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LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

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LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to identify the salient leadership practices of successful interim pastors in The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada (The Fellowship). To accomplish this purpose, three research questions were developed to guide the direction of this research project. A multiple case study methodology was used. Eighteen active or recently active interim pastors from The Fellowship were interviewed using an open-ended question methodology. Twelve of the interviews were conducted using a face-to-face format. Six interim pastors were interviewed by telephone. All participants had served in two or more interim pastoral positions.

Participants were initially contacted by telephone and electronic mail. They were subsequently provided with the interview questions and an informed consent form. The interim pastors then chose the time and place of their interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. Coded transcriptions yielded leadership practice categories. These aggregated categories were summarized into ten leadership practice themes: appraisal, resolution, communication, ministry, revitalization, realignment, direction, management, leadership, and self awareness. These results were discussed in terms of limitations and implications for future research.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving and always supportive wife, Esther,
To my wonderful daughter, Rachael,
And to the glory of God

"One generation shall commend your works to another,
And shall declare your mighty acts."

(Psalm 145:4)

Acknowledgements

He who has taken upon himself the work of a dissertation at this level would readily admit that in many ways it is a solitary journey. There are many lonely nights and months in which the researcher is shut in with his thoughts, theories, and data. Yet in reality, the journey is far from isolated. There are others who travel the road with him. I gratefully acknowledge those who have invaluably supported me through this journey.

First, I want to thank my dissertation chairperson, Dr. Lori Robertson, for her continuous encouragement and wisdom throughout this process. She has foreseen the difficulties and rendered perceptive counsel at many points along the way. Her joyful assistance and timely comments have proven invaluable. Second, I want to acknowledge the valued insights, creativity, and perspectives of the director of the Ph.D. in Leadership Program at Tennessee Temple University, Dr. Andrew T. Alexson. His humorous and sagacious observations lightened my task in many respects. I count it a great privilege to know both of these individuals as teachers and friends.

Third, I thank my dear wife, Esther. I would not have begun this study without her direction. She has been an unfaltering source of strength, encouragement, and acceptance throughout these years of Ph.D. studies and this final dissertation challenge. Her sacrifice and loving support has truly reflected the mind of Christ every step of the way.

Most importantly I thank my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). This study is about his work by his servants in his church for his glory. I thankfully acknowledge the Lord's gracious provision and enablement throughout the varied aspects of this research project.

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing." (Revelation 5:12)

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Leadership is crucial to the success, growth, and change of organizations. Effective leaders must excel in "picking other leaders, setting the strategic direction, and conducting operations."[1] Organizationally, "leadership defines what the future looks like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen."[2] Consequently, when leaders perform well in their practice of leadership, their direct reports recognize "that significant changes are not only imperative, but achievable."[3] The organization advances, the internal atmosphere is positive, and the key stakeholders receive adequate return on their investment. Effective leaders see the changing external landscape and reconfigure their organizations to meet the changes and resulting challenges. To remain competitive, effective leaders "continually monitor the changes in the environment and review the current and probable future organization-environment fit."[4] But what happens to organizations when leadership itself changes?

The change of leadership in any organization can be a challenging period; the former leader of the organization leaves resulting in a directional and visionary vacuum. Admittedly, "leadership transitions are a fact of our organizational lives.

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[1] Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, *Execution, The Discipline of Getting Things Done,* (New York, Crown Business, 2002), p.24.

[2] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change,* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), p.25.

[3] Daryl, R. Conner, *Managing At The Speed Of Change,* (New York: Villard Book, 1993), p. 9.

[4] Bruce E. Winston and Kathleen Patterson, "An Integrative Definition of Leadership," *International Journal Of Leadership Studies,* 1, no. 2, (2006): 29, http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/ijls/new/vol4iss2/IJLS_v4Is2_Bebb.pdf (accessed May, 2010).

The average length of tenure for a CIO is between four and five years."[5] However,

for some organizations, the existence of a leadership pipeline enables the organization

to progress through its leadership turnover. These organizations intentionally

mandate that "several levels of management hierarchy exist through which

individuals may ascend."[6] Unfortunately, leadership pipelines are not the norm in

most organizational contexts; "the framing and naming of developing a leadership

pipeline for the future is an unnatural act for the vast majority of companies who not

only wait too long, but then do a poor job of framing the future."[7] Consequently, for

many organizations, including governmental and non-profits, the change of leadership

is a taxing time.

　　　The above, troubling scenario can be particularly challenging for churches

when their leadership changes. While "transitions may be difficult for pastors, it is

the churches that seem to suffer the most."[8] Consequently, whether in corporate or

ecclesiastical contexts, it is at this critical juncture in an organization's history that

interim leadership may prove invaluable. For corporate, governmental, and non-

profit organizations, temporary leadership may include an acting chairperson, CEO,

or interim manager. In fact, in the latter decades of the twentieth century, there

appeared a specialized group of businesses focusing on providing interim executives

[5] Marylu Goodyear and Cynthia Golden, "Leadership Transitions: Keys for Success," *EDUCAUSE Quarterly,* Vol.31, no.1 January-March (2008): 52-54 http://www.work911.com/cgi-bin/leadership/jump.cgi?ID=10431 (accessed June, 2010)..

[6] Sheri S. Bebb, "The Structure of Role Transition: A Phenomenological Study of Successful Executives from Five Countries," *International Journal Of Leadership Studies,* Vol. 4, Iss. 2, (2009):224, http://www.regent.edu?acad/global/publications/ijls/new/vol4iss2/IJLS_v4Is2_Bebb.pdf (accessed May, 2010).

[7] Noel M. Tichy and Warren Bennis, *Judgement How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls.* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007), p.124.

[8] Rob Green, "Passing The Baton: A Theological and Practical Look At Pastoral Turnover," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology*, (Spring 2006): 54.

for temporary positions in industry, commerce, and government organizations. Their rise in popularity and profitability as a niche market segment has evidenced their value to the corporate community; "the IM sector has grown steadily over the past c. 15 years to about one billion pounds a year in fees and there are now over 10000 interim executives active in the UK, some operating internationally."[9]   Interim management, though a relatively recent phenomenon, has acquired recognized value to the corporate sector.

In the case of local churches, the practice of interim ministry has a much longer history and value to the Christian community. Throughout its history the church in North America has required the services of interim pastors. In many early scenarios the interims may well have been lay pastors from within the congregations or from nearby churches. For instance, early Canadian Baptists record that "the churches established by them were necessarily weak, and for many years required much encouragement and assistance."[10]

More recently, the transitional focus has shifted to retired pastors and professional interims. For many contemporary denominations, "proven experiences in congregational leadership as well as specific gifts for this particular ministry also are priority considerations."[11] Today, when the transitional period requires the leadership of an interim pastor, leaderless congregations will simply contact their state or provincial denominational offices to secure a list of potential interim pastoral

[9] John Bridges, "Interim Management: A Concept," *CEOWORLD Magazine* (October, 2008) http://ceoworld.biz/ceo/2008/10/23/interim-management-a-concept (accessed May, 2010).

[10] E.R. Fitch, *The Baptists Of Canada*, (Toronto: The Standard Publishing Company, 1911), p.86.

[11] The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, *The Intentional Interim Ministry Program of the Pacific Southwest District The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod,* (February 2008): 10 http://www.psd-lcms.org/interim_ministry/guidelines.pdf (accessed June, 2010).

candidates who might fill their ministry void. Resultantly, because of the repeated

and necessary nature of this process, many denominations now maintain transitional

ministry departments and personnel whose responsibilities include the careful

alignment of church transitional needs with listings of prospective interim

candidates.[12]   Additionally, several para-church organizations also train and supply

transitional ministers for a variety of denominational contexts.[13] Interestingly, in the

case of denominational lists, such interim directories include transitional pastors who

have had extensive interim experience and others whose interim experience has been

comparatively limited and brief. It is evident that not every transitional ministry

assignment is equally successful. Some interim pastors are in continual demand,

while others cease ministry after their first interim assignment. Some have

reputations for interim excellence, while others struggle.

Why do some transitional pastors enjoy continued ministry while others do

not? Why are there differing levels of ministry success in various interim contexts?

Admittedly, some of the outcomes may be attributable to the nature and structure of

the church or to other non-ascertainable factors. For instance, some congregations are

known as clergy killers, and "unless the clergy killer narrative is transformed, no

amount of transitional ministry will be helpful or of value."[14] However, could there

also be identifiable transitional leadership practices that accompany effective interim

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[12] Denominations which maintain interim ministry departments include The Lutheran Church of America, PCOA, The Mennonite Church of America, The United Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church of America, and The Southern Baptist Convention.
[13] Some of the better known organizations focusing on interim ministry are The Alban Institute, The Center for Congregational Health, The Interim Ministry Network, and Outreach Canada.
[14] Molly Dale Smith and Loren Mead, *Transitional Ministry: A Time of Opportunity*. (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, n.d.) p. 86
http://books.google.ca/books?id=SXlHHr3ZzTYC&pg=PA168&dq=transitional+ministry&sources. (accessed June 2010).

ministries? Could certain identifiable practices contribute to successful transitional

leadership? The following study will address this interim leadership practice issue.

The Value of the Study

Pastoral leadership in American and Canadian churches is changing. Long

tenure pastorates have become less common. In fact, "surveys of pastors across

America indicate the average tenure of a pastor to be 3.8 years."[15] On average, every

four years local churches will face a transitional period requiring some form of

interim pastoral ministry. This frequency of transitional ministry in the lifespan of a

local church is significant. Transitional pastors face the repeated demands of caring

for leaderless flocks.

A second complicating aspect of this scenario relates to the length of the

interim itself. While on average, senior pastors move every four years, the length of

the interim period may last from six to sixteen months or longer. For some Baptist

groups the "interim process typically takes approximately 12 to 18 months from the

decision of the congregation to begin intentional interim ministry until the calling of

the next pastor."[16] The Central Canadian District of the Christian and Missionary

Alliance states that their process is a "(6 to 12 months) holistic strategy for

maximizing the opportunity of transition."[17] Undoubtedly, interim lengths will vary

from church to church. However, the potential length of time is noteworthy. The

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[15] Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), p.146.
[16] Baptist General Convention of Texas, *What is Intentional Interim Ministry,* (Baptist General
Convention of Texas, 2005), p.3 http://www.bgct.org/texasbaptists/Page.aspx?pid=822&srcid=255
(accessed June, 2010). The Arkansas Baptist Convention states the same time frame.
[17] Central Canadian District of the C&MA, *Intentional interim Ministry,* (Christian and Missionary
Alliance) http://www.cmaccd.com/files/IntentionalTransitionalMinistry_458.doc (accessed May,
2010).

local church is under the care of a transitional pastor for up to, in some cases, twenty percent of its ministry life. In these situations, twenty percent of all leadership, outreach, worship, discipleship, training, management, administration, and education are under the jurisdiction of an interim pastor.

A third aspect of the interim picture relates to the context of pastoral movement itself. The rationale for pastoral movement impacts the nature of the interim period. Pastors leave for varied reasons. Many move to follow the Lord's leading to a new church. Some leave to assume a new ministry role. However, a significant number of pastors are facing forced terminations or pastoral burnout. Some researchers estimate that "one in four pastors experiences a forced termination from the pastorate in America's evangelical churches."[18] Such forced terminations "affect both pastors and their families."[19] However, the effects also include the local church. One study showed that "the church left behind also paid the price. Approximately 10 percent of the congregation left the church as a result of the pastor's forced departure."[20] Externally, many forced exits result in "the community coming to know the church as a place of power struggles, fighting, and discontentment."[21] Those who choose to stay in the church after a forced exit suffer the loss of a shepherd, many of their friends, as well as embarrassment in the community. Consequently, in these cases, the interim pastor faces a grieving and embittered congregation.

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[18] D. Scott Barfoot, Bruce E. Winston, and Charles Wickman, "Forced Pastoral Exits: An Exploratory Study," (Pastor in Residence Ministry). http://www.pastorinresidence.org/newsletter/SurveyPIR.pdf (accessed May, 2010).

[19] John C. LaRue, "Forced Exits," *Christianity Today,* April 14, 2009. http://www.christianitytoday.com/ycmore/specialreport/6y6064.html (accessed April, 2010)..

[20] LaRue, 'Forced Exits," April 14, 2009.

[21] Jerry D. Hall, "A Multi-Case Study Of Clergy Termination," (Ph.D. diss., Regent University, 2004), p.20.

In the case of pastoral burnout, the interim issues can be equally challenging. One study has concluded that "the pastor's burnout level is about as high as the level among human service professionals and highly educated persons."[22] One author states, "The stark statistics reveal that pastors are leaving the ministry in epidemic proportions."[23] However, the issue has significance beyond the trauma to the pastor and his immediate family. Certainly for the hurting pastor the cost is extensive both financially and emotionally. However, for a church congregation, the loss of a pastor due to burnout or depression can often result in self-deprecation, factional tendencies, and power struggles. In short the "pastor leaves and the congregation is left to pick up the pieces."[24] In this context, the interim pastor has a challenge identifying and addressing the varied negative reactions.

A fourth aspect of the transitional landscape involves change. New pastors are never identical to former ones. They often have an agenda for growth and change. However, the congregation may not hold that same agenda. It is this aspect of ministry to which a transitional pastor may "be positive and constructive so that the church will actually gain momentum and productivity."[25] Interim pastors can actually begin to refocus the congregation on its primary functions, and because they are temporary shepherds, they can often do what an incoming senior pastor could not. This function can be particularly true of intentional transitional ministry practices as

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[22] Welko Tomic, David M. Tomic, and Will J. G. Evers, "A Question of Burnout Among Reformed Church Ministers in The Netherlands," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 7, no. 3, (2004): 231. http://dspace.ou.nl/bitstream/1820/1225/1/A%20QUESTION%20BURNOUT%AMONG%20REFOR MED%MINISTRY%20IN%20THE%NETHERLANDS.pdf (accessed May, 2010).

[23] Daniel Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church, Diffusing Pastoral Burnout,* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1999), p.10.

[24] H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors At Greater Risk.*(Ventura, CA: Regal Books2003), p.57.

[25] Mark Platt, "Church and Pastoral Transitions," (Stockton, CA: Next Generation Churches, n.d.) http://www.nextgenchurches.com/pdf/ChurchAndPastoralTransitions.pdf (accessed June, 2010).

"significant studies of hundreds of congregations over the past twenty five years are now showing that the interim between pastors can be an important time in congregational life."[26]

The frequency of interim ministries, the length of transitional pastoral assignments, the unique needs of congregations during the interim period, and the challenges of the change process indicate the salient nature and importance of temporary shepherds. Consequently, because of the varied needs and challenges associated with this unique form of pastoral ministry, it is crucial that one examine the practices of those who successfully navigate the transitional pastoral process. Identifying the practices of such pastors can prove valuable to those who would engage in transitional ministry. Consequently, this study is valuable to furthering the understanding of interim pastoral leadership practices.

Statement of the Problem

The transitional period between senior pastors is a difficult time for most churches. The loss of a pastor can elicit a range of reactions "that may include trauma or elevated levels of conflict."[27] Transitional ministry is particularly helpful "after long term pastorates, after abrupt terminations, where parish histories reflect substantial stress, where there is conflict, and where there is a large staff."[28] However, with the varied congregational settings, the ministry of a temporary

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[26] Arkansas Baptist State Convention, *Intentional Interim Ministry* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 2009):1
http://absc.org/website/17/Files/Helps%20INTENTIONAL%INTERIM%MINISTRY%20 (accessed May, 2010).
[27] The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Interim Ministry Policy, Procedures, and Resources,* (Toronto: The Book Room, 2001), p.2.
[28] The Office for Transitional Ministry of the Episcopal Church, *Interim Ministries Book 1,* (New York: National Association of Episcopal Interim Ministry Specialists, 2007), p.3.

shepherd is uniquely challenging. Those who excel must exercise particular skill sets, behaviors, and practices that augment their individual pastoral assignments. The precise identification of those practices is needful to others who would succeed in this singularly difficult exercise in pastoral ministry. In order to ascertain what leadership practices may be inherent in successful interim ministry, it is necessary to initiate an analysis of practicing transitional pastors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify significant leadership practices evidenced in actively serving and former successful interim pastors. As will be seen in the literature review, certain experience levels, specialized training, and skills are considered necessary for those who would successfully exercise transitional positions. However, this study seeks to discover common leadership practices present in successful transitional pastoral ministries. The study is guided by the following questions:

Question One: What leadership practices are evidenced by the successful interim pastors examined in this study?

Question Two: To what extent are common leadership practices evidenced across the sample of interim pastors identified in this study?

Question Three: What factors influence, and in what ways, the identified leadership practices of these transitional pastors in their interim settings?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In their classic work, *The Leadership Challenge,* Kouzes and Posner assert that "leaders exhibit certain distinct practices, which vary little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community, and country to country."[29] They identify the "Five Leadership Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire the Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Acts, and Encourage the Heart."[30] Within these five practices they also identify ten behavioral commitments that "serve as a guide for our discussion of how leaders get things done."[31] Their thesis summarizes their more than twenty fives years of research into leadership practice. However, their analysis is relatively recent in the field of leadership studies.

Research into leadership theory and practice is both extensive and wide-ranging. A cursory "review of the scholarly studies on leadership shows that there are a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the complexities of the leadership process (e.g., Antonikis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004; Bass, 1990; Bryman, 1992; Gardner, 1990; Hickman, 1998; Mumford, 2006; Rost, 1991)."[32] Leadership has been viewed "as a trait or as a behavior, whereas others view leadership from an information processing perspective or from a relational standpoint."[33] In fact, "in the past 60 years, as many as 65 different classification

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[29] James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The leadership Challenge,* (San Francisco: John Lilley and Sons, Inc., 2007), p.xiii.
[30] Kouzes and Posner, p.14.
[31] Kouzes and Posner, p.25.
[32] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), p.1.
[33] Northouse, p.1.

systems have developed to define the dimensions of leadership (Fleishman et al.,

1991)."[34] Consequently, the practice of leadership may be viewed from a variety of

disciplines and perspectives including behavioral psychology, team dynamics, ethics,

cultural studies, business, education, ministry, and economic theory. Resultantly, this

author will limit his literature review to the practice of leadership in terms of three

primary areas: business, education, and ministry. The review surveys leadership

practices in the above-mentioned fields in terms of permanent and interim positions.

<u>Business Leadership</u>

Much of the early research into leadership theory and practice focused on

business management, worker motivation, and leader-follower relationships. In his

overview of leadership literature, Peter J. Whitley traced the study of leadership in

business from "its beginnings in managerial theory with the classical view of

management."[35] He traced the development of leadership theory from the more

transactional approach to leader-worker interaction and productivity through "the

realization that leadership involved the motivation of followers, the behaviors of

leaders, the interactions between leaders and followers, the situation at the time, and

the nature of the environment (Slater, 1955, McGregor 1960, Schein, 1969)."[36]

While no review of leadership theory is exhaustive, "in order to more

effectively understand these various theories, it is useful to classify them into

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[34] Northouse, p.2.
[35] Peter J. Whitley, "The Leadership of Entrepreneurialism in Technical and Further Education
Colleges," (DBA diss., Curtin University of Technology, 2004), p.41.
[36] Whitley, 44.

groups."[37] Vickie L. Wisdom suggests following Yukl's typology as "a useful

starting point for discussion by suggesting that approaches to leadership research and

theories could be organized into the following categories: (a) trait, (b) behavioral, (c)

power-influence, (d) situational, (e) integrative."[38] This review will examine some of

the above theories as well as a few others not mentioned.

Trait Theory

Trait theory in its simplest form focuses solely on the leader. It emphasizes

her personality, perceived strengths, values, skills, and identifiable leadership traits

implying that "individuals with certain traits are more likely to be leaders."[39] Often

personality and aptitude inventories have been used for an individual to access

whether she has the necessary traits required to be an effective leader. Regularly,

"physical characteristics, aspects of personality, and aptitudes were studied, and often

these traits were deemed essential for identification of leadership behavior."[40]

Decades of research by varied researchers in trait theory have yielded several lists of

identifiable characteristics and traits that could be associated with leadership.

Northouse, in citing French and Raven's research from their work, *The Bases of

Social Power,* presents five different lists from four different researchers.*[41]* However,

each researcher has identified differing traits. No two lists are identical. Yet in

comparing the lists one may simplify the overlapping traits to "include intelligence,

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[37] Vickie L. Wisdom, "Understanding The Demands and Constraints of Department Heads in Higher Education Based on the Perceptions of Deans, Faculty, and Department Heads." (EdD diss., University of Missouri, 2007), p.17.
[38] Wisdom, p.17.
[39] Jackie Lynn Smith, "A Study of the Leadership Styles and Beliefs of Students at Athens State University." (EdD diss., University of Alabama, 2009), p.11
[40] Wisdom, p.17.
[41] Northouse, p.18.

self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability."[42] Trait theorists would

assume that the greater number of traits a leader possesses, the more effective her

leadership performance should be. However, there are some challenges to the trait

theory of leadership

The primary challenge to early trait theory was its subjective nature. In fact,

"the methodologies of the early trait researchers chiefly involved observation rather

than measurement (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1998)."[43] As well, trait theories tended to

emphasize the leader at the expense of the follower, "neglected situational

determinants of leadership success (Yukl, 1981), and were unable to decipher the

connection between a particular trait and effectiveness (Fisher, Tack, & Wheeler,

1988)."[44]

Trait theory as an early form of research into leadership was later combined

with situational leadership research to form "a combination theory. The promise of

the combination theory was that effective leaders not only needed correct traits, they

also needed to apply them appropriately in the proper situation (Marriner)."[45]

Ultimately, trait theory was eclipsed by leadership research in the later part of the

twentieth century. However, as an interpretive form of leadership practice it remains

"in a principal position in leadership theory at the start of the 21rst century."[46]

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[42] Northouse, p.18.
[43] Tongshan Chang, "Leadership Styles of Department Chairs and Faculty Utilization of Instructional Technology," (EdD diss., West Virginia University, 204), p.19.
[44] Chang, p.20.
[45] Stephen Wayne Gardner, "Analytic Hierarchy Analysis of Leadership Skills in Education as Rated by Selected Education, Community, and Business Members in Northwest Florida," (EdD diss., The University of West Florida, 2005), p.15.
[46] Gardner, p.16.

