴⁴⁰ because they have the social power and influences that minorities lack⁴⁴¹ in the dominant culture. This means the PCA must actively combat system-wide racialized patterns of segregation and embrace biblical patterns of integration by the power of the Holy Spirit. For instance, while the PCA has welcomed African Americans and Korean Americans under its broad umbrella, these ministries are still segregated ministries in the predominantly Anglo PCA. I do not believe this reflects the biblical pattern of unity and mutual submission.⁴⁴²

The PCA’s structural arrangement of “racially homogenous ingroups” may, in fact, continue to “contribute to segregated social networks and identities” and “generally fragment and drown out religious prophetic voices calling for an end to racialization.”⁴⁴³ More importantly, such a “divided by race” structural arrangement is an issue because of the kind of “divided by race” ethos it perpetuates among its pastors and congregations. It does not move the organization toward an environment of mutual submission and learning

⁴³⁸ PCA, “PCA Position Papers: Racial Reconciliation”.

⁴³⁹ Ellis, 130.

⁴⁴⁰ Hiebert, 108.

⁴⁴¹ As Tim Keller emphasized during *Race and the Christian* Q&A, March 28, 2012.

⁴⁴² Ephesians 2:15-16.

⁴⁴³ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 168.

necessary to challenge dominant culture assumptions and embrace minority culture values and perspectives.

On the surface, it may give an appearance of some unity, but the interview findings have revealed that there is a serious lack of appreciation for and integration of the values and perspectives of minority pastors. Minority pastors were treated as inadequate and incompetent pastors, and their views were subdued and ruled over⁴⁴⁴ by dominant culture assumptions and practices. One African American pastor described his experiences at his presbytery meetings by revealing, “When I talk, no one’s really listening ... ‘Oh, it’s the black guy talking, that’s great’ – and that’s it.” We expect this kind of marginalization outside the church, but not where the grace of Christ that breaks down walls reigns.

True repentance requires these racialized patterns be addressed. The PCA must consider how all of its ethnic ministries may be fully integrated in the life of the Anglo PCA to display true biblical unity in a racialized society. Such an integrated structural arrangement would also cultivate an environment and ethos of mutual submission and learning as God’s equally privileged people. Given the systemic nature of the leadership challenges and the patterns of racialization in majority culture organizations, these intentional actions and arrangements are necessary to provide minority pastors equality in view of the gospel.

⁴⁴⁴ Kendagor, 6.

The gospel of Christ is the only solution to racism and influences of racialization that affect minority pastors in the church.

The literature on human equality emphasized that Christ has already done the hard work of reconciliation and restoring human equality destroyed by the fall.⁴⁴⁵ Christ died for our rebellion and rose again to make us right with God. Christ has also destroyed the wall of hostility. “Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody. Christ brought us together through his death on the cross.”⁴⁴⁶ Our work now is to apply his work. We can humbly yet freely confess our pride, admit our failures and fears, and discuss without shame how we all have contributed to the problem of racism and racialization in the church. The interviewees felt uniquely called by God to carry out this particular work of the gospel and display its power.

In the end, no government policies on diversity or denominational policies on multiculturalism will remove the pride and fear that leads to racialization in our hearts or racialized patterns in our churches.⁴⁴⁷ Only our reliance on the work of Christ, love of the gospel, and repentance of our attitudes, prejudices, and practices will lead us toward reconciliation and commitment to a united multiethnic church of equally privileged people. The solution – “the key to killing pride and living in humility” – is God’s grace in “the cross of Jesus.”⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 101-102.

⁴⁴⁶ *The Message*, Ephesians 2:15-16.

⁴⁴⁷ Piper, 90.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

In varying degrees, all six minorities pastors expressed their hope in the gospel and its power to transform people and organizations. While Allen modeled its power as a Korean American pastor of his predominantly Caucasian congregation, Colin and Evan have witnessed lives change and their increasingly diverse congregations begin to erase racialized patterns of prejudice and segregation. In the process, they formed a new culture of gospel unity and mutual submission, such that segregated congregations seem simply “wrong” in view of the gospel that breakdown walls of racism and ethnocentrism. It is hard, complex work⁴⁴⁹ that requires years of overcoming challenges. But these pastors can testify to the power of the gospel to change hearts and impact their racialized churches and cities for the sake of Christ.