Behavioral Theory

While trait theory approached the study of leadership from the perspective of the leader's personality, skills, and abilities, researchers in the mid twentieth century began to investigate another aspect of leadership, the behavioral approach. Behavioral theory contrasted with trait theory in that it "expanded the study of leadership to include the actions of leaders toward subordinates in various contexts."[47] In essence, "this approach tends to identify what leaders do rather than what traits they possess (Taylor, 1994)."[48] The classic Ohio State behavioral studies analyzed "how individuals acted when they were leading a group or organization."[49] From the results of these studies, "two positive patterns of behavior (Dill & Fullagar, 1987; Schermerhorn, 1997; Yukl, 1998) emerged: consideration or relationship-oriented (friendliness, consultation, and openness of communication with subordinates) and structure-initiating or task oriented (directing and clarifying subordinates' roles, problem solving, or criticizing poor work)."[50]

The two patterns that emerged from Ohio State behavioral research were seen as separate or distinct. For instance, a leader might be high in task orientation and low in consideration. In essence, the two behaviors were viewed as unrelated. However, later research suggested that "leaders should concentrate on both dimensions (Daresh, 2001; Palestini, 1999)."[51]

At nearly the same time as the Ohio State studies, a group of researchers at the University of Michigan were also studying leadership behavior. From their research,

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[47] Northouse, p.69.
[48] Chang, p.21.
[49] Northouse, p.70.
[50] Chang, p.21.
[51] Gardner, p.17

"two fundamental types of leaders were identified: *employee-oriented* and

production-oriented (Kahn & Katz, 1960)."[52] The employee orientation emphasized

the leader-employee relationships, whereas the production orientation focused on the

technical and productive aspects of the leader-employee context. The two types of

leaders identified by the University of Michigan researchers appear somewhat similar

to the two types identified in the Ohio State studies: relationship orientation or task

orientation. The two studies identify task-structure concerns and relationship-

consideration responsibilities.

The emphasis on "understanding leadership through the behaviors that a

person exhibits enabled those interested in developing leadership capacity an

opportunity to develop training and tools for categorizing leadership behavior."[53] The

primary tool resulting from the Ohio State research, the Leader Behavior Description

Questionnaire, "remains a well-accepted and commonly used tool in leadership

research (Nahavandi, 1997)."[54]

As research into behavioral theory progressed through the latter half of the

twentieth century, one classic model, "The Managerial Grid, which has been renamed

the Leadership Grid, was designed to explain how leaders help organizations to reach

their purposes through two factors: *concern for production* and *concern for people.*"[55]

The Managerial Grid, using a vertical and horizontal axis to represent concern for

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[52] Ann Gracia, "A Correlation Study of a Random Stratified Sample of Superintendents in Michigan – Analyzing the Relationship Between MBTI Reported Personality Preference Types and FIRO Interpersonal Leadership Styles, MBTI Perceived and Reported Personality Types and FIRO-B Interpersonal Leadership Styles*,*" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 2006), p.29.
[53] Greg A. Williams, "Communitarian Educational Leadership in the Urban School Environment: A Case Study of Leadership within the Context of a Communitarian Reform Initiative in an Urban School District," (Ph.D. diss., Miami University, 2006), p.30.
[54] Williams, p.30.
[55] Northouse, p.72.

production and concern for people, maps five kinds of leadership behavior: country club management, team management, middle-of-the-road management, impoverished management, and authority-compliance management. By scoring and plotting the leader's behavior on the grid, one is able to easily identify the leader's management style. Most leaders will have a management style default. It is one that is more easily and perhaps most often employed. As a tool, the Managerial Grid has continued to garner interest in the business community and continues to be used in numerous training contexts.

Situational Leadership

While behavioral research focused on task and relationship orientation, or concern for people and concern for production, a further development in leadership research expanded the understanding of leader-worker relations; situational leadership. Whereas previous behavioral theories focused on the leader's style or behavior in the workplace, little emphasis was placed on the situation in which those styles and behaviors were manifested. Were there situations and contexts that demanded one style of leadership as opposed to another? To what extent should a leader modify her style to accommodate the new situation? These questions were addressed in a new line of research suggesting "that the skills required of a leader will differ according to varying situations (Daresh, 2001)."[56]

In effect, this approach utilized behavior and trait theory as they related to individual management situations. Developed by Hersey and Blanchard, the Situation Leadership Model "emphasized the need for leaders to choose the right leadership style based on the maturity of the follower. The choice of the right

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[56] Gardner, p.18.

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leadership style is predicated on the job/task maturity and the psychological/developmental level of the follower."[57] The focus of this theory was to align three leader/follower factors: follower maturity, follower ability, and leader management style. In order "for leaders to be effective, they must vary their leadership style based on subordinates' level of job and relationship maturity (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991; Northouse, 2004; Taylor, 1994; Vecchio, 1987)."[58]

The four quadrants of the situational model reflect the follower's maturity level and the corresponding appropriate leadership styles: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. The leader is able to move along the leadership-style bell curve and select the appropriate management style. The leader may even blend the styles of leadership on the style continuum to reflect a less pronounced follower requirement. As well, the leader is able to move forward or backward on the leadership style curve in correspondence with the progression or regression of the follower's maturity and ability.

The situational model of leadership behavior remains popular in contemporary leadership and management circles. It has a broad business appeal and applicability as well as an intuitive sensibility. Yet it fails to quantifiably address the determination of follower maturity. How does one assess the actual status of an employee in order to apply the appropriate leadership style? How does one eliminate the possibility of bias in determining the maturity levels of employee groups?

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[57] Whitley, p.47.
[58] Mary Ellsworth Burlis, "A Meta-Analysis of Research on the Mediated Effects of Principal Leadership on Student Achievement: Examining the Effect Size of School Culture on Student Achievement as an Indicator of Teacher Effectiveness," (EdD diss., East Carolina University, 2009), p.36.

Contingency Theory

  While Hersey and Blanchard were formulating their situational approach to leader-follower interaction, another contemporaneous approach was emerging; the contingency model of leader effectiveness. With a similar intent as Hersey and Blanchard, Fiedler's contingency theory attempted to align leader style with the appropriate setting or situation. However, Fiedler's approach "claims that group productivity depends on the match between task as opposed to relationship behavior and the 'favorableness' of the leadership situation (Fiedler, 1976, 1971; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974)."[59]

  In order to align leader style with situations, "Fiedler developed the Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) scale. Leaders who score high on this scale are described as relationship motivated, and those who scored low on this scale are identified as task motivated."[60] His theory analyzed three situational factors: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Utilizing the LPC scores, contingency theory would predict where or in what situation a leader's style would work best. In effect, LPC scores would detect whether a leader/manager was a mismatch with a particular situation. Interestingly, while trait and behavior theories focused on leader characteristics, contingency theory, along with situational leadership theory moved the focus to the leader's context. What contingency theory did not do, however, was explain "adequately what organizations should do when there is a mismatch between the leader and the situation."[61] Contingency theory could identify the match of leader

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[59] Chang, p.24.
[60] Northouse, p.114.
[61] Northouse, p.119.

to situation, but it did not attempt to retool the leader's style to a potentially mismatched context.

Shortly after the emergence of situational leadership and the contingency theory of leadership, two models of leadership theory appeared in the literature. They were path-goal theory and leader-member exchange theory. Each of these models varied significantly from the previous two. Each was quite pragmatic in nature.

Path-Goal Theory

Path-goal theory, also known as motivation theory, "is derived from expectancy theory, which suggests that subordinates will be motivated if they think they are capable of performing their work, if they believe their efforts will of result in a certain outcome, and if they believe that the payoffs for doing their work are worthwhile."[62] As a motivational theory, the path-goal approach advances that "a leader can affect the performance, satisfaction, and motivation of a group by offering rewards, clarifying paths, and removing obstacles that stand in the way of goals achievement."[63] Through the application of a variety of leader behaviors (instructive, encouraging, participative, and productive) the leader seeks to eliminate any obstacles, direct employee efforts, and clarify goals so that the employee or group will realize its appropriate or expected level of productivity. In short, the leader clears and clarifies the path so that the worker can reach the organizational goal.

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[62] Northouse, p.127.
[63] Smith, p.14.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory focuses on the "interactions between leaders and followers."[64] This theory examines motivation and association between leader and follower. In short, "the followers who enjoy a close relationship with the leader report higher performance and loyalty expectations from that leader."[65] In LMX theory, the purpose of the dyadic relationship is greater contribution to productivity through closer association. The closer an employee feels to his manager, the greater his sense of involvement, dependability, and communication. The employee as part of the "in group" often stays longer, works more conscientiously, and progresses more quickly through the organization. The goal of the leader is to foster as many "in group" relationships with employees as possible.

Both of these theories differ from the previous and later ones in that they focus strongly on the outcome for the organization of the leader-member interaction. In path-goal, the goal of the organization through its manager is consciously in view. In LMX, association with and attention to the employee for the intent of greater productivity is in view.

Transformational Leadership

One of the more heavily researched contemporary leadership theories in the literature is the transformational approach. First articulated by Burns in 1978, transformational theory "combines aspects of the early trait theory with the more

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[64] Northouse, p.151.
[65] Smith, p.16.

current situational and contingency models."[66] In effect, Burns "married the roles of leader and follower in creating and facilitating organizational change."[67] Rather than being simply about the adaptation of a leadership style to a follower's need and situation, "transformational leadership is more of a dynamic process that involves constant communication between the leader and followers."[68] It is a process that changes both leader and follower and ultimately advances the goals of the organization.

In developing the theory, Burns differentiated an exchange-focused transactional style of leadership and transformational leadership "whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower."[69] Transformational leadership motivates and changes both leader and follower raising both to new levels of performance and commitment. In fact, "conceptual and empirical studies have confirmed that transformational, as compared to transactional leadership, has a greater impact on associates' motivation and self-efficacy, as well as individual, group, and organizational performance (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass & Avolio, 1994)."[70] Closely associated with transformational leadership is the concept of charisma. Transformational leaders with charisma appear confident, competent, and communicative. They inspire others to achieve more than they normally would and

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[66] Gardner, p.22.
[67] Kathleen M. Gulbin, "Transformational Leadership: Is it a Factor for Improving Student Achievement in High Poverty Secondary Schools in Pennsylvania?" (EdD diss., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2008), p.25.
[68] Smith, p.16.
[69] Northouse, p.176.
[70] Daniel James Cahill, "The Role of Transformational Leadership, Vision Communication and Vision Characteristics on the Growth of Dotcoms in the Midwest," (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2002), p.27.

in so doing adapt to and adopt the beliefs of the leader. As well, the charismatic leader maintains strong values and beliefs, knowing that "values lie at the heart of leadership, and in a business context at least, the leader's values are assumed to be aligned with the organization's values."[71]

Bass and Avolio characterized transformational leadership in terms of four factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These characteristics contrast significantly with transactional leadership that employs contingent reward and corrective criticism. Further research in transformational leadership by Bennis and Nanus and Kouzes and Posner has yielded additional understanding of transformational theory.

Stephen Gardner, in his research, noted four strategies employed by transformational leaders when implementing change in their organizations: "(1) recognizing and developing a vision, (2) communicating that vision to organizational members, (3) building trust in the vision, and (4) fulfilling the vision by motivating those organizational members (Palestini)."[72] Transformational leaders understand and are well equipped to lead change in organizations. They prove to be adept at inspiring and modelling advancement and change in an organizational context.

Kouzes and Posner, in their research, identified the five practices of transformational leaders that allow them to accomplish extraordinary achievements: "(1) model the way, (2) inspire a shared vision, (3) challenge the process, (4) enable others to act, and (5) encourage the heart."[73] These researchers developed a widely used tool, the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI), to investigate these five practices

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[71] Gracia, p.41.
[72] Gardner, p.24.
[73] Kouzes and Posner, p.14.

in transformational leaders. Their research and theories have been extensively taught and applied throughout the business world.

As a theory, transformational leadership uniquely avoids restrictive assumptions and prescriptive actions in particular contexts. Rather it offers a more generalized picture of how transformational leaders think, lead, and model for their followers. Consequently, because of its more generalized nature, it can be applied in varied organizational contexts and at differing levels of organizational structure.

Servant Leadership

In the 1970s, Robert Greenleaf developed the theory of servant leadership, a theory that "has gained increased popularity in recent years (see Block, 1993; DePree, 1989, 1992)."[74] In fact, there has been an increase over the past several years of peer reviewed publications on the topic of servant leadership (Aytry, 2001; Buchen, 1998; Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998: Daft & Lengel, 2000; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Pollard, 1997; Russel, 2001; Sendjaya & Sarros, 202; Spears, 1998)."[75]

Servant leadership is about perspective; "the focus of the servant leader is on the followers of the organization or those served by the organization."[76] The leader wants to serve others first and by serving others actually leads at the same time. While other theories examine power and position, "servant leadership uses a different kind of strength or moral authority."[77] It is "an alternative model for the deployment

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[74] Northouse, p.348.
[75] Brian Clinton Herndon, "An Analysis of the Relationships between Servant Leadership, School Culture, and Student Achievement," (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri – Columbia, 2007), p.27.
[76] Brian Clinton Herndon, p.27
[77] Dorothy Ledbetter Hall, "Balancing Accountability and Ethics," (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2009), p.13.

of power, authority and influence in organizations."[78] The servant leader uses her

power "to serve the needs of the follower, thus serving the needs of the organization

and striving to help those who are part of the organization become the best they can

be."[79]

Admittedly, this theory requires substantially more empirical study. In spite

of the growing popularity of the theory, the paucity of empirical research hampers its

academic acceptance.

Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership theory, though certainly not a new concept, is enjoying

resurgence in leadership literature. This growing interest may be due in part to the

multitude of financial, religious, and political scandals that have undermined the

positions of many of society's leaders. However, ethics in leadership is not a recent

concept. Northouse states that "the development of ethical theory dates to Plato (427-

347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)."[80] The latter part of last century witnessed a

revisiting of the subject, partly due to the dearth of ethical leadership in politics and

business.

Ethical leadership has been defined as "leadership that is governed by

traditional ethical guidelines to include respect of all members of society, tolerance

for divergent opinions and cultures, and equality of persons because they are moral

agents."[81] In effect, ethical leadership theory considers issues and decisions in terms

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[78] Mary Ann Faeth, "Power, Authority and Influence: A Comparative Study of the Behavioral
Influence Tactics Used by Lay and Ordained Leaders in the Episcopal Church," (Ph.D. diss., Virginia
Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2004), p.16.
[79] Herndon, p.30.
[80] Northouse, p.342.
[81] Elaine Montgomery Wilson, "A Qualitative Investigation of How Ethics Influence Urban Principal's
Practice in School Improvement," (EdD diss., The University of Cincinnati, 2008), p.5.

of all stakeholders affected. Ethical or moral leaders are "those for whom high moral standards are a way of life. Individuals who hold these strong personal convictions may be prone to require the same behavior of those that work under them."[82]

As a theory, ethical leadership overlaps with transformational and servant leadership with respect to its concern for other stakeholders. Transformational leaders seek to elevate their followers and ultimately the organization. Servant leaders put the needs of their employees above their own. The moral consideration of others in these two theories coincides with the altruistic intent of ethical leadership.

Ethics, by its very nature, must be at the heart of leadership. Understandably, because leadership is influence and all leaders exert some form of influence on their followers, ethical leadership theory is central to the practice of leadership.

Educational Leadership

As a field of research, "it should be noted that most of what has been written about leadership has come out of the fields of business and politics. Only recently have researchers turned their attention to leadership as it is exercised in social institutions and non-profit organizations, although these investigators are generally using theoretical frameworks and models that were developed in a business or government context and cannot always be made to fit other types of organizations."[83] Depending on the management level of the educational continuum one observes, one may discover leaders with significantly different leadership styles and practices.

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[82] Jeffery Richard Moorehouse, "Desired Characteristics of Ethical Leaders in Business, Education, and Religious Organizations from East Tennessee: A Delphi Investigation," (EdD diss., East Tennessee State University, 2002), p.27.
[83] Gracia, p.25.

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In her 2006 correlational study of superintendents, Ann Gracia states that, at the superintendency level, "articles that are actually about educational reform discuss the superintendency as an office, not as requiring a certain type of personality to fill that office (Keedy & Bjork; Muffs, Sullivan, & Fried, 2003)."[84] Superintendents, because of their position, find their "primary role as a political one, and one that is conducted in an atmosphere of conflict–over values, cultural differences, funding, testing, and all of the issues currently at the forefront of the debate over school reform."[85] Consequently, their natural leadership default "has been on developing skills, rather than on cultivating the personality traits that distinguish effective leaders from ineffective ones."[86] In effect, this description reflects a classically influenced form of leadership.

At the principal level, leadership research indicates the trend toward a more transformational style of leadership. A traditional business model dominated much of the twentieth century in which "the leader (usually the principal) uses his or her power or influence to make others (teachers) do something (like achieve organizational goals) (Foster, 1986)."[87] This traditional model, built on classical leadership theory, was challenged in the latter part of the twentieth century as education reform was instituted at the national and state levels.

Today's principal leadership perspective has moved "from the administrator being viewed as the sole leader in a school to a distributed view of leadership where many people are empowered to lead (Fullan, 2001; Lambert, 2003; Spillane et al.,

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[84] Gracia, p.20.
[85] Gracia, p.23.
[86] Gracia, p.61.
[87] Barbara Anne Setchel, "How Distributed Leadership Practices Are Implemented in a Rural Northeast Georgia Elementary School," (EdD diss., Georgia Southern University, 2008), p.38.

2004)."[88] Today, principals "realize that collaborative decision-making increases the coordination of tasks and duties and increases the quality of communication (Lindelow & Bentley, 1989)."[89] While the principal is still responsible for the administration of the school, he or she collegially collaborates with staff on internal functions, direction, and communication. As well, the principal inspires and encourages staff through interest, attention, and visibility.

Historically, at the teacher level, "models of teacher leadership have focused on quasi-administrative, management, or advisory roles often with little or no authority (Smylie et al., 2002)."[90] Within the classical model of leadership, "teaching has been treated as technical work and described as a set of skills, behaviors, and techniques to be mastered and evaluated."[91] Traditionally, the teacher, though recognized as leader in the classroom, functioned under a somewhat rigid set of authorities, guidelines, and constraints. However, the concept of teacher leadership has also changed with contemporary educational reforms.

Today, "teacher leadership accomplishes its means through a focus on teaching and learning, trusting and constructive relationships, and through formal and informal points of influence."[92] The contemporary understanding of teacher leadership includes far more than the classical understanding of classroom instruction. Contemporary teacher leadership "conceptualizes teachers empowered within a culture of learning, taking power and authority from pedagogical expertise, and

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[88] Setchel, p. 38.
[89] Debra Ann Manders, "Characteristics that make Principals Effective Leaders. A Study of Teacher Perceptions of Principal Leadership," (EdD diss., Washington State University, 2008), p.25.
[90] Paul Ridgeway Sturm, "Understanding Teacher Leadership in Context: A Qualitative, Heuristic Study," (EdD Washington State University, 2009), p.17.
[91] Sturm, p.18.
[92] Sturm, p.19.

focusing on improving instruction and student learning."[93] As a professional, the

teacher/leader exercises management within the classroom, the organizational

context, and the culture.

The contemporary educational environment reflects a variance of leadership

styles. While the literature indicates a move to a more transformational educational

stance, the varied levels of management reflect a continued mix of classical and more

contemporary transformational approaches. Educational forms of leadership may be

classical, transformational, or a mixture of either.

Ministry Leadership

The literature related to pastoral/ministry leadership practice predates

contemporary business and educational leadership material by nearly two millennia.

Leadership literature pertaining to pastoral ministry begins with the inspired writings

of the New Testament.   The apostles Paul, Peter, and John address pertinent

leadership issues and practices for those who aspire to the office of pastor. Paul, in

particular, elucidates the salient aspects of pastoral leadership in two similar passages

written to two younger pastors, Timothy and Titus. In these passages (1 Timothy 3:2-

7; Titus 15-9), the apostle outlines the pastoral leader's social, moral, mental,

personal, domestic, and ministry qualifications. Each of these areas is carefully listed

and "none of the qualities here enjoined by Paul are optional extras, but indispensible

requirements."[94] In fact, as one examines these classifications of public and private

qualifications, one recognizes that "Paul obviously believed in the leadership of

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[93] Sturm, p.20.
[94] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual leadership,* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), p.29.

character."[95] He had learned that in pastoral leadership one must "ultimately live and therefore lead before an audience of one."[96]

Peter, in writing his first general epistle to the churches in the New Testament area of Asia Minor, reminds the pastors of their leadership responsibilities and practices: shepherding, oversight, modelling, and sacrifice (1 Peter 5: 1-4). These practices of servant leadership had been indelibly etched in his mind years earlier on the shoreline of the Sea of Tiberias. There the Lord Jesus Christ reiterated one essential leadership practice; "shepherd my sheep." (John 21: 15-17). Peter understood that "God is concerned both to pinpoint the work and the sort of person who ought to be engaged in it."[97]

The writer of the Book of Hebrews outlines further functions and practices of those who would lead (Hebrews 13:7, 17-18). Within the body of Christ, pastors are to faithfully teach, carefully watch, and ultimately answer to Christ Himself. As leaders, they have a function to perform, a quality to maintain, and an accountability to anticipate.   In the context of the local church there is a reciprocal relationship for "just as church leaders are to rule in love and humility, those under their leadership are to submit in love and humility."[98]

The apostle John, nearing the end of his life and ministry as an exile on the island of Patmos, received a vision and message to share with the churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 1:4, 19). In this vision the Lord commanded him to write seven

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[95] E.M. Blaiklock, *The Pastoral Epistles A Study Guide Commentary to the Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p.35.
[96] Crawford W. Loritts, *Leadership as an Identity,* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2009), p.23.
[97] Jay E. Adams, *Trust and Obey A Practical Commentary on First Peter,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p.144.
[98] John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Hebrews,* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), p.384.

short letters to seven churches. Each of these messages "contain divine revelation and exhortation pertaining to the present age; and, having special pertinence in the present situation in the church, they constitute one of the most incisive and penetrating exhortations in the entire New Testament in relation to church doctrine and Christian living."[99] Each of the churches was either suffering persecution or spiritual decline. However, each of the letters was addressed to the pastors of those churches. The pastors were termed angels. John repeatedly stated, "To the angel of the church write" (Rev. 2:2; 2:8; 2:12; 2:18; 3:1; 3:7; 3:14). The Lord Christ, through the words of John, stipulated that the central position of each pastor was to lead, correct, and encourage his flock.

Doctor Luke records one poignant example of pastoral leadership in practice (Acts 20:18-31). As the apostle Paul was traveling to Jerusalem for the last time, he stopped along the way to encourage the pastors in the area of Ephesus. There he reminded them of his own transparent testimony as a pastor in Ephesus for the space of three years. He rehearsed that he had humbly evangelized the unsaved, taught believers, suffered persecution, and shared the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Then he reminded them for the last time that they are to guard the sheep against the inevitable attack from false teachers; "wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:29). The apostle reiterated that "the responsibility of these overseers was the solemn one of caring for the church of God which had been acquired by the blood of God's own One."[100] With the careful, apostolic exercise and teaching, the

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[99] John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), p.50.
[100] Homer Kent, *Jerusalem to Rome,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p.172.

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[99] John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), p.50.
[100] Homer Kent, *Jerusalem to Rome,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p.172.

office and practice of pastor and the concept of pastoral leadership was fully entrenched in the culture of first century Christianity.