Minority pastors struggle with cultural identity because of cultural differences maintained by racialization in the church.

The literature on minority leadership problems emphasized that minorities in leadership positions struggle with personal anxiety because they are treated as incompetent.⁴⁵⁰ This was certainly a factor for the six pastors. However, even though the literature scarcely addressed the issue, the interviewees revealed that cultural differences were much more of an issue in their personal struggles with identity, loneliness, and cultural isolation. Even though they have a common faith in Christ, Colin struggled with his identity and felt alone because he was ministering in “parallel universes” as an African American pastor. Even though he was in the same Christian fellowship, Franklin felt like “the lonely Kryptonian on earth” as a Korean American pastor of his predominantly

⁴⁴⁹ Emerson and others, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, 180.

⁴⁵⁰ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 55.

Caucasian congregation. Different expressions of faith in musical styles, preaching styles, interactions of congregants during worship, as well as the casual mannerisms heightened their struggle with cultural identity and isolation.

Crucially, their struggles remind us that the power of racialization must be not underestimated. That is, some of the cultural differences are sustained by influences of racialization in the church. Emerson and Smith simply state, “In fact, these structural forces [of segregated congregations] often regenerate the very conditions the positive actions work to eliminate.”⁴⁵¹ Because most Christians in America worship in segregated congregations, their religious expressions and impulses also reflect habits and practices that are formed primarily in racially segregated groups.⁴⁵² While this may be viewed as “just fine” among Christians having freedom of expression in Christ, such a view fails to recognize how racially segregated Christianity leads to slavery to our particular religious heritage or cultural familiarity as our primary identity instead of our lasting identity in Christ. That is, we find meaning, significance, and contentedness in being white Christians, black Christians, or yellow Christians instead of being Christians who consider all things worthless compared to knowing Christ together.⁴⁵³ Congregations divided by race, however, go against Christ’s design for his church: “Christ’s desire is not Asian-Americans here and Latinos there, Afro-Americans here and Anglo-Americans somewhere else, but rather that we may be brought to complete unity.”⁴⁵⁴ Simply, racialized patterns of and reliance upon homogeneity and segmented markets undermine the common identity

⁴⁵¹ Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 168.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Barrs, 18.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

of all believers in Christ and intensify the sense of cultural isolation and loneliness in minority pastors.

Socialization also plays a key role in why minority pastors struggle with a sense of loneliness. Because most Christians are socialized within racially segregated congregations, we lack respectful and meaningful interactions with people from different cultures.⁴⁵⁵ More pertinent to this study, the interviews revealed that, because most Caucasian Christians in majority culture congregations of the PCA were not socialized under the leadership and teaching of minority pastors in a meaningful way, they treated minority pastors with less respect, viewed them as incompetent, and undermined their authority and expertise. These experiences stemming from socialization in segregated congregations also heightened a sense of loneliness for minority pastors in majority culture congregations. This is not to say that Caucasian pastors do not struggle with a sense of loneliness in the ministry. But, unlike minority pastors' struggles with cultural isolation, the Caucasian pastors' racial identity is not a factor because they are within the comforts of their own dominant culture.

Moving forward, however, there is hope for change. Colin, who often felt alone as a minority pastor and struggled with a weekly identity crisis, celebrates the joy of seeing a generation of black and white children learning and growing as Christians under his non-white leadership. "And they're going to look at their less diverse churches and say, 'What's wrong here?'" Or if they go to all-white churches or all-black churches, they're going to challenge some of the thinking." Such intentional undoing of racialization and renewal of socialization in the church will not only impact future minority pastors and congregations, but also the Christian witness in racialized cities and the broader American society.

⁴⁵⁵ Brislin, 2-3.

Minority pastors sense a burden to prove themselves as competent pastors because of dominant culture assumptions.

The literature on systemic leadership challenges emphasized that minority leaders face the potential for presumed incompetence and resistance to their authority because of their inferior status.⁴⁵⁶ It also noted that because of these two systemic challenges, minorities feel a burden to prove themselves to be legitimate, qualified, competent leaders.⁴⁵⁷ While being presumed as incompetent leaders and resistance to their authority were common themes for the participants, they seemed to think that dominant culture assumptions were much more of a problem, leading them to feel the burden to prove themselves as leaders. This issue was raised by Burns when he emphasized that Caucasian pastors who hope to lead in a multicultural environment “must recognize dominant cultural perspectives and the tendency to assume that these are correct.”⁴⁵⁸ In fact, the interviewees identified dominant culture assumptions to be a major underlying systemic component to their leadership challenges. Specifically, the participants felt the burden to prove themselves by assimilating to the dominant culture view of leadership because they were misperceived as inadequate leaders from the dominant culture point of view.

Dominant culture assumptions perpetuate two major problems for minority pastors and majority culture congregations. First, dominant culture assumptions sustain inequality. Regarding the assumption that minorities assimilate to the majority culture, Franklin bluntly said, “They don’t recognize there is inequality.” Dominant culture assumptions are a problem because they are the unchallengeable standard that measures other perspectives,

⁴⁵⁶ Waters, 17-18.

⁴⁵⁷ Lyght, Dharmaraj, and Dharmaraj, 57.

⁴⁵⁸ Burns, *Pastors Summit: Sustaining Fruitful Ministry*, 30.

values, or ways of life. This was evident in the interview findings. Some minority pastors, for instance, were viewed as weak leaders because they didn't display the qualities of alpha white male leadership. Thus, dominant culture assumptions pose a serious problem by disregarding or devaluing the unique identities and qualities of minority pastors and by viewing minority pastors as inadequate, inappropriate, inferior, or wrong. Under this domination, minorities felt the burden to prove themselves and assimilate.

Second, dominant culture assumptions perpetuate a lack of cultural intelligence among Caucasian pastors and congregants. That is, because minorities are expected to assimilate to the dominant way of life, Caucasians are dissuaded from developing cultural intelligence by learning from minority cultures, perspectives, and values. Indeed, the interviews revealed that minority pastors were often misperceived as weak leaders, or their preaching styles were deemed ineffective or inappropriate in their congregations because Caucasians lacked "the ability to understand, acknowledge, and appreciate current contextual forces"⁴⁵⁹ and cultural differences. Further, their efforts to explain their cultural points of view or biblical basis for their practices were also frustrated by the inability of Caucasian pastors to carefully discern biblical principles and cultural nuances. Such interactions burdened the participants to prove themselves as competent pastors. Therefore, unless dominant culture assumptions and practices in majority culture congregations are addressed, minority pastors will continue to face similar systemic leadership challenges.

Caucasian pastors serving in majority culture congregations may also face challenges of presumed incompetence. However, the color of their skin is not likely to be

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 29.

an issue. They don't have to prove themselves because of presumed incompetence based on race. It is a unique challenge for minorities.

Organizational culture directly affects the survival and the success of minority pastors in majority culture congregations.

The literature on organizational culture stressed that for minority leaders to effectively lead organizations, the organizational culture must welcome, support, and submit to them, fostering a culture of mutual learning.⁴⁶⁰ This study has shown that majority culture congregations that cultivated an environment of equality and mutual submission gave minority pastors opportunities to thrive. In fact, whether the research participants merely survived or successfully thrived as minority pastors depended in large part on the cultures of the congregations. Congregations that deliberately acted to minimize the "toxic and deadly" forces of racial bias, prejudice, and stereotypes to create a multicultural environment⁴⁶¹ gave the minority pastors an opportunity to thrive. But congregations that merely expected their minority pastors to assimilate and perform traditional duties within the existing system of dominant culture assumptions and practices made it challenging for them to even survive. Thus, the cultivation of a multicultural environment proved to be an indispensable factor in how minority pastors overcame leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. It clearly validated Connerly and Pedersen's claim: "In order to move toward cultural competence, organizations must alter

⁴⁶⁰ Kim, "Second-Generation Korean American Evangelicals: Ethnic, Multiethnic, or White Campus Ministries?," 31.