Following the establishment of Christianity in the New Testament world, the next several centuries of Christianity witnessed a remarkable advance of Christian faith throughout the Roman Empire. With the spread of Christianity in the first several hundred years, the office of pastor also increased in significance. In many respects it veered theologically from the original pattern laid out in the scriptures. However, the central practices of a pastor continued as a "shepherd and guide of souls."[101]

As the church entered the latter half of the first millennium, it had wavered drastically from the New Testament pattern. The office and practice of pastor wavered as well. Pastoral leadership became more political and secular, yet at the same time more locally powerful. The Roman church wielded power over kings and countries and pastors over parishes and counties. In fact, "the clergy constituted a special class. They had their own courts and stoutly maintained that they could not be called to account by the civil courts or be taxed by the civil rulers."[102] With the descent into the darkness of the Middle Ages, Christianity, and in particular the role and leadership of the clergy declined and "seemed to be throwing off even the pretence of honouring what great Christians had endeavoured to embody."[103] It would not be until the rise of the Reformation that pastoral leadership would once again reflect that which was specified in the Scriptures.

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[101] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume I, Beginnings to 1500,* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), p.238.
[102] Latourette, Vol. I, p.525.
[103] Latourette, Vol. I, p.642.

While the Protestant Reformation developed in varied movements throughout Europe, the literature records that pastoral leadership in a more biblical sense was once again prevalent in the church. For instance, under Calvin, "over one hundred and fifty pastors, trained in Geneva, were sent to France between 1555 and 1556."[104] Many of the reform movements were forwarded through the leadership of local pastors throughout Europe. In fact, it was under the leadership of two pastors, John Smith and Thomas Helwys, that the Baptist church in Holland, and later in England (1608 and 1612), began. Historically, "this was the first Baptist church on English soil for whose origin there is historical proof."[105]

As the evangelical church developed the new world, it was once again under the leadership of pastors that it expanded throughout America. For example, in 1766, the former evangelist, Isaac Smith, "assumed the pastorate of the Baptist church in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and continued in that capacity for thirty nine years. Between 1740 and 1790, eighty six new churches were formed in the Massachusetts Commonwealth, an enterprise in which Smith was active."[106]

Pastoral leadership throughout varied evangelical denominations in North America furthered the work of Christ into new regions and people groups. Today, pastoral leadership practice is evidenced in tens of thousands of churches in North America. The literature pertaining to pastoral leadership is varied and wide ranging including pastoral psychology, counselling, issues in theology, current trends, church management, and general leadership.

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[104] Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p.342.
[105] Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists,* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1978), p.37.
[106] Torbet, p.224.

Current research has identified numerous issues pertaining to the practice of pastoral leadership. First, the ecclesiastical context of pastoral ministry is in a constant state of flux. The exponential rate of change in North American church life has made relevant pastoral ministry a constantly moving target. In his article, *Reinventing the Church,* Donald E. Messer identifies "eight trends evident in the present and future church."[107] These trends include the disestablishment of the church in America, loss of denominational brand loyalty, a new ecumenism, weak denominational loyalties, local churches becoming the object and not the source of mission, internal denominational theological and political polarization, and a future that is constantly changing because of globalization.

Second, with the disintegration of North American family and societal norms, the literature identifies the growing need among clergy for advanced counselling ministries to the hurting, confused, and hopeless. While pastors have always advised and counselled members within their congregations and others outside the church, the literature suggests that "there is increasing evidence that the pastoral counselling movement has come of age."[108] Today, effective pastoral counsellors will draw from various systems including: "cognitive behavioural therapy, contemporary and classical approaches, historic, contemplative, and contemporary approaches, applied integration psychology and Christian theology, narrative therapy, object-relations work and neoanalytic therapy, Frankl's logotherapy, interpersonal and social systems therapy, and ecological social work, task centered practice, and the person-in-

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[107] Donald E. Messer, "Reinventing the Church," *Religion Online,* March 3, 1998. http://www..religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=199 (accessed June, 2010).
[108] John Patton, "Pastoral Counselling Comes of Age," *Religion Online,* March 4, 1981. http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1711 (accessed June, 2010).

environment approach.[109] Pastoral counselling practice addresses a complexity of contemporary, personal, and family contexts.

Third, the literature identifies the multi-faceted nature of pastoral ministry in contemporary North American culture. A survey conducted by the Barna Research Group examined no less than eleven key areas of pastoral practice: preaching, teaching, encouraging, shepherding, leading, motivating, discipling or mentoring, evangelism, counselling, administration, and strategic planning. The researchers commented that "it's unrealistic for most pastors to claim that they can perform at an above-average level in such a large number of disparate ministry duties as those examined in the studied."[110] Indeed, the many facets of pastoral practice and responsibility continue to stretch the average pastor's abilities while parishioners' expectations increasingly grow. Comments from another study by the Barna Research Group highlight this truth; "The study also underscores how difficult the role of pastoring is – and it should remind churchgoers to express gratitude to the men and women who serve."[111]

Fourth, the literature examines varied approaches to pastoral leadership, particularly two theories. There is a growing amount of research in this area, focusing on the theories of transformational and servant leadership. For instance, Mary Laura Lutz, in her research into failed senior pastoral appointments states, "Other studies have focused more generally on effectiveness in ministry (Pense,

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[109] Timothy Clinton and George Ohlschlager, *Competent Christian Counselling,* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2002), p.62.

[110] The Barna Group, "Pastors Rate Themselves Highly, Especially as Teachers," *Barna Update* January 7, 2002. http://wwwbarna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/65-pastors-rate-themselves-highly-especially-as-teachers?q=pastoral+work (accessed May, 2010).

[111] The Barna Group, "Pastors Feel Confident in Ministry, but Many Struggle in their Interaction with Others," *Barna Update,* July 10, 2006. http://www.barna.org/leadership-articles/150-pastors-feel-confident-in-ministry-but-many-struggle-in-their-interaction-with-others (accessed May, 2010).

1996; Whie, 1988), concluding that clergy who were transformational in their approach were perceived to be more effective by leaders in the church."[112] Jackson W. Carrol, in rehearsing the results of his research for the *Pulpit & Pew* study states, "Transactional leadership and the market values that under gird it may be appropriate for excellent business leadership, but there are serious limitations when applied to churches and pastors."[113] He adds that pastors are to pursue Christ's servant leadership model in which they "continue his servant ministry in the world."[114] In her research into the behavioral influence tactics used by laymen and leaders of the Episcopal Church, Margaret Ann Faeth argues that while church leaders have historically employed a hierarchical and exploitative methodology, "the integrity and power of true servant leadership continues to manifest God's creative and redeeming power in the lives of men and women."[115]

Contemporary pastoral leadership literature addresses the numerous challenges and practices evident in clergy ministry. As witnessed in the literature, the challenges are varied requiring a unique style of leadership. The traditional classical theory of leadership fails to address the needs of congregational care and denominational growth.

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[112] Mary Laura Lutz, "An Exploration of the Relationship between Failed Senior Pastor Appointments in Three large United Methodist Churches and Seminary Preparation, Professional Identity, and Person – Environment Interaction" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2007), p.60.
[113] Jackson W. Carrol, "The More Things Change…': Pastoral Change for the 21rst Century," *Pulpit & Pew: Research on Pastoral Leadership Duke Divinity School,* September 12, 2002, P.11.
[114] Carrol, p.11.
[115] Faeth, p.16.

<center>**Interim Leadership**</center>

The previous discussion examined the literature relating to leadership in business, education, and pastoral ministry. However, when a leader departs, there is a leadership vacuum requiring some form of interim management and leadership. The following is a brief review of literature relating to interim leadership in the same three fields: business, academia/education, and ministry.

<center><u>**Interim Management in Business**</u></center>

As noted above, with the frequent transition of leaders in business, there is a constant need for replacement and interim leadership. Professional firms have developed to meet the demand for interim managers, CEOs, CFOs, and leaders. The literature relating to this aspect of business leadership is relatively recent as "interim management first appeared in the Netherlands in the 1970s, where recession and strict employment laws made it difficult to get the right people on board at the right time."[116] The concept "made the transition to the UK sometime in the 80s where it has grown steadily ever since."[117] The interim management concept spread to the Far East where IM firms provide interim managers as "a cost effective solution to a problem, in that they typically cost less than the total employment costs of a permanent employee, but with greater focus on the project they are assigned to and with no employment liabilities."[118] Interim management has found a unique niche

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[116] Rob Lewis, "When a Stranger Calls; Should You be Worried About Interim Management?" *HR Zone,* March 29, 2007. p.1   http://www.hrzone.co.uk/cgi?id=166599&d=pndrpr&h=pnhpr&f=pnfpr (accessed May, 2010)

[117] Lewis, *HR Zone,* p.1.

[118] Lloyd Morgan, "Introduction to Interim Management," *Lloyd Morgan.* http://www.lloydmorgan.com/PDF/LM0037_Our%20Offering_Introduction%20to%20IM%20managment,pdf (accessed April, 2010).

<center>36</center>

market in the corporate world offering a specialized level of professional leadership. It seems to have ongoing value and demand as "a survey carried by IPSOS MORI in 2007 estimates that there has been a 24% rise in the number of interim assignments undertaken in 2007 compared with the previous year."[119]

Interim management provides a significant benefit to firms in need of management as "the rapid turnaround for recruiting an interim is also seen as a big advantage to employers."[120] Firms that can fill the management void quickly have a distinct advantage over those that cannot. However, there are several other reasons why firms utilize interim managers: "(1) need a specific skill and do not have it in house, (2) have a vacant senior role with an active search, but they cannot afford to wait until the full recruitment process takes place, (3) need to keep a mission critical role staffed during a planned or unplanned employee leave of absence, (4) know their in-house management team is unable to take on additional responsibilities, (5) urgently need an injection of real business expertise, (6) need someone who can drive significant business change or lead a transition, (7) have a business critical project that needs experienced, accountable management which has "done it before", (8) need to depend on an executive to remain focused on agreed objectives, (9) need an executive to deliver value from day one, someone who can "hit the ground running", (10) want the flexibility to release an executive from a role once the job has been completed and objectives have been met, and (11) need someone who can be a

[119] Jean Richards, "Interim Managers," *CIPD* April 4, 2009, p.1
http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/maneco/intmnt/interimman.html?IsrchRes=1 (accessed April, 2010).
[120] Georgina Fuller, Interim Management: More than Just a Temp," *Personneltoday.com* May 13, 2008. http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2008/05/13/4572/interim-management-more-than-just-a-temp (accessed April, 2010).

mentor and also leave behind a legacy of their skill with other members of the team."[121]

Those who would function well in the capacity of an interim manager or executive require certain skill sets and practices. These would include: "(1) committed experienced professionals, (2) team worker, (3) passion, energy, and enthusiasm, (4) flexibility and adaptability, (5) non political but politically astute, (6) task oriented, (7) enjoy change and can manage it, (8) able to lead, mange, and motivate by influence, and (9) open-minded."[122]

Companies do have a choice when facing the need for an immediate executive. They can hire a senior manager on contract. However, the time lag may be a problem with this alternative. They can hire a consultant, but a consultant seldom handles everyday work. After all, the consultant is there to advise. Or companies can use an interim manager with the appropriate expertise, drive, commitment, and track record of performance. It is little wonder the literature suggests that in a world where executives arrive and depart with increasing regularity, firms are looking to interim management.

Interim Educational Leadership

While the need for interim leadership in academia and the education field is not as well documented as in the business world, there is nevertheless discussion in the literature concerning executives filling temporary educational leadership

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[121] Kimball Norup, "Eleven Reasons to use Interim Executives," *Msquared Consulting Commentary on Consulting, the War forTalent, and the Flexible Workforce,* October 15, 2008, p.1 http://www.msquared.com/blog/2008/10/15/eleven -reasons-to-use-interim-executives/ (accessed April, 2010).
[122] RSAGroup, "The Evolution of Interim Management," *RSA n.d.* p.4 http://www.thersagroup.com/publications/The%20Evolution%20of520interim520Management.pdf (accessed, April, 2010).

positions. The literature speaks of interim placements in varying educational fields.

In the health care field, while the literature identifies the cost to budgets of leadership

turnover, "little is known about the process of selecting an interim leader or about the

role of an interim leader."[123] While comparing permanent to interim positions,

suggestion is made in the literature that "the same qualities apply in the selection of

interim leaders."[124] Those who hold temporary positions need the same expertise as

those who hold permanent positions. Similarly, in the nursing field, when academic

vacancies occur, the literature suggests that "the interim administrator may find the

role perplexing and question which tactics they need to exercise to meet the

expectations of the university, faculty, and stakeholders."[125] The task is far from easy

and requires significant expertise.

In the administration of colleges and universities, there is also the need for

interim administrators. However, "notwithstanding the frequent and regular use of

interim administrators, the nature and meaning of the experiences of those interims

and their impact on the organization, particularly as concerns the practice of

leadership has been largely ignored."[126] Gina K. Ondercin, in her examination of

interim higher educational positions asserts that "a negligible amount of empirical

research on department level interim leaders has been conducted."[127] Her analysis

focused on five case study research projects involving interim presidents at the

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[123] Kevin Grigsby, Robert C. Aber, and David A. Quillan, "Interim Leadership of Academic
Departments at U.S. Medical Schools," *Academic Medicine* 84, No. 10/October 2009, p.1328.
[124] Grigsby, Aber, and Quillan, p.1328.
[125] Mary T. Boylston and Mary Anne Peters, "Interim Leadership in an Era of Change," *International
Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship,* Abstract, October 3, 2004 http://www.bepress.com/ijnes/
(accessed May, 2010)
[126] Gina, K. Ondercin, "Being Interim: Leading in a Transitional Appointment" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling
Green State University, 2009), Abstract iii.
[127] Ondercin, p.30.

university and college level. While each of the studies emphasized unique aspects of interim administration, a few common results were identified: the position required relationship building, the interim focused on preparing the institution for the new permanent president or administrator, the interims were not interested in the permanent position, and the interims grew through the experience sometimes through problem solving.[128] What is significant about Ondercin's research is the scarcity of a large body of research on the topic of interim positions in education.

Interim Pastoral Leadership

The literature on interim pastoral leadership includes books with helpful insights and instructions from veteran interim pastors, interim ministry associational material, Doctor of Ministry student projects, and denominational interim ministry program materials.[129] Some of these materials have been mentioned earlier in this paper. Several non-denominational ministries produce helpful work on interim pastoral leadership. These groups include The Center for Congregational Care, The Alban Institute, The Interim Ministry Network, and Outreach Canada's Transitional Leadership Ministries. Many larger denominations maintain their own interim departments at the national and state level[130]. However, apart from some Doctor of Ministry research projects, little doctoral level research has been produced specifically addressing the leadership practices of interim pastors. This is particularly

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[128] Ondercin, p.24-30.
[129] Presbyterian Church USA, "A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors," *The Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists,* September 11, 2007.
http://pcusa.org/media/uploads/research/pdfs/interimpastors.pdf (accessed April, 2010).
[130] Daryl Neidermayer, "Brief on the Policy and Practice of Interim Ministry," *Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,* January 2, 2005. http://www.neidermayer.ca/papers/interim_ministry.pdf (accessed March, 2010).

true for interim practice in the Canadian context. Consequently, the identification of interim leadership practices will further the understanding of transitional ministry.

Summary

This chapter has examined literature pertaining to leadership in business, education/academia, and pastoral ministry. It has also briefly discussed the literature relating to interim management, academia, and ministry. It has shown that, while there is a substantial amount of leadership literature, it relates more to business than to education and ministry. The need for further research into the study of interim pastoral leadership practice is warranted.

The following chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed in this study to examine the leadership practice of successful interim pastors in The Fellowship.

CHAPTER THREE

Design and Methodology

This chapter presents and discusses the design and methodology employed in this research project. Numerous subjects are addressed which serve to elucidate the purpose, protocol, trustworthiness, and value of this research. It is the author's intent to carefully apprise the reader of the steps employed in the gathering, assessing, and presenting of the research data and its subsequent relation to the research questions. As Yin states, "Research design is the logic that links (and the conclusion to be drawn) to the initial questions of study."[131]

Definition of Terms

The discussion of the design and methodology requires an initial definition of the terminology used throughout this study. Some of these terms are unique to the subjects and context under investigation. Consequently, some degree of definition is beneficial for the understanding of the reader. The terms to be defined include: The Fellowship, FEB CENTRAL, FEB Pacific, FEBCAST, FEBMID, Fellowship Atlantic, senior pastor, regional director, local church, interim pastor, lay person, Board of Elders, and Board of Deacons.

The Fellowship (The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada)

The Fellowship, also known as The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, officially began in 1953 with the amalgamation of two groups of Baptist churches: "The Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec

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[131] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research,* (Thousand Oaks: C.A., Sage Publications, 2003), p.19.

and The Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches of Canada."[132] This new entity

was later expanded with the inclusion of other regional groups of Convention Baptist

Churches from eastern and western Canadian provinces culminating in "the

emergence of The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada on a

national scale."[133] Each of the churches was evangelical, baptistic, autonomous, and

congregational in governance.   While the churches in this new entity enjoyed a

significant degree of agreement in biblical doctrine, they did vary somewhat in the

area of eschatology. Today, those variances also include the concept of elders and the

role of women on deacon's boards.

The Fellowship numbers nearly 500 churches and currently extends across

Canada with congregations in nine provinces and two territories. The Fellowship is

divided into provincial regions with the largest three being FEB CENTRAL (the

English speaking churches of Ontario and Quebec), FEB Pacific (the churches of

British Columbia and the Yukon), and AEBEQ (the French speaking churches of

Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick). The Fellowship maintains a national office in

Guelph, Ontario and several regional offices. However, because of the independent

nature of the individual churches, the national and regional offices do not exercise

denominational control over The Fellowship churches. In essence, because The

Fellowship is a voluntary association, "churches enjoy a great measure of

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[132] J. H. Watt, *The Fellowship Story,* (Toronto: The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, 1979), p. 48.
[133] Leslie K. Tarr, *This Dominion His Dominion,* (Toronto: The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, 1968), p.150.

independence, and ties are formed through relationships rather than lines of authority."[134]

FEB CENTRAL

The region of FEB CENTRAL, or The Fellowship Central Region, consists of nearly 300 English-speaking churches situated mostly in the province of Ontario. The regional office for FEB CENTRAL is in the city of Cambridge, Ontario. The region is divided into nineteen local associations of churches. The more densely populated associations exist in the southern and south-western area of Ontario. On average, this region has approximately ten percent of its churches in need of a senior pastor at any one time. Many of these churches are small rural congregations, although larger churches occasionally require senior pastors as well.

FEB CENTRAL regionally exercises significant autonomy within the Fellowship, maintaining its own budgets, personnel, and administrative responsibilities. In recent years, The Fellowship has become more regionalized in structure. Many responsibilities such as recommending senior, associate, and interim pastors to inquiring churches have also been regionalized. Churches looking for a senior or interim pastor may approach the FEB CENTRAL regional office and obtain a list of potential candidates for consideration and investigation.

FEB Pacific

The FEB Pacific region of The Fellowship includes the province of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. This region joined The Fellowship in 1965 and today includes the second largest group of churches in The Fellowship with 102

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[134] The Fellowship, "How We Do It," *The Fellowship Serve Unite Thrive,* (The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada: Guelph, ON., 2010), p.1, http://www.fellowship.ca/qry/page.taf?id=41 (accessed June, 2010).

churches in five associations. It maintains its own regional director, budgets, administrative personnel, and responsibilities. As in other regions of The Fellowship, interim pastoral requests are often addressed to the regional director. Lists of available interims are submitted to inquiring churches.

FEBCAST

The FEBCAST region of The Fellowship includes the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and the North West Territories. The region officially joined the Fellowship in 1963. While this region includes a much smaller number of churches, just twelve, it also maintains a regional director who oversees administrative responsibilities for the region. Interim assignments and personnel are funnelled through the regional office.

Fellowship Atlantic

The Fellowship Atlantic region of The Fellowship includes churches throughout three of the Atlantic provinces of Canada (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). As with the other Fellowship regions, Fellowship Atlantic maintains its own regional office and responsibilities, which include church planting, training, and support for pastors and churches. Interim pastors and churches in need of interim pastoral ministry often contact the regional director for a list of available pastors.

FEBMID

The FEBMID region of The Fellowship includes eight churches in the province of Manitoba. While this region is small, it also maintains a regional director who oversees the responsibilities and personnel of the region. Requests for senior,

associate, or interim pastors are directed to the regional director. As with the other regions the director provides lists and resumes of potential candidates for the needed positions or offices.

Regional Director

The office of regional director entails regional oversight. It is both a challenging position and one that involves particular political skill. For some regions the position is a part-time or volunteer assignment. In a few regions the director's position is a full-time paid position. When invited, the regional director intervenes in local church affairs and provides insight and direction for congregations facing various crises. Among his many duties, the regional director also responds to congregational requests for names and resumes of potential pastors, associate pastors, and interim pastors. Individual pastors desiring to pursue interim pastoral ministry often contact the regional director for possible opportunities.

Senior Pastor

The office of senior pastor in The Fellowship relates to the local church. Senior pastors are employees of their respective congregations and as such do not answer to outside ecclesiastical authorities or representatives. Local churches are both independent and autonomous in their governance. Consequently, the senior pastor is both leader of, and answerable to, the local church in which he ministers. The placement of senior pastors, as well as other associate pastors or interim pastors, is the sole responsibility of the local church and is not dictated by any outside authority or individuals.

Local Church

The baptistic nature of The Fellowship mandates that individual churches function autonomously. The relations between local congregations in The Fellowship are voluntary, and "membership in The Fellowship requires that each church be in accord with The Fellowship's belief statement."[135] Consequently, The Fellowship does not reflect a hierarchical structure but rather places greater emphasis on the local church as the key functioning unit. Local churches prepare their own budgets, call or appoint their own officers, maintain their own memberships, select their own associations, and when necessary choose their own interim pastors.

Interim Pastor

The term interim pastor or transitional pastor refers to that individual who assumes a temporary leadership/ministry role in a local church between senior pastorates. In The Fellowship an interim pastor often is a retired former senior pastor who wishes to lengthen his ministry for several years past his retirement. In the above mentioned regions interim pastors are often recommended by the regional director to local churches who lack a senior pastor. The regional director maintains a list of interim pastors that he may recommend to inquiring local churches.

Lay-person

In The Fellowship, the term lay-person refers to those individuals who are not in professional full or part-time pastoral ministry in the local church. The lay-person may hold various positions in the local church. The interim pastor shepherds this group of individuals during the transitional time of the local church.

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[135] The Fellowship, *How We Do It*, p.1.

Board of Elders

Some churches in The Fellowship have a board of elders who serve in leadership along with the senior pastor. These elders may be vocational pastors or lay individuals elected to the position for a period of time. Depending on the individual churches, these boards will have varying degrees of authority in relation to the senior pastor. As well, when the church does not have a senior pastor, the board of elders may be responsible for the selecting of an interim pastor.

Board of Deacons

Churches in The Fellowship hold to the biblical offices of pastor and deacon. Consequently, all The Fellowship churches have a board of deacons. The size of this board will vary according to the size of the local church. However, depending on the particular church, the board of deacons will have varying levels of authority and responsibility. For many Fellowship churches, the board of deacons assumes much of the leadership. In the absence of a senior pastor, this board may be responsible for the selection of an interim pastor.

Summary

Interim pastoral selection and ministry will vary from region to region and church to church. No two interim situations will be exactly alike. Some interim assignments will be short and others will be of greater length. Some interim pastors will work with a board of elders and others with a board of deacons. All will shepherd a flock of lay individuals with varied needs and challenges.