⁴⁶¹ Cox, 12-13.

the power relations to minimize structural discrimination. This may involve including minorities in decision-making positions and sharing power with them.”⁴⁶²

The interview data revealed that intentional invitation was key to creating a healthy environment for minority pastors. That is, in view of racialized patterns in the church, majority culture congregations became healthy environments for minority pastors through deliberate and purposeful acts of placing minority pastors in positions of authority and influence equal to Caucasian pastors. One congregation intentionally pursued an African American pastor to be a senior pastor. Two congregations deliberated called their minority pastors as “co-pastors.” Caucasian leaders and congregants willingly submitted to their leadership. Such intentionality was crucial for two reasons. First, an intentional invitation was necessary to systemically change the dominant culture-centric way of life in majority culture congregations. Second, it reversed and redefined the inferior status of minority pastors and brought them from the margins to the center.⁴⁶³ Simply, these intentional invitations began to undo racial inequality and the culture of white privilege. Interviewees who were not as fortunate to work in such a healthy environment repeatedly reported facing leadership challenges throughout their years. Therefore, for minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges and thrive in majority culture congregations, a multicultural environment that minimizes systemic prejudice and racial bias is absolutely essential.

⁴⁶² Connerley and Pedersen, 84.

⁴⁶³ Howell, 294.

Humble and courageous Caucasian pastors and leaders are necessary to address racialized patterns of leadership in majority culture congregations.

Because of the enormous challenge of breaking and changing entrenched patterns in a racialized society, the literature on restoring human equality noted that bold and brave leadership is necessary to establish authentic, reconciled, multiethnic congregations⁴⁶⁴ in which minorities are treated as equally privileged people.⁴⁶⁵ The interviewees attested to the validity of the claim that, “Courageous and visionary leadership among both clergy and laity is essential and a necessary ingredient for success.”⁴⁶⁶ Indeed, the minority pastors who received intentional invitations readily gave credit to their Caucasian pastors and lay leadership for their success. In a large predominantly Anglo American denomination, these Caucasian pastors and lay leaders went out of their way to provide equality and prepare a pathway for the minority pastors to succeed. With a vision to create a new congregational culture, they sacrificially and gladly submitted to the leadership and teaching of the minority pastors. They respected and appreciated what their African American or Korean American pastors brought to their majority culture congregations to enrich their lives and teach the gospel in fuller, meaningful ways.⁴⁶⁷ And their actions were rewarded⁴⁶⁸ with a generation of Christians who now see segregated Christianity as wrong, and with a new generation of multiracial leaders who are eager to multiply gospel-displaying multiethnic congregations to transform their racialized cities.

⁴⁶⁴ Emerson and others, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, 180.

⁴⁶⁵ “Racial Discrimination” in *English Standard Version Study Bible*, 2557.

⁴⁶⁶ Emerson and others, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, 180.

⁴⁶⁷ Walls, 76-77.

⁴⁶⁸ Connerley and Pedersen, 80.

In many ways, the Caucasian pastors and elders who risked their reputations and had the courage to change the culture of their majority culture congregations are the unsung heroes of my research. They made a tangible difference for the sake of the gospel. They showed true biblical humility. One Caucasian pastor, viewing his African American friend as more significant, submitted himself to his leadership and willingly became an associate pastor. Two respected Caucasian pastors laid down their white privilege and equally shared their pulpits and ministries as co-pastors. Many Caucasian elders respected their minor pastors as they would respect their Caucasian pastors. In a racialized society, they modeled for their congregants what it looks like to integrate and value others for their God-given uniqueness. They were simply Christ-like. Through their humble and courageous leadership, they changed racialized patterns in the church to provide gospel-displaying equality and unity in the body of Christ.

Lay leaders and congregants play a key role in the success of minority pastors.

The literature on organizational culture also underlined the importance of a supportive system⁴⁶⁹ to create an environment that allows minority leaders and their subordinates to cooperate to achieve their organizational goals more effectively.⁴⁷⁰ The interviewees indicated that constant encouragement, sincerity of love and acceptance, and positive feedback from their Caucasian elders and congregants played a significant role in helping them to overcome their leadership challenges and thrive. While instances of negative criticism became flashpoints for cultural identity crises, affirming compliments increased their self-confidence and deepened their loyalty to majority culture

⁴⁶⁹ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 163.

⁴⁷⁰ Connerley and Pedersen, 84.

congregations. One participant wondered whether Caucasian pastors get as much positive feedback as he does. Another participant acknowledged that the overwhelming support he receives makes it “almost impossible” for him to leave his ninety-nine percent Caucasian congregation.

Consistent encouragement and support is important to any pastor, regardless of race or ethnicity. However, ongoing support of affirmation, positive feedback, and genuine respect by Caucasian leaders and congregants make minority pastors feel like real pastors and not like incompetent interns. It makes them feel fully human and equally privileged as God’s people. One participant was surprised by the treatment he receives on a weekly basis. He expected to be racialized just like he had been in society, but his church proved him wrong. That is the difference that Caucasian leaders and congregants make to minority pastors. Minorities are often treated as different, inferior, and less in a racialized society. But kind and sincere words and actions of ordinary Caucasian leaders and congregants can restore their humanity and heal their souls from the effects of racial sins. Thus, the support of Caucasian lay leaders and congregants can show that the gospel does make a difference in reversing racialized patterns of marginalizing minorities in society.

God calls minority pastors to fulfill his purpose through the church.

Lastly, the literature on restoring human equality highlighted that God’s plan was for Christ to reconcile sinful human beings to himself and to destroy the dividing wall of hostility between people groups through the cross.⁴⁷¹ Specifically, it noted that God’s plan for dealing with the sin of racism and abolishing ethnocentrism⁴⁷² is the creation of a single

⁴⁷¹ Ephesians 2:11-22.

⁴⁷² Fong, 75.

new humanity⁴⁷³ through multiracial congregations in the power of the gospel.⁴⁷⁴ The interviews revealed that this theme of God's plan to deal with racial inequality through multiracial congregations was a compelling motivation for them to minister in majority culture congregations. They felt uniquely called by God to fulfill his purpose of reconciling people torn apart by racial sins, pioneering with the hope of establishing multiracial congregations, or ministering cross-culturally to grow and enrich the body of Christ.

Many pastors in the PCA – and in other denominations – might strongly disagree with Emerson's claim that "multiracial congregations are God's plan for responding to racism."⁴⁷⁵ "All we need to do," they may argue, "is to preach the gospel, and God will bring people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures to our churches." However, this study has revealed that such reasoning is flawed. I have come to believe that such reasoning is used by pastors to justify their churches' existence in a racialized society. This is not to deny the sovereignty of God. Having sovereign authority, Jesus clearly commands his servants to go and make disciples of all ethnic people.⁴⁷⁶ It was not enough for the first century Jewish Christians to merely preach the gospel in Jerusalem. Because of the existing separatism⁴⁷⁷ and hostility,⁴⁷⁸ they had to deal with their ethnocentrism in view of the gospel⁴⁷⁹ and intentionally go to the Gentiles as ministers of reconciliation.⁴⁸⁰ Lest the "privileged" Jews and the "inferior" Gentiles miss the point and establish separate

⁴⁷³ Waltke, 220.

⁴⁷⁴ Emerson and others, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, 184.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Matthew 28:19-20.

⁴⁷⁷ Fong, 73.

⁴⁷⁸ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 91.

⁴⁷⁹ Acts 10:9-16, Acts 15:1-31, and Galatians 2:11-14.