This multiple-case study focused on face-to-face interviews with interim pastors in the FEB CENTRAL region, phone interviews with interim pastors from

other regions of Canada, written material from some interim pastors, and insights from regional directors and lay individuals. The selection of interim pastors and methodology of this multiple-case study approach will be discussed in the following sections.

Purpose of this Research Study

The purpose of this research study, as mentioned in chapter one, is to identify salient leadership practices, behaviors, and characteristics evidenced in actively serving and former interim pastors. The literature suggests that those in varied full-time and interim contexts manifest certain experience levels, specialized training, and skills necessary for effective leadership. This study seeks to discover and identify the common leadership practices evident in interim pastoral ministry.

Research Questions

This qualitative multiple case study approach is guided by the following research questions:

Question One: What leadership practices are evidenced by the successful interim pastors examined in this study?

Question Two: To what extent are common leadership practices evidenced across the sample of interim pastors interviewed in this study?

Question Three: What factors influence, and in what ways, the leadership practices of these interim pastors in their transitional settings?

These questions form a basis for the research methodology discussed below. However, as with most qualitative analysis, further unforeseen questions and discoveries develop during the process of investigation and data examination. They

shall be gathered and presented in concert with the initial research questions. As Yin

points out, "Very few case studies will end up exactly as planned. Inevitably, you

will have to make minor changes, ranging from the need to pursue an unexpected lead

(potentially minor) to the need to identify a new 'case' for study (potentially

major)."[136] Understandably, "in a qualitative research project, issues emerge, grow,

and die."[137] The actual open–ended questions asked to each interviewee are discussed

below. However, it should be mentioned at this point that the interview questions

serve to address the three research questions mentioned above.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

This research project employs a qualitative, multiple-case study methodology.

Qualitative methods differ from quantitative methods in a number of ways. Robert

Stake differentiates the two methods stating that "three major differences in

qualitative and quantitative emphasis deserve attention: (1) the distinction between

explanation and understanding as the purpose of the study; (2) the distinction between

a personal and impersonal role for the researcher, and (3) a distinction between

knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed."[138] Gillham suggests "that

qualitative methods enable you:

1. To carry out an investigation where other methods – such as experiments – are
   either not practicable or not ethically justifiable.

2. To investigate situations where little is known about what is there or what is
   going on. More formal research may come later.

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[136] Yin, p.61.
[137] Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research,* (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publication, 1995), p.21.
[138] Stake, p.37.

3. To explore complexities that are beyond the scope of more 'controlled' approaches.

4. To 'get under the skin' of a group or organization to find out what really happens – the informal reality which can only be perceived from inside.

5. To view the case from inside out: to see it from the perspective of those involved.

6. To carry out research into the *process* leading to results (for example how reading standards were improved in a school) rather than into the 'significance' of the results themselves."[139]

Merriam, in summarizing the four primary characteristics of qualitative methodology, states, "All qualitative research is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and a richly descriptive end product."[140] Sanders suggests, "Where quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations."[141] In short, "qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail."[142] Lincoln and Guba, in their classic study in naturalist inquiry, propose five axiomatic differences: "the nature of reality, the relationship of knower to known, the possibility of

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[139] Bill Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods,* (London, Continuum, 2000), p.11.
[140] Sharon B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Practice: Example for Discussion and Analysis,* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), p.6.
[141] Marie C. Hoepfl, "Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Technology Education Researchers", *Journal of Technology Education,* 9, no. 1, Fall, 1997, p.2. http://scholar.lib.vt/ejournals/JVT/v9n1/hoepfl.html (accessed June, 2010).
[142] Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), p.14.

generalization, the possibility of causal linkages, and the role of values."[143] In

essence, these five axioms undergird naturalistic inquiry and qualitative analysis.

Choice of Qualitative Methodology

The choice of a qualitative methodology for this research project has enabled

the researcher to investigate the finer nuances of the research topic that might not be

immediately quantifiable. In essence, qualitative methodology "permit(s) inquiry into

selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance."[144]

Unlike a purely statistical approach, qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive allowing

for the simultaneous analysis of multiple and sometimes contradictory factors.   As

well, the emergent design of this method allows the researcher to investigate "how

people understand themselves, or their setting – what lies behind more objective

evidence."[145] Because of the relative paucity of research data in this researcher's area

of investigation, the qualitative method offers greater latitude for case-by-case

investigation and comparison. A qualitative multiple-case study approach is the more

effective way to investigate this relatively new area of research.

Features of Qualitative Research

Proponents of qualitative research have suggested several prominent

characteristics of qualitative, or naturalistic, research. Hoepfl summarizes these

characteristics "of qualitative research:

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[143] Yvonne S. Lincoln and Egdon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry,* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1984), p.37.
[144] Patton p.227.
[145] Gillham, p.7.

1. Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are, maintaining what Patton calls an "empathetic neutrality" (1990, p.55).

2. The researcher acts as the "human instrument" of data collection.

3. Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis.

4. Qualitative research reports are descriptive, incorporating expressive language and the "presence of voice in the text" (Eisner, 1991, p.36).

5. Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.

6. Qualitative researchers pay attention to the idiosyncratic as well as the pervasive, seeking the uniqueness of each case.

7. Qualitative research has an emergent (as opposed to predetermined) design, and researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or product of the research.

8. Qualitative research is judged using special criteria for trustworthiness."[146]

The unique characteristics of qualitative or naturalistic inquiry are well suited to this research topic. Denzin and Lincoln summarize these appropriate, generic features stating, "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible."[147] Consequently, "this means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms

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[146] Hoepfl, p.3
[147] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), p.3.

of the meanings people bring to them."[148] This research project seeks to identify and interpret the leadership practices of those who would exercise leadership in the context of interim ministry.

Application of Naturalistic Research to this Study

Qualitative research, because of its emphasis on natural settings, inductive analysis, and the perceptions, knowledge, and internal beliefs of people within their unique contexts, understandably rests within the tradition and framework of naturalistic inquiry. While the term naturalistic inquiry refers primarily to the post positivist research tradition, and "is defined not at the level of method but at the level of paradigm,"[149] the understanding of qualitative research pertains primarily to a research method. Yet there is a sense in which the two terms are often employed interchangeably for "naturalistic inquiry is a term parallel to the term qualitative research, where qualitative research is meant to denote all research not concerned with variables and their measurement."[150] Indeed the two terms often coincide in the literature. Understandably, Lincoln and Guba include qualitative methods among their fourteen characteristics of naturalistic research. In light of the relationship between qualitative methodology and naturalistic research, the axioms, mentioned above, and characteristics of naturalistic inquiry provide a useful framework for conducting this research.

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[148] Denzin and Lincoln, p.3.
[149] Lincoln and Guba, p.250.
[150] Renats Tesch, *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools,* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1990), p.43.

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Axioms of Naturalistic Inquiry

The five axiomatic principles identified by Lincoln and Guba provide the "philosophical underpinnings of the research process"[151] and serve as the foundation for naturalistic inquiry. These principles address "the nature of reality, the relationship of knower to known, the possibility of generalization, the possibility of causal linkages, and the role of values in inquiry."[152] Each of these principles relates to this research project.

The Nature of Reality

Naturalistic inquiry maintains that "there are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically; inquiry into these constructed realities will inevitably diverge (each inquiry raises more questions than it answers) so that prediction and control are unlikely outcomes although some level of understanding (verstehen) can be achieved."[153] With the interviews conducted in each case, this researcher sought to understand the data within the context of the interviewee's immediate ministry context. Invariably, the perspectives on reality rehearsed by each participant differed somewhat from the information provided by other interviewees. There was no single, controllable variable that could explain the variant situations revealed in the research data. Only a holistic, multiple-constructed reality as interpreted by this researcher could begin to identify some of the latent aspects of leadership practice in interim ministry.

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[151] Mary Laura Lutz, "An Exploration of the Relationship Between Failed Senior Pastor Appointments in Three Large United Methodist Churches and Seminary Preparation, Professional Identity, and Person – Environment Interaction", (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2007), p.115.
[152] Lincoln and Guba, p.38.
[153] Lincoln and Guba, p.37.

The Relationship of Knower to Known

Naturalistic inquiry acknowledges that "the inquirer and the 'object' of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable."[154] One of the strengths and also weaknesses of naturalistic inquiry is the closeness and interaction of the researcher and the researched. Naturalistic inquiry recognizes that there is inevitably some reciprocal influence evidenced in the research process. For this researcher, this influence quotient, though not precisely measurable, is nonetheless acknowledged as a real factor in the gathering of data.

In several of the interviews, there was a familiarity with the interviewees simply because of the nature and context of pastoral ministry in The Fellowship. This researcher had known some of the interviewees for several years. The many similarities between researcher and participant, such as theological conservatism, senior pastoral experience, and biblical mandates, provided a basis for interviewing yet a possible cause of interpretive fog. As a fellow veteran pastor, this researcher was very conscious of the possibility of leading the participant's discussion.

The Possibility of Generalization

The naturalistic approach recognizes that "the aim of inquiry is to develop an idiographic body of knowledge in the form of 'working hypotheses' that describe the individual case."[155] No two interim assignments are alike. Churches and lay congregants vary from context to context. The aim of this researcher was not to establish generalizations that can apply in all interim contexts at any time. Rather, the

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[154] Lincoln and Guba, p.37.
[155] Lincoln and Guba, p.38

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purpose was to identify unique aspects of leadership practice as evidenced in a case-by-case approach. The research did not stem from a predetermined hypothesis, but sought to establish a series of 'working hypotheses' mined from the data. The 'working hypotheses' invariably changed throughout the data gathering and coding stages of the research.

The Possibility of Causal Linkages

Naturalistic inquiry holds that "all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects."[156] Rather than trying to form meaning on a cause and effect basis, this paradigm reflects multiple realities and perspectives evident in the research. Consequently, the researcher emphasizes rich description and explores relationship patterns, concepts, and content that point to a working hypothesis and suggested outcomes.

This research project emphasizes the multifaceted aspects of interim ministry in several unique cases. The thick description and insights of interviewees coupled with other observations and insights provide a basis for making meaning of the leadership practices of interim pastors.

The Role of Values in Inquiry

The fifth axiom of naturalistic inquiry focuses on values. While the positivist researcher strives to be value free and objective in methodology, the naturalist is admittedly "value–bound"[157]. Values are expressed and evidenced throughout the research project including the choice and design of research, personal biases, analysis technique, and summarization.

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[156] Lincoln and Guba, p.38.
[157] Lincoln and Guba, p.38.

This author admittedly is value-based in his research choice, design, and analysis. The subjects of inquiry are understandably value-laden in the context of their ministry. The challenge for the author is to surface his personal biases, assumptions, and values in the process of doing research and strive for accuracy in data accumulation, description, and analysis.

Characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry

The above five axioms explain the foundational principles and guidelines for naturalistic inquiry. However, Lincoln and Guba also provide fourteen characteristics that serve to operationalize their naturalist approach to research. These fourteen characteristics are natural setting, human data collection instrument, utilization of tacit knowledge, qualitative methods, purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, grounded theory, emergent design, negotiated outcomes, case study reporting mode, idiographic interpretation, tentative application, focus-determined boundaries, and special criteria for trustworthiness.

Natural Setting

In order for the data to be adequately understood, Lincoln and Guba suggest, "The research interaction should take place with the entity-in-context for fullest understanding, because of the belief that context is crucial in deciding whether or not a finding may have meaning in some other context as well."[158] The natural setting is maximized in order to gain the greatest insight.

This researcher purposely chose those contexts most convenient and comfortable for the participants. In each face-to-face interview the interviewee was asked to choose the place and setting for the interview. The researcher carefully

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[158] Lincoln and Guba, p.39.

communicated his willingness to meet at the place and time of the participant's choosing. As well, the researcher also purposed to maximize the personal context of the telephone interviewees. Each participant was given the open-ended questions prior to the interview. He was then asked to choose a time or times convenient to him. This researcher assured each participant that his time and effort was important. The respondents usually chose a home or office setting from which to participate in the interview. They were assured that they could choose to not answer any question if they so wished.

Human Data Collection Instrument

The function and import of the researcher in naturalistic inquiry data collection is reciprocally multifaceted. Because of the mutual interaction and influence that both researcher and respondent exert upon one another, the recognition of the role of the researcher as an instrument in data collection is crucial to the research process. As Lincoln and Guba state, "The inquirer and the 'object' of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable."[159]

This researcher was particularly aware of this acute, instrumental research role. A number of factors influenced this role. First, this researcher is a pastor in The Fellowship and has been for more than 27 years. His veteran status afforded a degree of familiarity with some of the interviewees as well as a level of mutual respect among the participants. Second, the subjects mentioned by the participants were usually quite familiar to the researcher. He had often faced situations similar to those of the interim pastors, though in a senior pastoral role. Third, the researcher, because of his ministry experience, was able to connect with the interviewees in both an

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[159] Lincoln and Guba, p.94.

interviewer role as well as that of an understanding and supportive listener/colleague. This interaction provided a more open conduit for conversation and data collection.

Utilization of Tacit knowledge

Qualitative researchers in the naturalistic paradigm admit and readily employ their various reserves of tacit knowledge throughout the research process. In contrast to explicit knowledge that can be more easily quantified and transferred to others, the researcher employed a felt or intuitive knowledge throughout the design, collection, analysis, and summarization stages of the study. In effect, "the human instrument can bring to bear all of the power of its tacit knowledge."[160]

The tacit or implicit knowledge of this researcher included professional and ministry experience, familiarity with The Fellowship, leadership experience and academic training, interpersonal skills and experience, "like precious faith", biblical and theological training, and personal acquaintance with some of the interviewees. This tacit knowledge was both an advantage in the data collection process and a cause for careful scrutiny in that the researcher was cognizant of many of the issues that might be discussed by the interviewees.

Qualitative Methods

This research study employed a qualitative methodology. Understandably, Lincoln and Guba include qualitative methods as one of their fourteen characteristics of naturalistic inquiry as it emphasizes an emergent design, thick or rich description, and a more holistic understanding of the multi-layered facets of the individual cases. Patton adds that "qualitative designs are naturalistic to the extent that the research

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[160] Lincoln and Guba, p.107.

takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest."[161]

More specifically, this researcher employed a semi-structured interview format to develop a holistic understanding of the leadership practices employed by interim pastors in individual transitional ministry contexts. Interviews were conducted in a face-to-face fashion with further telephone interviews and written interview questions utilized to verify the trustworthiness of the data gathered. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, checked for accuracy, approved by the interviewees, coded, aggregated, and summarized.

While the interview methodology was a primary data-gathering methodology, other methods including observation, field notes, document analysis, and member checking added to the robustness of the data.

Purposive Sampling

While randomness and generalization are key elements of quantitative research, qualitative methodology employs a more strategic sampling format. Cases are particularly chosen "because they are 'information rich' and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling then, is aimed at insight about phenomenon, not empirical generalization from sample to a population."[162]

This study focused on interim pastors within The Fellowship. Names of potential participants were gathered from regional directors. The researcher contacted regional offices requesting lists of names of practicing interim pastors. The regional

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[161] Patton, p.39.
[162] Patton, p.40.

directors either supplied the list of names or passed the request along to their regional

interim pastors allowing them, if they so chose, to contact this researcher. The FEB

CENTRAL region yielded the largest group of interim pastors. As this is the region

in which the researcher resides, the face-to-face interviews were chosen from among

the FEB CENTRAL list of names. The FEB CENTRAL regional director actually

supplied the list highlighting six potential interim pastors that he felt would be the

most experienced and beneficial to the study. In his opinion, they would prove to be

the most information rich sources of data. As the FEB CENTRAL region is

geographically vast, this researcher selected those interviewees that were within a

reasonable driving distance. Those from other regions were contacted by telephone.

Inductive Data Analysis

Within the naturalistic paradigm a qualitative researcher employs an inductive

approach to theory building. In essence, "the qualitative analyst seeks to understand

the multiple interrelationships among dimensions that emerge from the data without

making prior assumptions or specifying hypotheses about linear or correlative

relationships among narrowly defined, operationalized variables."[163] With the

inductive approach, there may be a tentative understanding of the subject under

investigation; however, the researcher lacks sufficient data to initially construct a

working theory of the particular phenomenon. Consequently, the researcher seeks to

collect narratives, observations, documentation, and other sources of information in

order to build theory and understanding of the research subject. This bottom-up

approach to theory building allows the researcher to examine multiple layers of rich,

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[163] Patton, p.56.

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complex, and sometimes conflicting data without eliminating material because of pre-constructed hypotheses.

This researcher employed a semi-structured interview format utilizing ten open-ended questions. Such a design offered significant latitude to the participants to share their individual and sometimes complex realities. Multiple layers of data were gathered from face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and written responses. Interviewees often conversationally digressed into personal, unrelated issues that invariably added depth and richness to the description of their unique contexts. From these multiple layers of data the researcher was able to identify and construct the patterns of leadership practice in their individual interim settings.

Grounded Theory

As the very term implies, grounded theory is a process whereby the researcher inductively derives meaning from data. In this sense, the theory is grounded in the data. As a mode of research grounded theory employs a constant comparative method delineating particular units of measurement such as themes, concepts, and patterns. Charmaz states, "Grounded theory methods are a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development."[164] However, grounded theory is localized to the context of the real-world situations under investigation as "the naturalistic paradigm states that only time

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[164] Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory In The 21st Century", in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln editors, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), p.507.

and context-bound working hypotheses are possible (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)."[165] Therefore, because of the nature of the investigation, researchers employing grounded theory avoid generalizing to more universal theory. The data is gleaned from the analysis and pertains to the immediate situation. Yet to some extent, because of the multiple-case study approach and comparative analyses, there is a degree to which application may be made to a larger context.

This researcher employed a modified comparison method focusing on face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews. Concepts, patterns, categories, and themes, were identified, coded, and synthesized by hand. No specialized software was employed for this process. The researcher, because of his lengthy experience in pastoral ministry and history in The Fellowship, proceeded to identify emerging concepts and patterns in the accumulating data fields. Discrepant data, while adding a level of complexity to the coding process, actually furthered the researcher's understanding and the subsequent descriptive richness of presentation.

Emergent Design

Naturalistic inquiry is not linear in nature. In fact, there is a sense in which an emergent design applies to various stages of naturalistic qualitative research. For this researcher, the literature review provided a basis for the initial stating of the research and interview questions. Yet, in keeping with the nature of qualitative multiple-case study research, "ongoing analysis of data was used to change and clarify the nature of questions asked by the researcher."[166]

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[165] Anne Hillman, "Everyday Occupational Roles of People With Parkinson's Disease and their Partners," (Ph.D. diss., The University of Sydney, March, 2006), p.113.
[166] Hillman, p.112.

Neither the methodology, interview schedule, flow of interview questions, expected pattern coding, or categorical aggregation of the data proceeded as this researcher had originally anticipated. As this researcher acquired new information and data, he also discovered new avenues for research and inquiry. More importantly, the emergent design was shaped over time by the interaction between the researcher and the interviewees. As participants shared their stories and insights, new foci and queries developed leading in different directions.

Negotiated Outcomes

Naturalistic inquiry precludes preconceived outcomes. The qualitative researcher does not approach the study with an idea of where and how the data will appear, nor what the final conclusion may be. In effect, "the outcomes are the result of negotiation and interaction as both fact and interpretations that will ultimately find their way into the case report must be subjected to scrutiny by respondents who earlier acted as sources for that information."[167] Both the researcher and respondents adapt and adjust through their interaction.

Throughout the data gathering process this researcher obtained informed written consent from participants, transcribed the recorded interviews, and provided the transcripts to respondents for their perusal, correction, and approval. The process of interviewing, however, allowed the researcher to adjust his interviewing procedures as he gained greater understanding of the topic from the interim pastors. This adjustment subsequently affected the researcher's later interviews and emerging understanding of the issues related to the topic.

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[167] Lincoln and Guba, p.211.

Case Study Reporting Mode

Lincoln and Guba emphasize the case study mode as a significant characteristic of naturalistic inquiry as it supports "the investigator's interaction with the site and consequent biases that may result (reflexive reporting); because it provides the basis for both individual "naturalistic generalizations" (Stake, 1980) and transferability to other sites (thick description); because it is suited to demonstrating the variety of mutually shaping influences present."[168] Yin states, "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."[169] Stake refers to a case as "an integrated system."[170] In essence, the case study method examines a phenomenon in depth allowing "investigators to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events."[171]

When conducting case study research, the investigator seeks "to answer specific research questions (that may be fairly loose to begin with) and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, evidence which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers to the research questions."[172] A multiple-case approach follows replication logic in which "the cases should serve in a manner similar to multiple experiments."[173] As a qualitative methodology, a multiple-case study approach serves the intent of naturalistic inquiry to investigate the phenomenon in a natural setting.

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[168] Lincoln and Guba, p.42.
[169] Yin, p.13.
[170] Stake, p.2
[171] Yin, p.2.
[172] Gillham, p.2.
[173] Yin, p.53.

This researcher employed a multiple-case study method in identifying the leadership practices of interim pastors in their individual transitional settings. The participants were informed of the nature of the research, the demographics of those interviewed, the process of data collection, approval, and reporting, as well as safeguards in place to ensure their anonymity. Transcripts were supplied to participants for their individual feedback, correction, and approval. Additional sources of information were consulted. Data was collected, coded, aggregated, summarized, and reported.

Idiographic Interpretation

Naturalistic inquiry asserts that information gathered from interviewees, observations, and documentation is bounded within the context of the study. Lincoln and Guba state, "The naturalist is inclined to interpret data (including the drawing of conclusions) idiographically (in terms of the particulars of the case) rather than nomothetically (in terms of law-like generalizations) because different interpretations are likely to be meaningful for different realities; and because interpretations depend so heavily for their validity on local particulars, including the particular investigator-respondent (or object) interaction."[174]

The research for this study focused on the individual cases mentioned below. Interpretation and summarization was based on the data gleaned from the case interviews, observations, field notes, and documentation. While outside literature was referenced and employed in this study, the results were context based.

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[174] Lincoln and Guba, p.42.

Tentative Application

The object of this research project was not to produce generalizable results but to identify leadership practices on a case-by-case basis. Lincoln and Guba suggest, "The naturalist is likely to be tentative (hesitant) about making broad application of the findings because realities are multiple and different; because the findings are to some extent dependent upon the particular interaction between investigator and respondents (or object) that may not be duplicated elsewhere; because the extent to which the findings may be applicable elsewhere depends upon the empirical similarity of sending and receiving contexts; because the particular 'mix' of mutually shaping influences may vary markedly from setting to setting."[175] In other words, no two situations are alike and therefore broad generalizations may not apply equally in every case. Consequently, only tentative applications and conclusions may be drawn. However, the applications or conclusions may enable other researchers to make informed decisions as to applicability to a new context.

This researcher investigated, on a case-by-case basis, the leadership practices of interim pastors within The Fellowship. Not all contexts and interim pastors were exhaustively investigated. Not all regions were equally studied. Consequently the data provided and conclusions drawn were from unique and varied contexts. However, the conclusions were presented in such a way as to allow the reader to make an informed decision on whether or not to use the data in a new context. To this extent the results are transferable and somewhat generalizable.