⁴⁸⁰ Acts 11:19-28:31.

churches, Paul reminded them that God's plan is for them to be a unified multiethnic church.⁴⁸¹

Many churches, and certainly PCA churches, preach the gospel faithfully, yet they remain racially homogenous and segregated because of the forces of racialization in our society. Thus, the logic of "we preach the gospel and they will come" is also very naïve. It underestimates the powerful and pervasive forces of racialization that remain at the level of social systems, institutions, and structures within our congregations and denominations.⁴⁸² There must be an intentional invitation that reverses racial status and redefines power dynamics. Multiracial churches do not just happen. It requires intentionality to undo the forces of racialization. And God calls pastors to pursue his plan to undo the forces of racialization in his church by his power. Accordingly, Ellis prays, "May God give us the grace to disciple the nations by demonstrating the true meaning of ethnicity rather than imitating the world within ethnic power struggles, marginalization, and oppression."⁴⁸³

God called these minority pastors, interrupting their preferred cultural ways of life and sending them to unlikely places, in order to carry out his plan to unite people who are divided by inequality and racial sins. Not all congregations were ready to receive them. Not all minority pastors were aware of the challenges that they inevitably faced. But he called them nonetheless and provided his sufficient grace to survive, and even to thrive for his glory and the joy of all ethnic peoples.

⁴⁸¹ Ephesians 2:11-22.

⁴⁸² Priest, "Sharing the Gospel in a Racially Segregated Society," 127.

⁴⁸³ Ellis, 141.

Summary of Findings

This study has shown that the issue of how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations is a complex systemic problem. It involves understanding the interactions between minority pastors, Caucasian leaders and congregants, and dominant culture assumptions and practices within the church, as well as the pervasive influences of racialization without the church. The interviews revealed that racialized patterns in the church cannot be ignored or underestimated. They played a significant role in the leadership challenges of the minority pastors. The dynamics inside the church are interrelated with and interdependent on racialized patterns outside the church that inevitably and systemically influence people's views, assumptions, and identities.

In view of the complexities, minority pastors experience personal and systemic leadership challenges. While there is a correlation between these two categories of challenges, basic distinctions can also be made. Minority pastors encounter personal leadership challenges in majority culture congregations because of their cultural identity. They struggle with how to be true to themselves away from their own culture, and they feel pressure to prove themselves as leaders. Minority pastors also encounter systemic leadership challenges because of the assumptions and perspectives of the dominant majority culture. They are presumed to be incompetent by virtue of having a minority status, and thus their authority is undermined or resisted. However, this study has also shown that minority pastors can overcome their challenges and even thrive as pastors when they receive an intentional invitation by the Caucasian leadership of their congregations.

Without such an intentional invitation, they can survive, but it is nearly impossible for them to thrive because they do not have the necessary reversing of status and redefining of power in the leadership to be successful. Regardless of the preparedness of the congregations, God calls and motivates minority pastors to serve in majority culture congregations to fulfill his purpose to undo racism and inequality through the power of the gospel.

Recommendations for Practice

The leadership challenges that minority pastors encounter in majority culture congregations present a systemic problem that requires an adaptive solution. These pastors encounter leadership challenges because of the cross-cultural nature of their work, the dominant culture assumptions of the Caucasian leadership, their lack of social power as minorities in a racialized society, and the unpreparedness of pastors and church leaders to address racialized patterns and engage in multicultural leadership. For minority pastors to overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations, all four aspects must be addressed. Therefore, in light of the findings and the advice of the six minority pastors interviewed, the researcher will make the following recommendations for minority pastors, Caucasian leaders, and majority culture congregations.

Minority Pastors

Minority pastors ministering in majority culture congregations experience personal leadership challenges of identity crisis and cultural isolation. They struggle with who and how they are supposed to be in the dominant majority culture, and they experience a sense of loneliness. Although the extent to which minority pastors struggle with cultural

differences may vary, the research findings indicate that cultural differences do lead to these personal struggles. The solution to this may involve figuring out how to be authentic as African Americans or Korean Americans and still be effective in pastoring Caucasians. Intentionally gaining cross-cultural leadership experience prior to their particular pastoral calling is essential, as it may significantly minimize their personal struggles in majority culture congregations. Some may need to deal with how Caucasians treat them casually and address them only by their first names. In severe cases, it may involve dealing with the pressure to prove themselves as legitimate and competent leaders. Ultimately, minority pastors will have sufficient grace for their personal struggles when they find their identity, not in their culture, but in Christ. After all, they are who they are by the grace of God. Jesus willingly faced marginalization and rejection in order to glorify God and bring them to the center of God's presence. What is more, he called them to serve him as minority pastors by his grace. He will not abandon them. When such grace overwhelms them and shapes their identity, they will be able to genuinely love and serve their congregations. And this grace will guard their hearts from using their ministries to prove their worth as minority pastors.

Minority pastors also encounter systemic challenges. Caucasian leaders and congregants may treat them as incompetent because they are viewed as weak or inadequate leaders from their dominant culture point of view. This may lead to people not respecting them as leaders or resisting their leadership. The findings of this research indicated that the nature and severity of their systemic challenges largely depended on the preparedness of the Caucasian leadership to work with minority pastors to establish a multicultural

environment. Those who understand the impact of racialization in the American evangelical church will likely be more sensitive to the struggles of minority pastors, and they will intentionally address racialized patterns and inequality in the church. Even so, whether they are intentionally invited or uninvited, minority pastors with cultural intelligence will be able to work with those who lack the ability to distinguish the difference between what is cultural and what is biblical. Having cultural intelligence will also enable them to work in an environment that may give little to no priority to multiculturalism or may expect them to assimilate to the dominant way of life. Asian American pastors, in particular, will benefit greatly by learning from African American pastors about having “hard conversations” regarding racial prejudice or dominant culture perspectives with their leaders and congregants, instead of struggling in silence.

Lastly, the findings have shown that minority pastors will find having trusted confidants who understand them and care for them to be invaluable to their ministry in majority culture congregations. Even the pastors who thrived benefited greatly from spending time with friends of the same culture. All six pastors had caring people in their congregations who listened to their struggles. Processing these struggles with trusted friends provided much needed refreshment and respite for their uniquely difficult ministry. If possible, it will be a tremendous asset for minority pastors to have “ambassadors” such as elders or influential members of the church who will speak well of them to their critics.

Caucasian Leaders

The findings of this research indicate that the support of Caucasian pastors and elders is crucial to the success of minority pastors who minister in their congregations. For

the interviewees in this study, the intentional invitations that reversed status and redefined power relations determined whether minority pastors survived or thrived. The impact of their deliberate and purposeful actions in undoing racialized patterns and inequality in the church must not be underestimated. This is because Caucasian leaders have the social power that minorities lack in the dominant culture to make an immediate and lasting difference. Their courageous leadership set the tone and created a model for how the rest of the congregation treated minority pastors as equals and submitted to their leadership, as they would to any respected Caucasian pastor. Some pastors denied their “white privilege” and willingly served as “co-pastors.” One Caucasian pastor even had the humility to lovingly submit as an associate pastor to an African American senior pastor. However, when Caucasian leaders insisted that their dominant culture practices and perspectives were the standard of what was right and appropriate for pastoral leadership and ministry, minority pastors suffered numerous personal and systemic leadership challenges.

In view of these findings, Caucasian leaders will make an immeasurable difference to minority pastors when they deliberately act to undo inequality, support their leadership, and make careful distinctions between cultural differences and biblical principles. When they are given the opportunity to serve with minority pastors, it is vital that they do what they can to have equal status and establish a shared-power relationship for their ministry to be fruitful and successful. This may involve changing their titles and equally dividing their leadership and preaching-teaching ministry. It may involve gladly serving under the leadership of a minority pastor to model what it looks like to be God’s equally privileged people for the next generation of Christians. Such sacrificial acts of intentional invitation

may be humbling – even humiliating – for Caucasian pastors. But, it will demonstrate to the church and to the unbelieving community the power of the gospel that redeems us from the sin of pride.

Caucasian leaders will also remove huge and often painful barriers for minority pastors by actively coming to the aid of minority pastors when they are treated as incompetent or when their leadership is questioned or undermined. Their active support will communicate to the congregants that minority pastors are to be treated with dignity and respect. Their authentic actions will also communicate to minority pastors that they are truly valued and appreciated as genuine leaders of the church.