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[175] Lincoln and Guba, p.42.

Focus-determined Boundaries

Lincoln and Guba state, "The naturalist is likely to set boundaries to the inquiry on the basis of the emergent focus (problems for research, evaluands for evaluation, and policy options for policy analysis) because that permits the multiple realities to define the focus (rather than inquirer preconceptions); because focus-setting can be more closely mediated by the investigator-focus interaction."[176] In any multiple-case setting, boundaries are necessary to avoid "case drift". The investigator must adhere to some degree of boundary making so as to avoid wastage of time and resources. Boundaries are determined on the basis of research focus.

This researcher purposely focused his research on the practice of leadership in the interim pastoral setting. Other clergy settings and functions were eliminated. Other church offices and positions were also discarded from investigation. Investigation centered on the interview, observation, field note, and documentation format of inquiry. Face-to-face interviews were established on the practical basis of driving distance and cost. Telephone interviews were established on a regional basis with those who were willing to participate.

Special Criteria for Trustworthiness

The axioms of naturalistic inquiry preclude the use of the standard criteria for trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba state, "The naturalist is likely to find the conventional trustworthiness criteria (internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity) inconsistent with the axioms and procedures of naturalistic inquiry."[177] Consequently, because of the nature of the naturalistic paradigm, the researcher

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[176] Lincoln and Guba, p.42.
[177] Lincoln and Guba, p.42.

employs different criteria for establishing the trustworthiness of the research data and conclusions. Lincoln and Guba suggest the following: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This researcher carefully established the trustworthiness criteria of the research process, data, and results. The trustworthiness criteria for this study will be discussed below.

<p style="text-align:center">Research Design</p>

Participants

This research study focused on active or recently active interim pastors in The Fellowship. Each of the interim pastors interviewed had held at least one full time pastoral position prior to beginning an interim role. Most of the participants were older men who had served in pastoral ministry for many years. One was a young, former pastor. Those participating in face-to-face interviews had served in FEB CENTRAL churches prior to beginning their interim ministries. Telephone interviews were conducted with interim pastors from other regions of The Fellowship and with three from within the FEB CENTRAL region that were situated a significant distance from this interviewer.

Interviewees were contacted from lists provided by The Fellowship regional directors or by referrals from regional directors. Six of those participating in face-to-face interviews had been selected by the FEB CENTRAL regional director. He considered them to be more valuable to this research study. Participants were provided with an informed consent form and a transcript of their interviews.

Research Sites

Each face-to-face participant was allowed to choose a natural and comfortable setting for the interview. One interviewee chose to meet in this researcher's office and appeared quite at ease in this setting. Others chose their homes and offices as well as Tim Hortons coffee shops. Those who agreed to telephone interviews were asked to provide the researcher with a list of times that would be convenient to them. This researcher then negotiated a time that was convenient to both researcher and interviewee.

Procedure

The Fellowship has nearly 500 churches in nine of the provinces and two of the territories. These churches are organized in several regions. The churches in the regions vary in number from less than ten to nearly 300. Each region has a part or full-time regional director overseeing the regional work of The Fellowship.

This researcher contacted each English-speaking region to obtain a list of potential participants for this study. The FEB CENTRAL regional director provided this researcher with a list of 19 active interim pastors in the FEB CENTERAL region. The regional directors for FEBCAST and FEB Pacific, because of privacy concerns, agreed to forward this researcher's written request to their interim pastors. They were then free to respond to this researcher and subsequently participate in this study. The FEBCAST interim pastors chose to participate as did a FEB Pacific interim. The regions of FEB Atlantic and FEB Mid failed to respond to this researcher's requests for names of practicing interim pastors.

Individual Interviews

Naturalistic inquiry involves purposive sampling. Rather than being chosen on a purely random basis, cases are particularly selected in order to provide a greater depth of information on the topic under investigation. These cases included an interview format. As Gillham points out, "Any research which aims to achieve an understanding of people in a real-world context is going to need some interview material, if only to provide illustration, some insight into what it is like to be a person in that setting."[178] In this study, the face-to-face interviews were selected in accord with the suggestions made by the veteran regional director of FEB CENTRAL. In providing the list of 19 interim pastors from the region, the regional director took the initiative to point out six possible interim pastors that this researcher should consider interviewing. The regional director's explanation for selecting the six candidates was based on their greater level of experience and success in interim pastoral ministry. In his opinion, they would yield greater amounts of quality data when interviewed.

This researcher purposely sought other interview input from The Fellowship pastors across Canada. Each region except AEBEQ, the French speaking churches of Quebec and New Brunswick, was contacted to secure a listing of active interim Pastors. Because of language concerns, this researcher chose to focus on English speaking regions. Telephone interviews were arranged with interim pastors at a time convenient to them. Interview questions were emailed to these participants prior to the interview. As well, an informed consent form was also sent to the interviewees. All participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect their identity and information.

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[178] Bill Gillham, *The Research Interview,* (London: Continuum, 2000), p.12.

The researcher followed a semi-structured format using open-ended questions. The same set of questions was asked to all interviewees. The interview questions were designed to elicit information on the interviewees' background and training prior to their assuming an interim role, the genesis of their interim role, their initial expectations and objectives of their interim ministry, the challenges of their interim position and how they met those challenges, the more effective leadership practices utilized by the participants, the major concerns in interim pastoral ministry, the similarities and variations of interim leadership in succeeding churches, and any other information deemed helpful by the participants.

The interview format was designed to allow the participants to share their individual stories of interim pastoral leadership practice through their journey as transitional pastors in varying ministry contexts. The interviewees were asked to share their stories along with their successes, challenges, concerns, and complaints. Investigative prompts were used throughout the interview process to educe finer nuances of the topic under discussion. This researcher strove to achieve rapport with each interviewee by employing appropriate body language and tone of voice. The latter tool was central to the telephone interviews. All face-to-face and telephone interviews were recorded on two digital recorders: a Sony ICD-PX820 and a Phillips Voice Tracer 7655. The interviews were then transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking 10 transcription software. The transcripts were corrected before sending to the interviewee for his inspection and approval. Only the initial questions and interviewee answers were sent to participants. The researcher's prompts, comments, and interjections were deleted from the transcript.

Following the interview, the data was transcribed and provided to the interviewee for his inspection, correction, and approval. Any further comments by the participant were added at this stage. Field notes were made prior to and after each interview. The actual interview questions are presented and discussed in chapter four. The letter of informed consent may be found in Appendix A.

Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration for the researcher in the naturalistic paradigm is of significant importance. Erlandson states, "While naturalistic researchers are, by the implications of their own paradigm, eager to safeguard their respondents, their view of the ethical dimensions is much more comprehensive."[179] Understandably, this researcher, employing a qualitative, multiple-case study methodology within a naturalistic paradigm, included ethical safeguards in the approval, design, execution, and production of this study.

Permission for the study of this topic was first obtained from the director of the Ph.D. in Leadership Program of Tennessee Temple University, Dr. Andrew T. Alexson. This researcher then obtained approval from the chairperson of his dissertation committee, Dr. Lori Robertson. An extensive topic proposal was subsequently submitted to and approved by the director and chair prior to the design and implementation of the interview process.

This researcher first approached the regional directors of the various regions of The Fellowship explaining the intent and format for this research project, securing their support for this study, and obtaining a list of, or referrals to, potential

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[179] David A. Erlandson et al, *Doing Naturalistic Research: A Guide to Methods,* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993), p.158.

participants. Potential face-to-face interviewees were then contacted by telephone securing their willingness to serve in this study. The telephone calls were followed up by an explanatory email with the informed consent form and interview questions attached.

All participants were assured that they would be supplied with a pseudonym and that any reference to their present or former ministries would also receive assumed names or terminology. The participants were also informed that the transcripts of their conversations would be corrected and approved by them. This researcher also sought to answer any questions that the interviewees might ask prior to their involvement in the interview process.

Limitations

Limitations for this study included: time, resources, interviewee receptivity, bias, and topic choice. The first and more obvious limitation pertained to time constraints. Obviously, one might desire to contact numerous interviewees for face-to-face interviews in light of the fact that this type of data gathering yields quality information. However, the significant time expenditures invested in planning, executing, transcribing, analyzing, and reporting this data precludes a breadth of interviews. As Gillham concludes, "Face-to-face interviews are enormously time consuming."[180] Consequently, this researcher purposely limited the number of face-to-face interviews.

The second limitation, resources, was also quite understandable. Gillham states, "Large-scale interview studies are rare because of the enormous cost

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[180] Gillham, *Interview,* p.9.

involved."[181] With a greater number of interviewees, one must invest increasing

amounts of resources, especially financial. The potential participants for this study

were situated throughout the province of Ontario and across Canada. The driving

distances involved in meeting several of these interviewees was prohibitive. As well,

the participants were available at times convenient to them. Consequently, the travel

and accommodations costs were even greater. This researcher could not choose the

less expensive times to travel. Consequently, fewer face-to-face interviews were

undertaken.

A third limitation pertained to the receptivity of the participants themselves.

While potential interviewees were willing to participate, not all regional directors

were timely in their response to requests for listings of interim pastors in their

regions. For some of the directors, this study did not seem to be a priority.

A fourth limitation pertained to the bias of the researcher. As a veteran pastor,

this researcher undoubtedly reflected on the interview discussion and data from a

senior pastoral perspective. While relating to the participants on a pastor-to-pastor

basis, this researcher's experience and understanding of pastoral ministry undeniably

affected his interpretation of the data. The interview, coding, aggregation, and

summarization processes may have been different if performed by a non-pastoral

researcher. Non-pastoral interviewers might have missed some of the inferences and

ministry insights shared between veteran pastors.

The fifth limitation pertained to topic choice. Recognizing that the topic of

interim pastoral work is quite broad and includes various sub-topics and

specializations, all of which could have been investigated, this researcher purposely

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[181] Gillham, *Interview,* p.12.

narrowed the focus of his inquiry to one important aspect of interim pastoral ministry, leadership practice. This narrowing of focus understandably limited the understanding of the greater topic.

<p align="center">Trustworthiness</p>

With any research methodology, the key element of trustworthiness must be addressed. In the quantitative realm of research the conventional terms of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity are employed in presenting the trustworthiness of the research method and data. However, the qualitative researcher working within the naturalistic paradigm employs a different set of criteria to present the trustworthiness of the research method and data. Hillman states, "Terms such as reliability and validity are not considered appropriate to the way in which qualitative research is conducted."[182] Heopfl, in referencing Strauss and Corbin explains, "The usual canons of 'good science'…require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research."[183] The naturalistic researcher employs a different set of criteria in order to represent the trustworthiness of the research project and, just as with the quantitative approach, "such research demands theoretical sophistication and methodological rigour."[184] Consequently, in order to maintain the trustworthiness of qualitative work, Lincoln and Guba suggest an alternative set of criteria, consistent with the naturalistic paradigm. These two authors in their classic work, *Naturalistic Inquiry,* identified four criteria that correspond to the above four positivistic criteria. The four terms suggested by Lincoln and Guba, though criticized by some researchers have, nonetheless, been widely accepted throughout the qualitative research

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[182] Hillman, p.137.
[183] Hoepfl, p.9.
[184] David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research*, (London: Thousand Oaks, 2005), p.209.

community. The four terms are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

While the concept of internal validity assumes a single reality, the naturalistic paradigm assumes the presence of multiple realities. Consequently, the benchmark of credibility is determined by "whether the reconstructions (research findings and interpretations) are credible to the constructions of the original multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)."[185] Lincoln and Guba and Cressman suggest several common methods to establish credibility. To varying degrees, this research study utilized the following: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity, and member checks.[186]

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement may be variously interpreted. What one researcher might consider prolonged engagement could well be thought of as a brief glance. Nevertheless, 'Guba and Lincoln's (1989) suggestions of prolonged engagement and persistent observations point to the most helpful techniques for constructing a view of the context in its natural state."[187] When a researcher invests time into the research topic and the research participants in their natural context, she or he is able to construct a deeper and consistent understanding of what might be significant to the investigation. As Ely affirms, "Qualitative researchers have to be there with all our senses, with much of our time, and with a quiet stubborn streak that says, 'There is a

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[185] Hillman, p.137.

[186] Egon G. Guba and Yvonne S. Lincoln, *Fourth Generation Evaluation,* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), p.238.

[187] Margot, Ely, et al., *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles Within Circles,* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1991), p.51.

way. Maybe we haven't found it yet but with patience and skill, maybe

tomorrow.'"[188] One must simply be willing to invest the time and resources into the

research process.

This researcher's interest in this topic was such that he actually began

researching it fourteen months prior to formally proposing it as a research study. As

well, the researcher has followed the careers of three of the face-to-face interviewees

having personally known these men for over twenty years. Further, for the purposes

of this study, the researcher invested significant amounts of time and resources in

order to continually contact and communicate with each of the interviewees on a

more prolonged basis. With the telephone interviewees, this researcher sought to

communicate by email several times before and after the interviews in order to

maintain contact and glean any further insights into their particular context as interim

pastors. Completing the transcripts and returning them to each participant for his

correction and approval provided one further contact point for added investigation.

Persistent Observation

This method, while closely aligned with the previous, focuses on purposeful

and assertive investigation in which the researcher filters the data, sorting the relevant

from the inaccurate or irrelevant. At this stage one is attentive to both verbal and

non-verbal clues gathered through the interview process and any other observational

opportunities that are afforded the researcher. Confusing messages communicated in

one context may more easily be explained through the observation of other contexts

and interview settings.

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[188] Ely, p.51.

This researcher sought to be attentive to both what was said and how it was said in the interview settings. Non-verbal clues were noted such as body language, hesitation in answering, and length of responses to particular questions. As well, the telephone interviews, while eliminating any visual clues, offered some continued insight into the interviewee's context. This researcher noted certain pauses and introspective reflections in response to particular questions. He documented these responses in his field notes. Even the email correspondences with interviewees offered some insight.

Peer Debriefing

The method of peer debriefing allows the researcher to explore any emerging concepts and difficulties. For the researcher, "a peer reviewer provides support, plays devil's advocate, challenges the researches' assumptions, pushes the researchers to the next step methodologically, and asks hard questions about methods and interpretations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)."[189] Any researcher misses the obvious concepts and clues from time to time. As well, any researcher faces the inevitable roadblocks, setbacks, and detours throughout the research process. It is at these times that the foil of a peer is invaluable to one's perspective and focus.

This researcher utilized the insights and hard questions of two veteran colleagues in the design and execution phases of this study. Their encouragement, frankness, and wisdom were timely and insightful. Both individuals were versed in the subject matter and procedures for this study. They provided invaluable clarification for this researcher as he struggled with some of the concepts.

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[189] John W. Cresswell and Dana L. Miller, "Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry," in *Theory Into Practice,* Summer 2000, p.128.http://www.medicine.usask.ca/family/research/manuals/qualitative-research/Validity%20in%20Qual%20Rch.pdf (accessed June, 2010).

Negative Case Analysis

The naturalistic paradigm assumes multiple realities. Consequently, not every theme or case will perfectly fit one's emerging theory. What the researcher may discover in one context may not align with the data from another case or investigation. In this instance, the method of negative case analysis, or disconfirming evidence, allows the researcher to test for alternative hypotheses or conclusions. If the data supports the stated hypotheses more than any alternative theories, then this best fit strategy adds validity to the emerging theory. Further, negative cases that may not fit with other investigations allow the researcher to investigate possible additional nuances.

This researcher, not surprisingly, discovered some variance in the data gathered from individual cases. No two interviewees faced the same contexts, expressed the same objectives and desires, followed the same practices, exemplified the same leadership spirit, or found the same level of success. In fact, some data countered the evidence gleaned from other investigations. This researcher employed this countering data to confirm the strength of the emerging theories and more finely examine the nuances of leadership practices evidenced in the other cases.

Progressive Subjectivity

The process of naturalistic inquiry involves the researcher as well as the objects of research. Progressive subjectivity simply states that "any construction that emerges from an inquiry must, to be true to constructivist principles, be a joint one."[190] No qualitative researcher has a perfect grasp on what data will emerge as the process unfolds. Throughout the research process, settings will change and theories

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[190] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth Generation,* p.238.

will emerge, develop, and perhaps diminish. However, one must be aware of the tyranny of pre-conceived ideas and directions, for "if the inquirer affords too much privilege to the original constructions (or to earlier constructions as time progresses), it is safe to assume that he or she is not paying as much attention to the constructions offered by other participants as they deserve."[191] This researcher employed a reflective methodology to address this tendency.

This researcher used a journaling methodology whereby he could engage in reflective analysis on the emerging concepts in the data. As well, he regularly questioned his own assumptions as to what the data might be revealing. This was particularly useful as the researcher forced himself to question his assumptions about the direction of the research and the interpretation of the data. As well, the researcher sought the input from his colleagues as to the development and direction of the study. Their guidance proved invaluable.

Member Checks

Member checking provides an essential test for credibility. In fact, "Guba and Lincoln identified the most important criteria to establishing credibility as member checking."[192] Its importance lies in the nature of naturalistic qualitative research. Erlandson explains, "Because the realities that will be included are those that have individually and collectively been constructed by persons within the context of the study, it is imperative that both data and interpretations obtained be verified by those persons."[193]

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[191] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth Generation,* p.238.
[192] Ondercin, p. 39.
[193] Erlandson, p.31.

This researcher transcribed each interviewee's interview and supplied the participant with a copy. The interviewee was asked to read, correct, add, or delete any data from the transcripts. The researcher intentionally asked the interviewee to reflect on the original data provided and consider whether there might be further clarification required. Only after the transcript was considered an accurate rendering of the participant's concepts and words was it then coded and included in theory formation.

Transferability

Transferability, as criteria for judging the quality of qualitative naturalistic research, roughly corresponds to the conventional term, external validity. However, external validity in the positivist paradigm seeks to generalize the research results from a given sample to a greater population or setting. In the naturalistic paradigm, there is the recognition that local research settings will vary. One cannot control all variables. Consequently the researcher may not generalize the research results from one study to a more generalized context. There are simply too many variables that can change. As Hillman points out, "Because qualitative research involves a particular person interacting with a particular researcher it is argued that direct transferability to other people or groups is inappropriate unless the investigator knows a great deal about both groups and is able to make direct comparisons based on detailed definitions."[194]

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[194] Hillman, p.140.

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The naturalistic researcher asserts that "at best only working hypotheses may be abstracted, the transferability of which is an empirical matter, depending on the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts."[195]

If, as the naturalistic researcher maintains, there is a variance in settings, then it is the responsibility of subsequent researchers to assess the appropriateness and applicability of the original findings to their new setting. The responsibility of the original researcher is then to provide such rich and thick description so as to facilitate the understanding of later researchers.

In this study, care was taken to document the design, data, and resulting conclusions so that later replication might be possible. The use of thick description of the settings, findings, and analysis strengthens the possibility of transferability.

Dependability

While the concept of dependability roughly corresponds to the quantitative term reliability, the qualitative researcher understands that, because of the subjective nature of naturalistic research, pure replication and hence quantitative reliability is difficult. Rossman and Rallis explain, "The purpose of qualitative research is not to immaculately replicate what has gone before; in fact, such replication is impossible, given the dynamic nature of the social world and given that the researcher is not an instrument in the experimental sense."[196] Consequently, the aim of the qualitative researcher is to achieve research dependability through extensive documentation, investigation through multiple sources, and careful attention to a procedural trail. In other words, "to provide for a check on dependability, the researcher must make it

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[195] Lincoln and Guba, p.297.
[196] Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research,* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), p.67.

possible for an external check to be conducted on the processes by which the study was conducted."[197]

This researcher sought to demonstrate dependability through documentation of the evolving process of the research including: topic selection, research design, data collection, content analysis, and interpretation of the results. Specifically, this researcher employed several record keeping tools to document the steps taken in this study including: topic selection correspondence, research question design, interview question design and testing, field notes, interview hand-written observations, interview transcripts, informed consent forms, member checking, written lay-person insights, and sample transitional contracts and congregation expectation forms.

Confirmability

Researcher bias presents a challenge to investigative neutrality. In a sense, all researchers struggle with the possibility of bias. Hoepfl observes that there are many "who call into question the true objectivity of statistical measures and, indeed, the possibility of ever attaining pure objectivity at all (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Eisner, 1991)."[198] The presence of bias is particularly prominent in naturalistic research due to the subjective nature of the inquiry. However, "the naturalistic researcher does not attempt to ensure that observations are free from contamination by the researcher but rather to trust in the 'confirmability' of the data themselves."[199] Qualitative analysis shifts the emphasis of neutrality from the researcher to the data. Consequently, the naturalistic researcher validates "that data (constructions, assertions, facts, and so on) can be tracked to their sources, and that the logic used to assemble the interpretations

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[197] Erlandson et al, p.34.
[198] Hoepfl, 11.
[199] Erlandson et al, p.34.

into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit."[200]

In light of this neutrality shift, the researcher's goal was to maintain and demonstrate confirmability throughout the study.

Transcribed face-to-face interviews were augmented by telephone interviews, written observations, sample transitional contracts, lay person written remarks, member checks, and field notes. As well, this researcher added to his original number of interviewees as time permitted. A total of eighteen interviews provided a greater breadth of data.

Confirmability was also evidenced through journaling. This researcher recorded his intentions, questions, reflections, and insights throughout the research process. The transcripts of interviews, correspondences, and other documentation were organized and employed for the purposes of this study.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Methodology</div>

Data analysis in this research study sought to identify the leadership practices of interim pastors in their transitional contexts. The investigation followed a multiple-case study method and employed interpretational analysis "to postulate conceptual linkages or, to use more traditional terminology, to generate plausible hypotheses." [201] The analysis was characterized by the following ten principles or commonalities as presented by Tesch in her work, *Creative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools* (pp.95-96):

1. Analysis is not the last phase in the research process; it is concurrent with data collection or cyclic.

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[200] Guba and Lincoln, *Fourth Generation,* p.243.
[201] Renata, Tesch, *Qualitative Research: Analysis and Software Tools,* p.98.

2.   The analysis process is systematic and comprehensive, but not rigid.

3.   Attending to the data includes a reflective activity that results in a set of analytical notes that guide the process.

4.   Data are 'segmented', i.e., divided into relevant and meaningful 'units' yet the connection to the whole is maintained.

5.   The data segments are categorized according to an organising system that is predominantly derived from the data themselves.

6.   The main intellectual tool is comparison.

7.   Categories for sorting segments are tentative and preliminary in the beginning; they remain flexible.

8.   Manipulating qualitative data during analysis is an eclectic activity; there is no one 'right' way.

9.   The procedures are neither 'scientific' nor 'mechanistic'.

10.   The result of the analysis is some type of higher-level synthesis.

This researcher actually began data analysis once the interview process began. This analysis continued throughout the data gathering stage of the project and utilized a modified form of Gillham's content analysis system explained below. This researcher included a set of reflective, written notes with each interview. The data was originally segmented into somewhat similar and identifiable units. Recurring patterns and themes gradually appeared. Initial coding was tentative and remained flexible throughout the process. The result of this analysis was a progressive categorical aggregation and thematic development.