Lastly, Caucasian leaders will be able to relate and work more closely with minority pastors when they learn to make careful distinctions between what is cultural and what is biblical. Without making careful distinctions, they will misunderstand minority pastors who intentionally exhibit humble leadership as being weak because of their cultural tendency to value “alpha white male” leadership. Unless they make careful distinctions, they will mistake minority pastors who preach Christ with passion as being inappropriate or ineffective because of their cultural preference to be reserved. From their minority pastors, Caucasian pastors will gain new perspective to see weaknesses in the dominant culture practices and perspectives in light of biblical truths. As they learn to appreciate minority cultural practices and perspectives, they will find many to be equally valid and appropriate for enriching the lives of majority culture congregants.

Majority Culture Congregations

Finally, the findings have revealed that ongoing congregational support is essential to cultivating a thriving environment for minority pastors. “Positive groups help people make positive changes, particularly if the relationships are filled with candor, trust, and psychological safety. For leaders, such safety may be crucial for authentic learning to occur.”⁴⁸⁴ Without exception, pastors who experienced the least amount of personal and systemic leadership challenges had congregants who welcomed, appreciated, trusted, and respected them simply as their pastors. And yet, certain cultural differences and the congregants’ insensitivity to cultural differences made them feel less respected as pastors.

In view of the findings, it is strongly recommended that majority culture congregations find ways to actively support their minority pastors and to develop cultural intelligence to support them in a culturally appropriate manner. Caucasian congregants will greatly encourage minority pastors when they give complimentary feedback much more often than negative comments. It will be the difference between treating them as a competent pastor versus treating them as an incompetent intern. And in the process, they will reverse racialized patterns of marginalizing minorities often experienced outside the church.

Caucasian congregants can also express their appreciation of minority pastors by learning how to show them respect in culturally meaningful ways. Caucasians may view being casual or friendly to a pastor as a virtue, but that is not the case for African Americans or Asian Americans. When minority pastors are properly respected as pastors, they will feel close and loyal to their congregants. While it may be culturally awkward and

⁴⁸⁴ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 163.

unnatural for Caucasians, showing proper respect to their minority pastors will also teach them what it must be like for their minority pastor to love and serve them cross-culturally.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research sought to explore how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations. While it was thoroughly researched as a topic, it was fairly narrow in its scope to understand specific leadership challenges of African American and Korean American pastors in the PCA. Thus, several areas for further study are recommended.

Due to limited availability of time and resources, only issues dealing with African Americans and Asian Americans were reviewed, and only African Americans and Korean American pastors in the PCA were interviewed. Further study is needed to explore the leadership challenges of Hispanic pastors ministering in the PCA. The leadership experiences and challenges of Hispanic pastors need to be compared to and contrasted with the findings of this study to provide a more complete picture of how minority pastors overcome leadership challenges in majority culture congregations.

While this study focused on the leadership challenges faced by minority pastors in majority culture congregations, another potential area of research is what leadership challenges Caucasian pastors encounter when they intentionally minister with minority pastors. Such research would provide a deeper understanding of the leadership dynamics between the pastors, as well as what Caucasian pastors need to understand when they work with minority pastors. It would also provide insight to minority pastors seeking to minister with Caucasian pastors.

Experiences of congregations that are under the leadership of minority pastors is another area of research. What motivated them to call a minority pastor? What did they do to prepare to work with a minority pastor? What did they learn about being under the leadership of a minority pastor? How have their lives and churches been enriched by the ministry of their minority pastors? Answers to such questions should provide practical insights as to how a majority culture congregation can prepare to be under the leadership of a minority pastor.

Finally, research is needed to discover what seminaries are doing to prepare their students to minister in a multiethnic society. To deal with racialization and dominant culture assumptions, seminaries need to address “long-established reading, teaching, research and writing patterns oriented toward a white/Euro-American world”⁴⁸⁵ and re-orient them to train all pastors to think more critically about cultural assumptions, lead with multicultural awareness, and preach the gospel with greater clarity in a pluralistic and diverse American culture. Understanding how seminaries prepare their students may provide clues to why very few pastors establish multiethnic congregations or minister as a multiethnic team of pastors for the sake of the gospel.

⁴⁸⁵ Priest and Nieves, "Introduction," 4.

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