Procedures

Naturalistic qualitative analysis "requires an organisational and conceptual structure that allows the researcher to gain an overview of the data, carry out different analytic tasks and make sense of the evidence collected."[202] The approaches to qualitative analysis vary with the type and design of the research, and "each researcher needs, through experience and reflection, to find the forms of analysis that work for him or her."[203] This researcher chose to employ the following content analysis suggested by Gillham in his work, *Case Study Research Methods* (pp.71-75):

1. Take each transcript in turn.

2. Go through each one highlighting substantive statements (those that really make a point). Ignore repetitions, digressions and other clearly irrelevant material.

3. Some statements will be similar but if they add something mark them up.

4. Take a break. Doing the transcripts one after another will dull one's concentration.

5. After all the transcripts have been highlighted, go back to the first one and read them through again….Make any changes necessary.

6. Now comes the difficult, intellectually creative stage. Go back to the beginning again (after an interval) and, going through the highlighted statements, try to derive a set of categories for the responses to each question. Give these a simple heading….Depending on the number of

[202] Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis, *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers,* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), p.217.
[203] Stake, p.77.

categories; it may be easier to go from one transcript to another, dealing with one question at a time.

7.   Look at the list of categories and ask whether some of them could be combined or, alternatively split up.

8.   Go through the transcripts, with the list of categories at hand. Check each substantive (highlighted) statement against the category list to see if it has somewhere to go. Mark '?' to those statements that cannot readily be assigned to any category. Modify the wording of the category headings. Add new categories if necessary.

9.   Enter the categories on an analysis grid. If there are a large number of categories for each question, make up a grid/spreadsheet for each of them rather than for the transcripts as a whole.

10.   Go through the transcripts, assigning each substantive statement (where possible) to a category. Unclassifiable statements will be dealt with separately. Count or write out the actual statements under each category. Use the exemplar quotes for the reporting stage.

11.   Use the data from this analysis in conjunction with other kinds of collected data when writing up the report.

This writer followed this procedure highlighting statements, creating categories, assigning statements to categories, summarizing categories into themes, and selecting exemplar quotes that would illustrate the categories. The results are presented in the following chapter.

Summary

This chapter has presented a summary of the process used in the course of this research study. Relevant terms have been explained, the research paradigm with its attendant terminology has been discussed, the research design has been presented, and the analysis procedures have been outlined. The following chapter addresses the content of the study pertaining to leadership practice in interim pastoral ministry. Discussion focuses on the interpretations, categories, and themes that have emerged through the process of analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Chapter four presents the data analysis and results of the research conducted for this project. This chapter includes a rehearsal of the purpose, the research questions guiding this project, a brief discussion of the research process, a review of the participants, a presentation of the analytic procedure, a categorical aggregation of the interview question data, an analysis of the resultant interim leadership practice themes, and a summary.

Project Purpose

This research project focuses on the leadership practices of interim pastors in The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. The rationale for such a study includes the frequency with which interim assignments occur in The Fellowship churches, the length of contemporary interim assignments, unique congregational needs during the interim period, and the challenges of the change process faced by congregations and senior pastors. These primary reasons underscore the need for this research into the leadership practices of interim pastors in The Fellowship.

Research Questions

Three primary research questions guided this research into the leadership practices of interim pastors in The Fellowship. These include:

Question One: What leadership practices are evidenced by the successful interim pastors examined in this study?

Question Two: To what extent are common leadership practices evidenced across the sample of interim pastors identified in this study?

Question Three: What factors influence, and in what ways, the identified leadership practices of these transitional pastors in their transitional settings?

These three research questions provide the basis for the designed interview questions employed in the data gathering process of this project.

Research Process

The research for this project was limited to interim pastors within The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. After this researcher obtained approval for this project from the director of Ph.D. studies at Tennessee Temple University, Dr. Andrew T. Alexson, and the chairperson of this researcher's dissertation committee, Dr. Lori Robertson, he contacted The Fellowship regional directors across Canada. This researcher contacted all English speaking regions of The Fellowship including FEB Pacific, FEB CAST, FEB Mid, FEB Central, and FEB Atlantic. The French speaking region, FEB ABEC, was excluded due to this writer's French language limitations.

This researcher contacted each regional director by email requesting access to the interim pastors in his respective region. The email was followed by a telephone contact or message left with each regional director. The regional directors of FEB CENTRAL, FEB Pacific, and FEB CAST responded to this researcher's requests for access to the interim pastors in their region. Each regional director carefully questioned the writer as to the intended purpose for the requested information. Only after the regional directors were satisfied with the reason for this interim pastor

information request did they agree to help this researcher. The FEB CENTRAL regional director provided a list of the recently active interim pastors in his region. The regional directors for FEB Pacific and FEB CAST agreed to forward the request for a telephone interview to the recently active interim pastors in their respective regions. The latter two regional directors also offered to encourage the interim pastors in their respective regions to contact this researcher and provide any helpful data.

Three participants responded from the FEB Pacific and FEB CAST regions, one from FEB Pacific and two from FEB CAST. The FEB CENTRAL regional director provided this researcher with a list of nineteen interim pastors in the FEB CENTRAL region. The FEB CENTRAL regional director also intentionally specified six interim pastors that he believed to be the more experienced and successful interims in his region. Respecting the regional director's insight, this researcher purposely included these six interims in the pool of interviewees.

This researcher chose to interview by telephone the three out-of-province interim pastors as well as three FEB CENTRAL interim pastors. These six pastors were contacted by telephone due to distance limitations. The other twelve FEB CENTRAL interim pastors were within an acceptable driving distance for this interviewer. Consequently, this researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with each of these twelve interim pastors.

The interview pool was capped at a total of eighteen interviewees. This researcher determined this cap on the basis of interview time constraints. He conducted the eighteen interviews throughout the three months of September through

November, 2010. Interviews lasted a minimum of 55 minutes with a few extending to two and one half hours in length.

This researcher originally anticipated that face-to-face interviews would yield significantly richer data than comparable telephone interviews. However, surprisingly, there was no negligible difference in the type and quality of the data yielded in the two types of interview forms. In fact, some of the telephone interview transcripts proved longer and more substantial than many of the face-to-face interviews.

Interview Participants

This project on interim pastoral leadership practice focused on eighteen interview participants. Each subject had recently served or was serving as an interim pastor in The Fellowship at the time of his interview. When contacted, every participant willingly, and in some instances, eagerly agreed to participate and share his story of interim pastoral leadership practice. The stories were replete with salient leadership data and highly stirring detail. This researcher admittedly had not anticipated the richness, blessing, and wealth of data that these interviews yielded.

Six of the participants lived several hours to several days away from this researcher. Consequently, they were interviewed by telephone. The other twelve interviewees were situated within a reasonable driving distance. They agreed, and in some cases requested a face-to-face interview. One interviewee, now in his waning years, purposely requested that this researcher drive a considerable distance in order to conduct a face-to-face interview. When the researcher arrived at his residence, he found this interim pastor to be bedridden and in constant pain. The interviewee

joyfully shared his extensive interim pastoral experiences while enjoying a pastoral visit from this researcher. In fact, in every interview situation, the interim pastors enthusiastically shared their experiences and wisdom. Some of the interims came to the interviews with prepared notes arising from the researcher's previously delivered interview questions.

Interview participants were invited to designate an interview place of their choosing. The interview settings included Tim Hortons coffee shops, churches, participants' homes, seminary offices, and this writer's own church office. In each case the setting was of the interviewee's own choosing. The interviewees also were assured that their identity would remain anonymous and that any identifiable organizations mentioned in the interviews would be assigned fictitious names. All recorded or print materials arising from the interviews would be kept confidential.

During the course of gathering research material, this writer also questioned two lay-persons who had experienced repeated ministries by interim pastors in their home church. Their insights provided corroborative material on the leadership practice of interim pastors. These two individuals were also assigned pseudonyms for the purposes of this research.   Some interim pastors provided the researcher with personal written materials including interim ministry contracts, and congregational behavioral covenants.

Each of the eighteen participants provided the demographic information presented in Table 1:

Table 1:

Participant Demographic Profiles

Gender	Male: 18
Interim pastoral positions	1-5 churches: 11 6-10 churches: 4 11-15 churches: 2 15-20 churches: 0 20-25 churches: 1
Experience	Full time pastoral experience: 18 Additional seminary experience: 5
Employment Status	Retired (over 65 years of age): 12 Actively employed (under 65): 6
Education	Bachelor's degree: 9 Master's degree: 3 Doctoral degree: 6
Marital status	Married: 18

The Fellowship maintains that males hold all pastoral offices, including interim pastoral positions. Consequently, having served as pastors and interim pastors in The Fellowship churches, all interviewees were male. While the data understandably shows unanimity in gender, there is, however, a significant variance in interim pastoral experience. The majority of the participants held less than five interim pastoral positions during the course of their interim ministries. Two of the eleven interviewees had two interim assignments. The rest in this grouping had four or five assignments. Another four of the interviewees held between six and ten interim positions, two held more than ten, and one experienced veteran served in twenty-one churches. This pool of participants offered this researcher a substantial wealth of interim pastoral experience from which to mine leadership data.

All interview participants had prior pastoral experience. In fact, all of the retirees previously served as senior pastors, many serving throughout their entire pre-retirement years. Five of the interims had previous experience in seminary and Bible college contexts. Four of the five engaged in their interim ministries while also teaching in seminary. The other one began interim ministry after leaving his seminary position. Twelve of the eighteen participants had retired from full-time pastoral ministry. Six interviewees were under the retirement age of 65 and still employed while also participating in interim pastoral ministry.

All participants had Bible college and/or seminary training. Nine of the participants held a bachelor's degree, three held a master's degree, and six held a doctoral degree. All participants were married.

Interview Questions Presentation

The three research questions that guided the direction and formation of this project were addressed through the design of a ten question open-ended interview. This researcher constructed and pre-tested ten questions that allowed the participants to tell their story in a somewhat unrestricted fashion while ensuring that the relevant, needed data would also be extractable. The ten questions appear in the following sample.

Interim Pastoral Interview Questions

1. Could you give me some information regarding your background and experience? (Education, family, experience etc.)

2. How did you come to begin interim pastoral ministry?

3. What, if any, were your expectations on interim pastoral ministry prior to beginning?

4. What objectives, if any, did you have as an interim pastor?

5. What challenges have you faced as an interim pastor?

6. How did you address these challenges as an interim pastor?

7. What leadership practices and activities have been most effective in your interim pastoral context?

8. What are the major concerns that you have addressed in your interim pastoral ministry? How would you measure success in your interim ministry?

9. Are there aspects of interim pastoral ministry that vary from situation to situation (from church to church)? Are there aspects of interim pastoral ministry that are the same in each interim situation (common to all churches)?

10. What other areas of interim pastoral leadership and ministry do you feel are important to share?

The above ten questions were designed to provide this researcher with an extensive appraisal of the participants' histories, their interim pastoral contexts, experiences, expectations, and accomplishments, as well as individual and common leadership practices utilized in their successful execution of their interim ministries. The researcher found that each of the questions yielded relevant leadership practice data. Following the analytic procedure suggested by Gillham in his work, *Case Study Research Methods* (p.71-75), the aggregated categories and themes were determined and summarized. Consequently, this section, though quite lengthy, presents the

interview question responses in their categorical aggregations from which the resultant later thematic summaries are derived.

Question One

Question number one was designed to provide the researcher with a brief experiential context of the participants prior to their beginning interim pastoral ministry. As well, it was intended to create a more relaxed setting and sense of ease for the interviewees. In fact, one participant, Pastor Matthew, stated at the beginning of his interview, "I must confess that I am a little nervous about this interview." Participants shared their educational background, family contexts, former senior pastoral ministries, and health challenges. Some of the participants struggled to summarize a lifetime of ministry and experience into several paragraphs while others completed their self-appraisal in a few sentences. This researcher, perhaps because of his extensive pastoral experience, found that the interims shared some very personal feelings. For instance, Pastor Alex lamented from his medical bed, "At this present time, it is very hard for me as a pastor when you get to the end. It is not an easy time right now. I am praying that the Lord would take me home soon."

Some of the participants' demographic information is listed in table one above. However, it should be mentioned that the interviewees mentioned various items including their dating and early marriage contexts, challenges in early pastoral life, and feelings of insecurity. For instance, Pastor Fred when speaking of his Bible college training stated, "I had to write a letter asking permission to come back the third year. That was humiliating but I'm thankful God allowed me to go through that." All of the pastors explained in some detail how the Lord had directed them to

each of their pastoral callings. While many of the pastoral situations were challenging and even dysfunctional, the participants summarily affirmed the Lord's guidance and strengthening throughout their ministries.

Questions two through six were designed to provide this researcher with extensive interim pastoral leadership practice data. Each of the five questions examined interim pastoral ministry from a different perspective. The questions looked at initial motivation for interim ministry, as well as expectations, objectives, challenges, and solutions exercised throughout the practice of leadership in transitional ministry. As will be seen, the answers to these five questions yielded significant amounts of data. The data is presented here in a question-by-question format and is presented as categorical aggregations.

Question Two

Question number two was designed for three reasons. First, the researcher sought to discover the mechanism whereby formerly full-time pastors transitioned into an entirely different style of pastoral ministry. Second, the writer desired to investigate the means by which the participants moved from church to church. Third, the investigator wanted to determine if there were identifiable placement commonalities between the various interviewees. In other words, were the participants placed in their respective interim ministries as a result of the same mechanism?

This researcher discovered a significant variance in methods whereby pastors began their interim pastoral ministries. There was no single, overarching launch mechanism for these eighteen interim pastors. At least ten different launch methods

were identified. First, for two of the pastors, the regional director had significant

influence on their placements. When commenting on how he began in interim

pastoral ministry, Pastor John rehearsed, "The regional director was aware of my

situation."   Pastor Greg added, "I knew the regional director at the time, so he didn't

have far to go to catch me." Second, two other pastors were simply well known in

The Fellowship and were contacted by churches once it was known they were

available. Pastor Dan commented, "After I retired, the word got around that I was

available for interim ministry." Pastor Trevor concurred adding, "I had energy and I

was very well known because of my travels." Third, one of the pastors who had been

involved in seminary teaching was contacted during the course of his seminary work.

In rehearsing how he began in interim pastoral work, Pastor Peter stated, "I still had

the fifty percent in the seminary. So I sat back and asked myself, 'what now?' At

that time a church approached me." Fourth, two of the pastors admitted that their

beginnings in transitional ministry were financially motivated. For instance, Pastor

Matt remarked, "I needed some extra money." Fifth, at least three of the pastors had

been widely known through their previous itinerant ministries. Pastor Ken explained,

"Because I had spent seventeen years of itinerant ministry with Jim Roberts, I felt that

I would like to spend the rest of my active ministry years (after retiring from senior

pastoral ministry) in what ever itinerant ministry the Lord would open for me." Sixth,

two pastors began their interim ministries as a result of the recommendations of lay-

persons. Pastor Tim explained, "During that time I met a lady in a Bible study who

stated that her church was without a pastor. She asked if I would be a guest speaker.

I filled the pulpit for about a year." Seventh, one pastor began interim pastoral work

through pulpit supply ministry. Pastor Mike explained, "As my regular ministry began to wind down, I began to do some pulpit supply. When I got into pulpit supply, these churches that had an ongoing need, they contacted me." Eighth, two more pastors purposefully trained for intentional interim ministry and promoted themselves to churches in need. Pastor Maurice explained, "I always make a contact with the church. I set out what I do and what I do not do." Ninth, two more pastors were recommended to churches by other pastors. Pastor Allen stated, "Pastor Luke was at Northpoint Baptist. It was Pastor Luke who said to Northpoint Baptist, 'Go after Pastor Allen.'" Finally, another pastor who was vacationing in the area of a struggling church simply recommended himself to that church through the regional director. Pastor Luke mentioned, "I asked the regional director, 'do you think they could use some help?' He contacted them and said, 'Pastor Luke is willing to come.'"

The data reveals the varied methods and motives that interim pastors used when entering interim ministry. However, when continuing in interim ministry, the influence of the regional director became more pronounced with several of these pastors. Pastor Dan explained, "Now, the regional director, whom you know, he would continually recommend me to churches in need of an interim pastor." Other pastors were so well known across The Fellowship that they received continuous invitations without regional director input. Those with the greater number of interim assignments were less likely to rely on regional director recommendations.

No definitive placement method appears to dominate the question two data. The interim placement mechanisms are as varied as the personalities and ministry styles of those engaged in interim pastoral ministry.

Question Three

Question number three was designed to identify any expectations the participants had prior to beginning their interim pastoral careers. The rationale for this question, and question four, pertains to the ultimate identification of leadership practices. This researcher postulated that expectations would influence resultant leadership behavior and practice.

In answer to this question the participants once again offered a variety of responses. Four of the pastors had little idea of what to expect when they started interim ministry. Pastor Fred humorously stated, "I didn't know what to expect so I had my wife call a friend in The Fellowship and ask, 'What is an interim pastor? Does he wear shoes? Does he wear boots?'" He added, "I often say to other pastors at conferences that if I had known that interim ministry is so good I would've started with interim ministry first!"

Three pastors had the general expectation of providing a consistent pulpit ministry during the interim period. In fact, all three began expecting that sharing the Word of God would be their primary function. Pastor John summarized his expectations, "I was looking for a hit and run ministry originally. I vowed to myself, when I retired, that I never wanted to be behind closed doors with deacons ever again!" A fourth pastor also included preaching as a primary expectation, but he

added pastoral care to his answer. Pastor Keith explained, "Interim ministry was the best of two worlds. I got to meet people who I enjoy and I was able to preach."

Four more pastors summarized their expectations as ascertaining the needs of the church in order to address key issues. Pastor Trevor explained, "When I go into a church, I want to learn as much as I can about the congregation. I want to learn where they are and what they have gone through." Pastor Ken expanded this concept mentioning, "I attempted to become aware of some of the needs of the church before I arrived, so my reaction was, 'Lord help me to minister in such a way that there can be healing, or help for the leadership team, or a re-focusing on the future.'"

Two of the pastors mentioned that their foremost expectation of the interim time was to be preparatory for the next pastor. Pastor Allen described how he looked at his role, "My goal is to see Northpoint Baptist Church move as seamlessly as possible from my ministry to that of a new senior pastor and to pass off to him a healthy church, that has relationship health, structural health, and vision health." Pastor Tim reframed this concept differently stating, "The interim pastor acts as a buffer during that transitional time and helps them to get used to a different style."

Each of the final four pastors had differing expectations. One pastor, Pastor Dan, emphasized faithfulness as the overriding expectation mentioning, "You go in to be faithful." Another interim, Pastor Jeff, mentioned finances as his first expectation stating, "There were some financial expectations." A third, Pastor Peter, thought of time as his primary expectation clarifying, "I expected it would be a short role in each church." Interestingly, this pastor eventually had some of the longest interim

ministries. The last pastor had a simple expectation, "Survival". The expectations of the participants varied significantly.

Question Four

Question number four addressed the objectives that the participants had in their interim ministries. The question was broad enough to include their initial objectives as well as any objectives that developed over their careers as interim pastors. As with the previous question on expectations, this question on objectives was designed to trace initial and ongoing objectives in light of the leadership practices of transitional pastors. These practices are examined later in this chapter.

In answer to this question, the interim pastors mentioned a number of objectives. Unlike the previous question, there was a degree of overlapping of answers among the respondents. Consequently, these objectives will be discussed in order of frequency.

The first objective mentioned by the pastors was the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Seven of the interim pastors mentioned this objective directly with other interims referring to this item in terms of later mentioned objectives. Pastor Jeff remarked, "In the situations that I've been in, my main focus has always been preaching and meeting with the leadership." Pastor Mike obliquely commented, "For counselling I always told them, 'I do my counselling on Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. Show up!'" Pastor Tim, in reflecting on his limitations stated, "I am a maintenance man. I'm a teacher and a maintenance man. I am not what you call visionary person. If I get something big started then I'm out of here soon."

The second objective discussed by the interim pastors pertained to preparing the church for the incoming senior pastor. Six of the participants stated this as one of their objectives in transitional ministry. Pastor Keith succinctly summarized this objective stating, "My objective going in was to be like John the Baptist and prepare the way." Pastor Trevor added, "I tried to move them ahead to a place that prepares them for a new person to come in." While six of the pastors pointed directly to the concept of preparing the way, several more alluded to the awareness of readying the church for their future pastor and ministry.

The third objective for five of the interim pastors was investing in leadership. They purposely intended to build relationships with the present leaders and move them forward. In one situation the objective meant clarifying and challenging leadership. For instance, Pastor Paul explained, "We needed to confront. I started with the deacons. They were the weakest ones because they were not able to address the sin that was in the church." He added, "We started to look at the biblical role of the deacons. Once they got that understanding, what their role was, I was really able to use them as a shield to do the cleaning of the congregation." In another situation, it was simply the sense that the interim needed to work closely with established leadership. Pastor Alex explained, "The interim also needs to have an understanding of the leadership so that you are not operating apart from them. You need to be aware of what they are doing, where they are, and what they have designed." With each of these five interims, the importance of encouraging and strengthening leadership was an important objective.

The fourth objective, somewhat associated with the previous item, was an intentional addressing of the structure in the church. Five of the participants viewed structural revision as an important issue. For instance, one interim, Pastor Dan, stated one of his structural objectives, "I believe the church should have both the board of elders and the board of deacons. Now not everyone agrees with that, but that is where I stand." In keeping with this conviction he purposely "instituted an eldership in the church along with the deacons." Another participant looked at structure from the opposite vantage point. Pastor John's intention was to maintain the structure that was already present in the church. He explained, "Churches have a tendency to react or over-react because of a previous pastor. So I really did have to work with the board on that issue so that they would not over-react and tie the hands of the new pastor." Pastor Greg explained this objective as the "development of organizational structure that would help the new incoming pastor." While the various interims mentioned the issue of structure as an objective, they approached the subject differently.

The fifth objective, pastoral care was specifically mentioned as an objective by four participants and alluded to by a few others. Pastor Trevor concisely encapsulated this objective stating, "I was brought up to do a lot of visiting and caring for people. If you care about them and love them they will respond. That is part of being a shepherd." Pastor John explained it slightly differently saying, "My basic objective when going into any church, and this was central to being a happy situation, was to simply to get them to enjoy going to church again."

Closely aligned with the previous purpose is the sixth objective, encouragement and love. Another four interim pastors mentioned this objective.

Pastor Fred said, "You go in and love them and you tell them that you love them. In many sermons in interim churches I would say, 'I am saying this because I love you.'" Pastor Luke would communicate in much the same way stating, "Know that I love you guys. I think you are awesome! I love being here and this is a really nice place to be. So I worked on developing their self-image." Pastor Allen reiterated this sentiment saying, "I determined that I was going to love these people to death!" Each of these interim pastors was careful to communicate their care and love for the flock.

The seventh objective, also mentioned by four pastors, was bringing stability in the church. Four interims mentioned this as one of their objectives. Pastor Mike mentioned that as one of his objectives he determined "to stabilize, to provide spiritual truth, to give them strength and to give them counsel for the particular situation." Pastor Alex framed this intention somewhat differently saying, "You have to somehow pull all the ends together." Pastor Jeff added, "I go in with the idea that I am here to help. I'm not going to cause any problems. I'm going to help you along. I'm here to serve." A few of the others pastors mentioned that when they would encounter a dysfunctional situation, they would take specific actions to stabilize it and bring harmony to the flock.

The eighth objective, closely aligned with the previous item was addressing the issues of the church. Four interim pastors mentioned this item as one of their objectives. Pastor Maurice intentionally approached each interim situation with the question, "How do I resolve issues in the church?" Pastor Keith explained that he would "as much as is possible, try to help them work through what ever the issues are." Pastor Greg mirrored this sentiment saying, "I focused on helping people come

to grips with their issues." These participants assessed the church situation, identified the pressing issues, and addressed them throughout the course of their interim ministry. The pastors suggested that it took a relatively short period of time for them to identify the salient issues. For instance, Pastor Maurice mentioned, "Within a very short period of time I realize what the issues are. After I talk with the board and a few other people in the church I am pretty aware of the issues."

The ninth objective pertained to the task of confronting difficult people in the church. Four participants mentioned this item as one of their objectives. For two of the interims, that meant correction of an individual. Pastor John remarked, "I did have more than one Diotrephes in the church. I had to confront them." Pastor Paul stated, "I butted heads with the worship person who was a volunteer on a regular basis." For two of the interim pastors, the confrontation meant removal of individuals from the church. Pastor Alex simply stated, "We had to rid that group from the church." Pastor Luke added, "They needed to go. While I did not openly state it, it was an objective."

The tenth objective mentioned by three interim pastors pertained to the search committee. Pastor Greg mentioned that he would help with the pastoral search process. His explained his rationale, stating, "I assist in the pastoral search process more intentionally because some churches and boards use the rooster approach as I call it, 'Any dude'll do!'" Pastor Ken remarked that he would assess whether the church was even ready to start a search process stating, "Sometimes they were not ready to prepare for a new pastor. They could not even form a search committee for several months." Pastor Keith looked at the more practical side of this objective

stating, "Some churches did not know what to do. Most people do not know how to read the resumes. Again it was just getting them through the process."

Participants mentioned other individual objectives. However, each of them was only mentioned once. These objectives included clearing the baggage, bringing hope, addressing relations with previous pastors, doing basic administration, and visioning.

Question Five

Question number five addressed the challenges faced by the participants throughout their ministries. This open-ended question was designed to be broad enough to allow the participants to look over their interim pastoral history and identify specific and/or recurring challenges. This question actually set the stage for the succeeding question that focused on the activities and practices used by the participants to address these challenges. Interestingly, the pastors responded to this question in two different ways. Most of the participants enumerated the varied challenges they faced in their church contexts. However, a few of the respondents looked at the personal challenges they faced as interims in the execution of their responsibilities. These two perspectives are presented here.

The number one challenge mentioned by six of the interim pastors was unity in the church. Pastor Dan mentioned, "One of the challenges I think was to build a spirit of unity." Pastor Ken intimated that this was one of the greater challenges he faced saying, "The challenges I faced included the issue of disunity. That was the most painful thing." Pastor Mike added that in the interim time, "There is the need to build unanimity."

The second challenge also mentioned by six of the participants pertained to confrontation. In some instances it was a matter of confronting the sin in the church. Pastor Paul explained, "I got there and I realized we had to clear out all the sin. So I had to address all those issues and not tiptoe around them. We needed to confront." In other instances the confrontation focused on a small group of people. Pastor Luke remarked, "The challenge was centered around two or three people and their families. They were clearly opposed to the present leadership. There were some pretty significant confrontations with them." However, in at least one situation, confrontation included a larger group of people. Pastor Alex mentioned that in one instance, "A group was meeting in the church unbeknownst to the leadership. They had a regular weekly meeting in the church with more than 75 people. They were doing everything that the church was opposed to." He added, "When I found this out I had to get a handle on the situation. We had to rid that group form the church."

The third challenge, leadership, was mentioned by four interim pastors and included the two key concepts of building and developing leadership. Pastor Allen described, "When I became the transitional pastor on July 1, I formed a transition team. Interestingly, the chap who is now lead pastor had been so beaten up as the former chairman of the board that he was just simply sitting in the church." He added, "In the first few months as interim I could see him all of a sudden starting to open up again. So I invited him to be the chairman of the transition team." For Pastor Allen the task was constructing leadership. However, for Pastor Peter the challenge was working with existing leadership. He remarked, "Another challenge that I have to deal with is the strength of the board or board members." Some boards

were more controlling while others were at a loss to know how to lead. He added, "I

try to have people understand that you don't have a board to do what you want them

to do. You have a board that is sensitive to what God is saying they need to do and

they need to be sensitive to you and bring you along in that journey." The interim

pastors recognized the importance of finding and developing leadership.

The fourth challenge for four of the participants involved the search process

itself. In particular, the interim pastors desired to maintain a balance between guiding

the search process and not appearing to interfere. Pastor John carefully explained this

balance saying, "If I realized they were looking at a poor candidate I would simply

say, 'You need to check these people out further with the following individuals.' I

don't feel the interim should pick his successor." Pastor Keith added, "I built rapport

with the leadership so that they would understand that I was not there to put my man

in place. I was there to help them through the process." Pastor John summarized,

"The search committee is very important. I want to help them know what to do and

where to look. The search committee quite often can be the most important

committee in the church."

The fifth challenge mentioned by three interim pastors focused on change. In

order to prepare the church for the new man the interims knew that a degree of

change was required. Pastor Jeff, in commenting on leading change mentioned,

"That, to me, is a challenge. You try and encourage them but perhaps that is not the

direction they wish to take. You do it in a gentle way. But they're not listening!"

Pastor Matt, in speaking of one church stated, "They were resistant to thinking in new

ways." In analyzing his change leadership in several churches, Pastor Peter

remarked, "Another challenge, when I think about it, coming back to the DNA of the churches, is the challenge of trying to make those adjustments. We are all creatures of habit and when we are not staying on top of it, those old habits come back."

The sixth challenge, also mentioned by three interim pastors, was the challenge of pastoral care. The participants noted that in some cases the churches were quite discouraged, hurt, or bewildered. In these cases they mentioned how important pastoral care became. Pastor Luke remarked, "The ticket to the whole thing was to visit. They were falling over backwards because I was willing to visit them. It was really a nice run." Pastor Jeff, when commenting on a specific church explained, "I would say that Johnson Baptist Church was the most hurting one. Therefore I was always conscious of trying to address the situation and my goal was always encouragement."

The seventh challenge mentioned by three interim pastors was church structure. Some of the challenges related to formal structure, while others were less formal. Pastor Dan, in addressing the more formal structures stated, "Another challenge I faced was the antiquated nature of some of their constitutions. Some of them were so voluminous. I helped them redo their constitution in some cases." Pastor Allen underscored this need to address formal structure stating, "We realized that we needed to change the governance structure of the church. We needed to rewrite the constitution to become incorporated." However, when speaking of a particular church he mentioned, "I guess the biggest challenge was at Fifth Avenue Baptist where some of the people were very traditional. They were resistant to

thinking in new ways." In this latter context the challenge pertained to the way of doing church rather than the formal structure governing the congregation.

The eighth challenge mentioned by three of the participants pertained to staff issues. While many of the interims served in smaller churches with few staff, a few of them worked in larger, multi-staff congregations. In this context the interims found the unique challenge of dealing with discouraged and insecure staff members. Pastor Keith explained this delicate situation, "Where the staff was hurt, I would encourage them. They might be asking, 'Why did he leave?' So there was that kind of thing." But added to this scenario was their insecure future. Pastor Keith added, "There was also the fear that because the senior pastor had resigned maybe they would have to resign. So there was that hanging over their heads. I went out and had lunch with a lot of the leadership." Pastor Ben described a slightly different challenge in helping church staff. He explained, "One of the things that happens when churches are without a pastor for a long time is that the staff begins to work within a silo mentality." The pastoral staff members lose the team mentality that they had when the senior pastor was on site. He added, "Working with a multi-staff and correcting them….is very important when you are an interim pastor in a multi-staff situation." Pastor Fred, in speaking to this challenge, mentioned his practical solutions. "If there was a youth pastor or staff member I would take him out once a week to encourage him. I would take him for breakfast." The interim pastors sensed that there was a particular challenge facing them in a multi-staff context.

The ninth challenge, also mentioned by three interviewees, was the issue of encouragement. This encouragement took varied forms: encouraging members to

commit and serve, encouraging some to get on board with the leadership, encouragement for those who are hurting, and encouragement to those who are leading. Pastor Luke explained, "I spent a lot of time informally working on key leadership that was sitting on the sidelines. I would take them out for lunch and encourage them to get involved." Pastor Fred added, "Above all else I let them know, 'I love you. We are here to help you.' When they began to look back I would say to them, 'Let's start a new page! Let's forget the things that are behind.'" Pastor Alex summarized his intent saying, "I think the key is really loving the people. You must really love them. They are hurting people." To each of these transitional pastors, interim ministry meant encouragement in some form.

The tenth challenge mentioned particularly by two of the interviewees pertained to focus and vision. Pastor Ken described the challenge "of getting people refocused for the future. There are different reasons why they remain unfocused. There are different swamps that you need to pull them out of." Pastor Trevor explained that he "met with boards in some cases to work through planning and visioning and worked with them on the direction that they were going." A few of the other participants, while not specifically mentioning vision, nevertheless worked on re-directing the shattered remnants of the transitional congregations.

The eleventh challenge, mentioned by two interviewees, focused on the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Several of the participants mentioned the importance of the Bible in their respective interim ministries. However, these two discussed the preaching and teaching of the Word of God as a challenge in their particular transitional contexts. In effect, there was a resistance to the communicating

or reception of the Scriptures. Pastor Paul remarked that he faced difficulty with volunteer staff over the preaching of the Scriptures. He said, "I caused her real grief when I decided Bible teaching was more important than worship music." He added that, with respect to the congregation, "We challenged them to come with a better mind-set, prepared to learn from the Word of God. Challenged them to keep focused on what the Lord was doing." Pastor Dan reiterated this sentiment stating, "The challenge with some churches was really taking the Word of God seriously. And that would mean preaching and teaching from it and so on."

The twelfth challenge, mentioned by two participants, focused on lethargy and comfortable churches. This challenge in part overlapped with the issue of discouragement. Pastor Fred explained, "I faced disunity, minor splits, major splits, frustration, people who would not serve on the board, people who did not want to get involved anymore because they had been so disappointed." But there was another aspect to this challenge of lethargy. Too often the church became comfortable with the interim situation. Pastor John stated, "Another challenge that I faced was that churches will get very comfortable and really not look for a new pastor. The challenge is to keep them moving forward and looking for a new pastor once they become stable and happy again." These interim pastors realized that even transitioning churches can become complacent.

The thirteenth challenge mentioned by two of the interviewees pertained to moral issues in the church. Pastor Trevor discussed this challenge stating, "The biggest challenge I faced was in Grover Baptist Church where there was a moral issue. That was the third crisis in that church. It is on the ropes right now." Pastor

Dan also referred to this challenge stating, "Another challenge, although a smaller one, had to do with morality. Much of the problem had already been dealt with, but I still had to deal with a little bit of it." In essence Pastor Dan was discussing the ongoing ramifications of a moral issue in the church. Even after it had been dealt with, there were still repercussions for him as an interim pastor.

There were eight other challenges mentioned by the participants: love, legalism, wisdom, finances, distance to travel, severing an interim's relations with the church, prayer, and hope. However, each of these eight challenges was mentioned only once. As well, different interviewees mentioned no more than one of these different challenges. Consequently, for the sake of brevity, there will be no further discussion of these challenges in this section of this chapter.

Question Six

Question number six was designed to identify how the interim pastors addressed the above challenges. As with the previous question, the interviewees mentioned several ways in which they addressed the challenges. The number one way in which the pastors addressed their challenges was through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Nine of the participants mentioned this activity. Several of the nine viewed their preaching as the critical component in addressing challenges in the church. For instance, Pastor Dan said, "Generally you address the challenges by preaching the Word of God." Pastor Trevor added, "I focus on my preaching and try to create a real positive spirit. I set a strong biblical foundation." Pastor Mike further explained, "I tried to give them solid teaching. I found in many smaller works there were gatherings of people who had come from different

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backgrounds. They did not have good solid teaching." These interim pastors used the Word of God foundationally to address different challenges that they faced.

The second way in which the interim pastors addressed challenges was through working with the existing leadership in the churches. This would include identified and non-identified leadership in the church. Pastor Fred explained, "I would find out who the leading personnel in the church were." These individuals might be sitting in the pew in which the interim would begin working with them. Pastor Alex, in speaking of existing boards mentioned, "I have been in some churches where the board has been as dumb as dodos. Sometimes you have to save them from falling into a pit of thinking they know everything." Pastor Greg would go further by training the board to consider their job description. He stated, "I suppose just helping the board to think through things in a different way perhaps. Asking the board questions like how you go about preparing people to be considered as deacons." Pastor Trevor added a note of caution saying, "I would often work with the boards. I would give them counsel. Sometimes they did not listen and then other times they did." He added, "I try not to meddle in their affairs unless I'm asked." Working with the leadership took varied forms and levels of intensity with each of the interim pastors.

The third way in which interim pastors addressed their challenges was through pastoral care. Six of the interims mentioned this activity as one of the ways in which they faced their challenges. For instance Pastor Alex remarked, "One thing you need to do is develop a perception that you are accessible. I would let the people know that I was accessible." Pastor Mike added, "I lovingly cared for them and assured them

that God was interested in their future." Pastor Tim went even further and made changes in his own lifestyle in order to provide better pastoral care. He stated, "One thing I did was that I moved closer. They never asked me to. I moved closer." Pastoral care for these interim included availability, proximity, loving care, and genuine interest in the congregants.

The fourth way in which the interviewees addressed their challenges was through visitation. Five of the participants mentioned this activity. Pastor Ken mentioned, "Whenever I would travel to a church I would ask to be in people's homes for Sunday lunch so that I could minister to them. This takes time but I felt it is part of shepherding the flock." Pastor Alex reiterated, "On Sunday afternoons or at other times we would be in people's homes and be there for lunch. I would have a rest on Sunday afternoon in their home." Two other interims used visitation to address the situations facing the churches at that time. Pastor Dan stated, "I got in the homes, not so much as to calm the waters, but I knew when I went there would be some of it. I thought if I could talk and listen to them, they would feel better knowing that at least I was willing to listen and care." Pastor Peter remarked that using visitation often helped him confront difficult people and problems. He stated, "When I am ware of the situation, I do pastoral visits. I have an agenda. That completely throws them because I walk into the lion's den rather than trying to avoid them." For Pastor Peter, visitation was purposeful in confronting dissenters.

The fifth way in which interim pastors addressed challenges throughout their ministries was to encourage their congregants. Five of the interviewees referred to this practice. Pastor Jeff stated, "I was always conscious of trying to address the

situation and my goal was always encouragement. I would not try to bash them. I would try to encourage them to look at the positive side of things." When referring to his Sunday ministry, Pastor Ken mentioned, "The ministry with people before and after the service is so important. You are engaging people as friends and seeking to genuinely love them. You are making yourself available to them." Pastor Trevor included a further element in the practice of encouragement, his wife. He stated, "My wife has great people skills. She's always greeting people and getting to know them. She has been so involved with people." For these interims, the practice of encouragement was central to their interim ministries over the years.

A sixth way in which the interim pastors addressed challenges was through good communication. Pastor Ben came to his interview prepared to speak rather passionately on this subject saying, "What I wrote down in my notes here is, good communication! What people are not up on they're down on. Communication is essential to have a good information flow.   I'm thinking particularly of the whole congregation." Pastor Maurice added that the perception of good communication was equally important saying, "I give out my e-mail and they can e-mail me at any time. I let them know that nothing is private." Pastor Matt spoke of how he would communicate with congregants mentioning, "I would not dogmatize. I would say for instance, you need to consider this or you need to consider that." Each of the participants realized the value of good communication in effectively meeting the challenges of interim ministry. In fact Pastor Ben stated, "I learned this in Colbin Baptist Church. The search committee would not communicate with the church so the

three candidates they suggested were turned down. So I learned that even when you have nothing to say, say something."

The seventh way in which interim pastors addressed challenges was through carefully working with search committees. Pastor Alex, who often worked in the search process, bemoaned the lack of input he had had with one search committee that acted too hastily in calling a senior pastor. He shared, "I felt terrible because I didn't have a chance to help or counsel them. I wasn't able to get involved and these people really did not know what they were doing." He added, "They didn't know what his background was, what his doctrinal position was, what his gifts were, or even about his salvation. I was heartbroken over that!" Pastor John remarked, "One of my policies was to never directly interfere with the search committee. I was happy to give them advice on their procedure but reluctant to give them opinions on individuals." However, he also added, "If I realized they were looking at a poor candidate, I would simply say, 'You need to check these people out further.'" Pastor Mike shared, "In one situation I was able to point the church in the direction of a possible pastoral candidate. But for many of the churches, they looked after that themselves." Pastor Alex summarized the importance of working with the search committee stating, "So as you can see the search committee is very important. I want to help them to know what to do and where to look."

The eighth way in which interim pastors addressed challenges was through working with the structure of the church. Four respondents mentioned this practice. For instance, Pastor Greg worked at the board level stating, "I also helped them to develop a policy manual. I helped them clarify some areas of church ministry. I

helped them increase their understanding of their areas of policy responsibility."

Pastor Paul worked on structure at the congregational level stating, "One of the other things I did was I instituted small groups." Pastor Allen worked at the committee level saying, "I formed a transition team. We addressed the challenges through preaching, loving people, and forming a transition team." Pastor John worked at the constitutional level mentioning, "We rewrote their constitution, not a whole lot of it. But enough so that the red flags were taken out of it." In each of these cases the interim pastors recognized the challenge of restructuring some part of the church.

The ninth way in which the interviewees addressed their challenges was through confrontation. This confrontation focused on individuals, groups, or entire churches. Pastor Peter spoke at length of the process he used for confronting individuals in the church. He explained, "I don't have trouble facing a person and saying to him, 'What you just said is wrong and sin.' I just don't have trouble being blunt. That is how I have been willing to address issues." He added, "What I've found, real bullies, when they find out that you're going to stand up to them and not accept what they say, you kind of take out some of the air out of them." Pastor Maurice, in dealing with groups and churches mentioned, "This is a major challenge I find. It can be passive aggressive. For instance they can stop giving, working, or serving. Where they rally groups together, it can get pretty nasty." He continued, "To address that, in three churches, I have designed a process and have developed a covenant of holy manners where they agree how they are going to behave." Pastor Trevor summarized his approach saying, "I will walk with them through some difficult things even though I know that they will not like what I have to say. I know

they need it like if the doctor says you have a cancer and I need to operate." He added, "I try to do it tactfully and truthfully. I don't try to be heavy handed." The interims realized the essential nature of confrontation and approached it from different perspectives.

The tenth way in which the interviewees addressed the challenges they faced was through relational restoration with previous pastors. In some of the churches relations with previous pastors were strained and negative. In order to move the churches forward these interims realized they had to focus the church on their unhealthy relations with former pastors. This action was initiated in three ways. First, Pastor Fred took the initiative in reconnecting with a former pastor. In this instance, the church was less than supportive of the action. He stated, "When some of the board found out that I was going to see the former pastor, they did not like that. They had written him off! I let them know I was going to see this fallen pastor and lift him out of the clay." He added, "I was reaching out in the love of Christ. They came around to see my point of view partially. I left them with the feeling that they should have done this themselves." Second, Pastor Luke also reconnected with a former pastor stating, "There was sense that there needed to be some healing in those relationships. He didn't leave the best! I worked hard at reconnecting with him." However, Pastor Luke went one step further and "got him back in the church to preach." Third, Pastor Keith chose not do the initial work but actually forced the church to do the work of reconnecting. He stated, "I made them deal with the issues. I made them deal with the previous pastor." These interim pastors recognized the

importance of dealing with previous pastors. However, each went about the process in a slightly different way.

The eleventh way in which interim pastors addressed the challenges in their ministries was through relational renewal. Two interviewees mentioned this practice. For instance, Pastor Peter stated, "The other thing that I have done in addressing issues is relational renewal." He illustrated this by relating, "There were some major attacks on one of our pastors for years, especially led by one man who was the ring leader for creating problems. I brought reconciliation between he and the adult pastor. This took several months." Pastor Allen reinforced this activity stating, "The biggest challenge is what I call relationship renewal; to accept one another and love one another genuinely. Then begin the process of healing and so on." Each of these interviewees recognized the challenge and sometimes lengthy nature of healing relationships within the congregation.

The twelfth way in which interviewees addressed challenges was through vision development. Two interim pastors mentioned this activity specifically. Pastor Greg repeatedly focused on this subject in relation to outreach stating, "I worked on some vision for reaching the community. We tried to develop a vision by organizing a few prayer drives. We did things like that to lift the vision of the people to see how they could reach out." Pastor Mike focused on creating a God-centered vision for general church growth and development. He remarked, "I lovingly cared for them and assured them that God was interested in their future. I told them that things would work out for good as God was able, period!"

The thirteenth way in which the interviewees addressed challenges was through personal awareness. Pastor Alex spoke at length on this subject emphasizing, "It was important to keep myself spiritually in touch with the Lord because you are facing the church in its time of greatest crisis. They are like orphans and do not know what to do and it would be easy for them to be led astray." He added, "It is very important to keep yourself in a position of genuine joy and a close walk with the Lord. This must be reflected in your ministry." Pastor Maurice stressed, "During this time you have to take care of yourself intellectually, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. Because you are sort of a Lone Ranger and you do not have a group of people around you, you must find ways to care for yourself." To these two pastors self-care was an essential part of dealing with the challenges of interim ministry.

The interviewees mentioned five other ways in which they addressed challenges throughout their ministries. Each of these five ways was mentioned only once and for the sake of brevity they shall only be listed here. They were counsel, prayer, cleaning house, renewing relations with the denomination, and assessment of the church at the beginning of the interim's ministry.

Questions seven through ten were designed to more significantly focus the interviewees' responses. Consequently, it was anticipated that these questions would yield pithy data. Understandably, the answers were brief and pointed. Question seven dealt with most effective practices and activities. Question eight identified the major concerns that were addressed. Question nine looked at what practices vary from church to church and what practices are the same from situation to situation. Question ten was designed to identify any practices and activities that may have been

missed in the previous nine questions. The answers to these final four questions were relatively short compared to the previous six questions. This may be due to the length of the interview or simply because many of the issues and topics had been dealt with previously. However, as designed, these questions focused on major practices, concerns and activities.

Question Seven

Question number seven was designed to allow the interviewees to delineate those leadership practices and activities they felt were most effective in their interim ministries. Previously they identified general activities and practices involved in their ministries. This question narrowed their focus. Consequently fewer practices appeared in this data set. Of the practices listed as most effective, only the top few received the most mention. Table 2 illustrates this breakdown.

Interestingly, the top three leadership practices were mentioned more often than the latter nine practices combined. In fact, they were mentioned fifty-eight percent of the time. The top six leadership practices accounted for over eighty four percent of the practices mentioned. For these interim pastors, there were some obvious staple practices in their pastoral tool bags: preaching, pastoral care, leadership training, structural attention, encouragement, and relationship attention

Table 2

Most Effective Leadership Practices

Leadership Practice	Times Mentioned
Preaching	12
Pastoral Care	11
Leadership Training	11
Structural Attention	5
Encouragement	5
Relationship Attention	5
Staff Attention	2
Church Assessment	2
Self Awareness	2
Vision Development	1
Search Committee Attention	1
Conflict Management	1

Twelve interviewees mentioned preaching as an effective leadership practice. These pastors viewed communication of the Word of God as central to their pastoral effectiveness for several reasons including security, trust, and encouragement. For instance, Pastor Ben spoke of preaching in terms of congregational security and stability. He remarked, "I think preaching is very important. Consistent ministry in the pulpit and the appearance of somebody at the helm really secures the congregation." He added, "Let's face it, eighty percent of the congregation only see

you on Sunday morning and if they see stability they feel secure." Pastor Maurice

spoke of the importance of preaching in terms or trust and followership. He said,

"Preaching is the key component of what I do. Preaching gives me access to the

greatest number of people and enables me to build trust. Without trust you're dead in

the water." Pastor Dan agreed stating, "If they like the preaching, they will be behind

you in many things. If they don't like the preaching, you're in trouble." Pastor Matt

talked at length about the positive influence that preaching had on the congregation.

He stated, "I tried to give them a developing appetite for God's Word through

preaching. I taught with clarity and relevance. I worked hard at that." He added,

"One of my goals was to nurture a positive atmosphere for whoever was coming in as

the new pastor. It was really a preaching focus more than anything else." Pastor

Mike concurred stating, "Bible teaching was helpful as far as strengthening and

encouraging the church."

Several of the other pastors simply stated, without further explanation, that

preaching was vital to their ministry. Pastor Jeff said, "I feel preaching is vitally

important in this. I make sure they have a continuous ministry of the Word while I

am there." Pastor Trevor emphasized, "Preaching is number one." Pastor Keith

mentioned, "My public ministry was effective because the pulpit is the rallying

point." Understandably, many of the interviewees recognized preaching and teaching

the Word of God as an effective leadership activity.

Eleven interviewees mentioned pastoral care as an effective leadership

practice. They mentioned this practice in terms of curbing discouragement, relieving

pressure on present leadership, and helping hurting families in the church. For

instance, Pastor Ken, when speaking of encouragement, stated, "When I'm dealing with people who complain about other people, I encourage them to love them as God loves them and see them as God sees them. And how can I help this person who is a thorn in my side." Pastor Allen remarked, "I taught and practiced agape love and the people heated up. And the church began to come alive!"

When speaking about relieving the pressures on leadership, Pastor Keith explained, "The advantage of being an interim is that you can look after the hospitals and visit people and those kinds of things. That relieves your leadership because sometimes the leadership is trying to hold the fort together." Pastor Trevor agreed stating, "We also take care of hospital visitation and help people who are hurting. You build friendships within the church even though you are not there all the time."

Some of the interims spoke of pastoral care in reference to specific cases or families. For instance, Pastor Greg illustrated at length his care of a husband who refused to believe that his wife was dying. He said, "I did work on some trying situations. She was diagnosed with cancer and ended up in the hospital. He did not go to visit her." He added, "The man finally came to grips with the reality that his wife was dying. The man was angry at himself actually, that he didn't believe." Pastor Jeff summarized, "For me, I found whether getting into their homes or just meeting with them was very valuable. I find for me it is just more natural than forced visitation." One pastor, Paul, even referred to caring for those who chose to leave the church. He stated, "You have to be loving towards them. I still go visit people even though they may leave the church. I just wouldn't invite them back and I wouldn't

say, 'We miss you.'" For the interviewees pastoral care was considered one of their effective leadership practices.

Eleven interviewees also mentioned leadership attention as an effective leadership practice. For some of the interims, it was a matter of working alongside the established leadership in the church. For others, leadership needed to be re-constructed or directed. Each situation was unique. For instance, Pastor Luke spoke of reconstructing leadership stating, "One key player who was in the margins. I brought him back in and gave him assurance that things were going to go well. I brought him back online." Pastor Jeff mentioned, "The second thing for me was just meeting with the leadership. One of the things I wanted to do with the board was to take a book and lead them through a book, for instance, a book on the marks of a healthy church or biblical leadership." Pastor Ben spoke of coaching leaders stating, "The other part is coaching. How can I help them think through issues and prepare for leadership? That is particularly true in the board that is inexperienced. He added, "One board was filled with a group of passionate young men but they did not have the slightest idea of what to do. Coaching is inputting into people's lives." Two of the interims actually added levels of leadership during the transition process. Pastor Maurice stated, "Almost always I have formed a separate transition team. Once all of the issues have been highlighted and prioritized, the transition team works their way through that list. They then pass it back to the board who takes it from there." Each of the eleven respondents recognized the essential function of working with the leadership of the church.

While the above three practices were mentioned by the majority of the interviewees, each of the following three effective leadership activities was mentioned by five of the respondents. The first of these practices pertained to church structure. The interim pastors mentioned clarifying, adapting, or changing structure in different ways. Two pastors, Allen and Maurice, developed and utilized a transition team that worked separately from the board of deacons. Pastor Maurice explained, "It has been most satisfying when the transition team is separate from the board. After all, the board has other things to deal with. The transitional team will actually address each identified issue." He added, "The transition team will do all the work and then present that to the board."

Another pastor, Peter, spoke of structure clarification stating, "One of the areas is the issue of governance. What pervades the church is the issue of democracy without a correct biblical view. In other words, pastors are hirelings." He added, "In many churches I am seeing people push democracy to an extreme." Pastor Peter intentionally clarified the biblical structure of the church. One of the interviewees, Pastor Greg, referred to structure development in terms of outreach saying, "The organization administration aspect of outreach was important. We began a more organized approach to follow up new visitors to the church. That system was organized and laid out and they have developed it further." Another pastor, John, utilized the existing structure of the church to provide direction. He explained, "I did have more authority in the intentional interim position. I had such that I would actually chair committees and meetings. I would give them direction on the areas they needed to work through and I would give them enough information that they

could reach the right conclusion." Each of the interim pastors viewed structure as essential to effective leadership during the transitional period.

The next leadership practice identified by five of the participants pertained to the area of encouragement. Understandably, churches experiencing an interim period often require some degree of encouragement. Their discouragement may be at a committee level, a personal level, or at a church-wide level. Pastor Maurice spoke of discouragement at the search committee level saying, "First of all it can be very discouraging for the search committee. They think they are going to be the exception and find a pastor within a couple of months. I'm a resource person who sits on the search committee." Pastor Mike spoke of discouragement at the board and personal level. He remarked, "We would have leadership meetings to show them what they should be doing and what they should be looking at. Spiritual weakness is rampant in our churches!" He added, "I would personally encourage the folks as well. I felt if I could keep them stable and encourage them and provide good teaching, they could get through this." Pastor Fred spoke of discouragement at the church-wide level. He stated, "In some of the churches there was great discouragement. In Johnson Road Baptist Church they were so discouraged because they had been a larger church and people left and went everywhere." He added, "Today I still meet people from Johnson Road Baptist and they say, 'Thanks Fred for keeping us together.' Now they are in a building program and are doing great!" The interim pastors were particularly sensitive to the emotional turmoil of churches in transition.

Five interim pastors also identified building, improving, or correcting relationships as an effective leadership practice. This relationship building was both

personal and corporate. The interims built relationships with their people as well as purposed to restore relations among the members of the congregation. For instance, when commenting on his own relationships with the congregation, Pastor Paul remarked, "One thing that I have been gifted with is that I can build relationships with anyone. So I have the ability to come alongside people and can be very friendly and very likeable and so when I present those things is doesn't come off brash." Pastor Luke, when commenting on his development of leadership trust in the church stated, "To regain trust, it all came through relationships. It had everything to do with relationships building trust building relationships." Pastor Fred specified relationship building as helpful in developing people. He stated, "Like a doctor, I would meet with people individually. I let the Word of God do its ministry in their lives. And above all else I let them know 'I love you.'" Pastor Allen, in summarizing his process of relationship building, stated, "I call it relationship renewal, to accept one another in love and love one another genuinely. And begin the process of healing." To each of these participants, relationship development was an important aspect of effective leadership practice.

The next three effective leadership practices mentioned by the interim pastors included staff attention, church assessment, and self-awareness. Each of these activities was mentioned twice. Pastors Jeff and Keith discussed the leadership practice of staff attention and care. Pastor Jeff related the importance of ministering to the staff. He stated, "Another thing I should mention, which is important, is working with the staff. For instance North Port Baptist Church had an associate pastor and part of my ministry was to work with him. We got to be quite close in

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ministry." He added, "That is another thing that I did and was really happy to do that, investing in his life." Pastor Keith reiterated this statement saying, "I found that working with staff was most effective."

Two other participants identified the leadership practice of church assessment as an effective leadership activity. Their assessment included leadership and the church in general. Pastor Matt remarked on leadership, "I was able to pick up on the nature of the leadership quite quickly. I could tell where there was unity and where there wasn't, whether they seemed competent or not." Pastor Fred assessed leadership and the church in general stating, "I would find out who the leading personnel in the church were. Then I would find out what makes the church tick. Where is the heartbeat? I would check the blood pressure like a doctor." Both of these interim pastors emphasized the important role of assessment in the practice of leadership in interim ministry.

Another two participants identified self-awareness as an effective leadership practice in interim pastoral ministry. Pastor Paul succinctly described his approach and personality for leading change during his interim ministry. He remarked, "You cannot worry about offending people. That was never an issue for me. I just didn't care." He added, "If you got offended, then you have a choice. You can either get on board or leave." Pastor John was somewhat more sensitive and subtle in describing his role as interim, "Remember, as an interim, you quickly find yourself in a position of tremendous trust. They feel indebted to you, especially if they are in a church in crisis. So you quickly develop a position of trust and influence that you could abuse if you wanted to." These two rather different approaches to self-awareness

nevertheless highlight for these two interims the importance of this activity in effective interim pastoral ministry.

The latter three practices mentioned in response to question seven gained one mention each. These three leadership practices are vision development, working with the search committee, and conflict management.

Question Eight

Question number eight was actually a two-part question in which the participants were asked to identify the major concerns they addressed as interim pastors and then explain how they measured their success. These two questions were designed to look at leadership practice from two different perspectives. First, the interims were encouraged to specify the salient concerns that confronted their specific ministry contexts. Second, they were asked to look back at their own interim ministries and identify measurable elements of success. This researcher anticipated that these two questions would yield separate data sets from which leadership practice data could be extracted. However, this researcher encountered an unintended blending of the answers by several of the interviewees. At times the respondents drifted back and forth from one question to the other. In a few instances, the respondents simply proceeded to the latter question, ignoring the first one. Consequently the data sets, though significant, reflect a degree of answer drift.

The first question pertained to major concerns addressed by the interim pastors in their ministries. In answer to this question the participants mentioned eighteen different concerns. However, only two of the concerns were mentioned by six of the participants with three more being mentioned by four interviewees. Three

interim pastors mentioned one concern and two participants mentioned three more. The latter nine concerns were each mentioned by one interim pastor. The eighteen major concerns are displayed in table 3.

Table 3

Major Concerns Addressed By Interim Pastors

Leadership	6
Structure	6
Vision	4
Relationships	4
Discouragement	4
Growth	3
Unity	2
Stability	2
Reconciliation	2
Direction	1
Conflict	1
Trust	1
Legalism	1
Clean House	1
Preaching	1
Spiritual Understanding	1
Self-awareness	1
Well Being	1

The concerns listed in this table have been discussed in earlier questions, particularly

questions five through seven. Consequently they are only listed here and are

discussed later in the categorical aggregations and thematic summary.

The second part of question eight pertained to the interim pastors'

interpretation of success in their transitional ministries. In this question, this

researcher sought to identify how interim pastors measured their success in ministry.

In comparison with the previous question, there was a greater degree of agreement on

measures of successful interim practice. The results are displayed in table 4.

Table 4

Measures of Success in Interim Ministry

Growth	8
Leadership	7
Enthusiasm	5
Successful Search	5
Purpose	4
Unity	4
Love	4
Reconciliation	3
Trust	2
Appreciation	2
Stability	1
Vision	1

The measures of success mentioned by the interviewees were somewhat anticipated. However, the relatively equal distribution was surprising. No one measure garnered mention by a majority of interim pastors. There was a broad distribution of identified measures among the interviewees.

Eight of the interim pastors identified growth as a measure of success. This growth was both spiritual and numerical in nature. For instance, Pastor Tim stated, "I measured success in my teaching as people were learning and enjoying the Word of God. If they were growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, then I figured I was fulfilling part of my duty." Pastor Paul mentioned both types of growth stating, "I measured my success by changed lives. But I also measured by numerical growth. I still looked in the pews each week to see if we were growing." Pastor Trevor added, "Even though these are six-month ministries, because I go to Florida, you still want to see them grow." These interim pastors measured success by growth.

Seven of the interviewees mentioned leadership as a measure of success in interim pastoral ministry. However, there were variations on what they meant when referring to leadership. Pastor Dan mentioned leadership in terms of acquiring a new pastor to lead the congregation. He said, "Success is something you measure afterwards. For instance, in Eighth Street Baptist Church they have a fine young pastor and are going ahead. The same is true in Thomasville." Pastor John concurred stating, "I measure success by getting through the interim. Having a senior pastor called with the major issues basically dealt with." Pastor Tim, however, viewed

leadership success in terms of developing leaders in the church. He explained, "There was one guy there. He got baptized and when I left he was on the board. That was a good victory." Pastor Jeff interpreted leadership success in terms of bending and changing leadership in the church. He remarked, "It was a case of trying to get both sides to bend a little bit. The older ones had to realize that leadership had to be handed over." Pastor Trevor interpreted leadership success in terms of congregational response. He rhetorically asked, "Are the people responding to leadership?" Finally, Pastor Luke measured success by the retention of lay leadership. He stated, "I measure success by the fact that the key leader is still there." The interims measured success in terms of leadership even though they approached this activity from a varied perspective.

Five of the interviewees mentioned enthusiasm as a measure of their interim ministry success. Having faced churches in decline or discouragement, these five pastors viewed a renewed enthusiasm in the church as a measure of their successful ministry. However these men viewed enthusiasm differently. Pastor Trevor measured enthusiasm in terms of the Word of God rhetorically asking, "Were they more excited about the things of God and the Word of God?" Pastor Matt viewed enthusiasm in term of the congregation's walk and witness before the Lord and world. He stated, "They responded to the Word of God and developed a sense of enthusiasm for being God's people in that community." Pastor John considered enthusiasm in terms of the internal joy of the congregation. He stated, "When the people enjoy going to church again, that is success." While the interim pastors considered

enthusiasm from different viewpoints, they nevertheless measured their success in terms of congregational enthusiasm.

Five more interim pastors measured their interim success in terms of a successful search for a new pastor. As was observed from earlier interview questions, some of the interim pastors were actively involved in the search process while others took a more passive approach. However, they each realized that their ministries involved the ultimate calling of a new pastor. There was a significant degree of similarity in their answers. Pastor Ben summarized this measure by stating, "Success happens when you have gone through a thorough pastoral search process and have found God's man for the ministry." Pastor Keith added that success is measured in "basically finding them a shepherd, having them determine who they are and what kind of man will fit their need." Pastor John concurred with the previous two interviewees adding success is "having a senior pastor called with the major issues basically dealt with." Each of these interims saw the successful placement of the right man in the church as a measure of their interim pastoral success.

Four interim pastors measured success in terms of purpose. The all viewed purpose from a church-wide perspective. For instance, Pastor Mike commented, "I felt if they were able to get on for the new man and were willing as a unit to accept him and move ahead, if I was able to do that I considered that successful." Pastor Allen explained successful purpose as "the steps of faith we take, taking steps of faith that lead out to where people are. That's how I would measure success." Pastor Matt described successful purpose as "a kind of disorientation and reorientation at times." In other words, he saw success in refocusing the congregation on a new purpose and

direction. This is what he termed reorientation. For each of these four interims,

success was measured in terms of a new congregational purpose and direction.

Four more interim pastors measured their success in interim pastoral ministry

in terms of love. This love was three-fold in perspective; towards the Lord and his

Word, towards each other, and towards the world in general. Pastor Matt summarized

all three perspectives stating, "I felt I was successful if they love the Lord, love each

other, love His Word, and reach out to the world." Pastor Allen remarked, "I measure

my success based on love and unity. They are going to see us based on our agape

love." Pastor Fred succinctly summarized this measure stating, "Love them and care.

Loving and caring, that is so important." Each of these participants recognized love

as a distinct measure of their interim pastoral success.

Another four interim pastors determined their ministry success in terms of

unity. They saw unity as essential for the church moving forward in the service of

Christ. Pastor Allen stated, "I measure success based on unity and love. The

community is going to see us based on our unity." Pastor Trevor described unity, as a

feeling of oneness." Pastor Maurice further delineated unity as "a sense of

brokenness and humility." He added, "Then God can do something." To each of

these interim pastors, unity was an important measure of success in interim pastoral

ministry.

Three interim pastors mentioned reconciliation as a measure of their success.

They referred to reconciliation in terms of intra-congregational resolution and settling

with the past. Pastor Greg stated, "I guess success was seeing people, those who were

for the previous pastor or those who were against, coming to an understanding in

some sort of reconciliation." Pastor John viewed reconciliation as "the church feeling good about themselves again and if there is a Diotrephes, he has been dealt with." Pastor Matt viewed reconciliation as the church "being ready to get on with ministry and get beyond what happened in the past." Pastor John simply described reconciliation as "the people of God enjoying going to church again; that is success."

Two interim pastors specifically mentioned congregational appreciation for their ministry as a measure of success. Pastor Dan stated, "I would measure success in light of the fact they appreciated my ministry." Pastor Luke agreed mentioning, "I also measure success by when I left they overtly, verbally stated how much they loved my ministry. They said, 'You made us feel like valuable people.'" A few of the other interviewees referred to appreciation in terms of other measures of success.

Two participants mentioned trust as a measure of success. They mentioned trust in terms of interim leadership as well as future senior pastoral leadership. Pastor Keith remarked, "You have to earn that trust. But the fact that I was older helped me, where a younger guy might not have had the chance. So you are building trust." Pastor Peter spoke of trust as the end result of a successful interim ministry. The church would choose to trust a future senior pastor. He stated, "We started getting calls from potential candidates asking, 'Do the people willingly choose to trust godly leadership?'" The sign that congregations would once again follow and trust a senior pastor was a measure of interim pastoral success.

The two final measures of stability and vision were each mentioned by two pastors, Mike and Ken. Pastor Mike, in speaking of stability, stated, "I felt if they were stabilized and had a measure of strength, I considered that successful." Pastor

Ken, when speaking of vision mentioned, "I tried to keep the focus on what the church should be."

Question Nine

Question number nine was designed to encourage the interviewees to re-visit the challenges and concerns that they faced in their respective interim ministries. The researcher's intent was to discover any aspects of interim ministry and ultimately leadership practice that may have been overlooked in previous answers to questions five through seven. While this question specified both varying and non-varying interim situations, the primary intent was to identify any previously unmentioned aspects of transitional ministry. To a certain extent, this question not only overlapped with questions five through seven but also question ten.

Interestingly, no new categories emerged from the answers to this question. The interviewees mentioned a total of twenty subjects, all of which had been raised in earlier answers. These twenty subjects and the number of times mentioned are presented in table 5.

While participants mentioned the same categories that had already been discussed, one may observe that the first eleven categories received nearly all the mention by the interim pastors. Interestingly, these same categories appear in the question ten aggregations, albeit in a different order. As such they will be discussed in question ten.

Table 5

Aspects of Interim Ministry

Leadership	9
Preaching	9
Pastoral Care	8
Church Assessment	5
Vision	4
Relationships	4
Structure	3
Communication	3
Search Process	3
Planning	3
Encouragement	3
Unity	1
Self-awareness	1
Hurts	1
Trust	1
Leaving the Church	1
Stuckness	1
Staff	1
Closure	1
Distance to Drive	1

Question Ten

Question number ten was designed to allow the interim pastors an opportunity to share aspects of their stories and experiences that may have been missed in earlier questions. This researcher noted two significant responses to this question. First, in answering this final question, the interim pastors returned to a more introspective stance as they assessed their ministry experiences, strengths and weaknesses. Second, the interviewees reiterated some of the key items mentioned earlier in questions two through nine. In essence, many of the interviewees tended to rephrase salient topics mentioned in earlier answers. Little new data emerged from the answers to question ten. Table 6 presents the seventeen categories and the number of times mentioned by the interim pastors.

While seventeen categories are listed in table 6, the number of times each one is mentioned appears to be relatively low. This may be due, in part, to the rather brief responses by the interim pastors at this point in their respective interviews. Few of the interviewees spoke at length in response to this question. Yet they shared what was important to them. At least three of the interims started by saying how important the issue or topic was. For instance, Pastor Ken remarked, "An important area is to realize what you cannot do and what you must leave for the senior pastor to do." Pastor Luke spoke more strongly stating, "A critical factor is to connect deeply with the present leadership of the church." These final thoughts, though relatively brief, were of vital importance to these men. Consequently, several of these items will be discussed briefly.

Table 6

Other Areas of Importance in Interim Ministry

Self-awareness	7
Communication	6
Leadership	5
Pastoral Care	4
Church Assessment	4
Preaching	4
Search process	3
Encouragement	3
Direction	2
Leave the Church	2
Growth	2
Prepare for the New Man	2
Vision	2
Resolve Issues	2
Structure	1
Clarity of Role	1
Relationships	1

First, seven of the interviewees reviewed the category of self-awareness.

Pastor Alex carefully shared, "You need to be open with the Lord and open to the

people so that you are not missing something that is very obvious." Pastor Dan

clarified further, "I suppose the only thing I would mention, it is so very obvious, is that for every interim ministry I went to, I had to be convinced by the Holy Spirit that this was God's will." Pastor Matt spoke of self-awareness in terms of his role in the church stating, "It has become very clear to me that I must gain a clear sense of what my role is in the church." These men understood that they needed an awareness of their ministry before the Lord and within the context of the church.

Six of the interviewees mentioned communication in answer to this question. These respondents mentioned this communication in terms of clearing misunderstandings, stretching the thinking of congregants, and encouraging the church. For instance, Pastor Peter stated, "I have addressed miscommunication and have faced individuals. It also allows me to send a message." Pastor Maurice remarked, "One of the advantages of an interim pastor is that you can ask questions. These questions will help free up their thinking." Pastor Luke, in speaking of encouragement said, "Constantly tell the people that they are good people. They have nothing to fear."

Five of the respondents mentioned leadership in answer to this question. They referred to leadership in terms of encouraging present leaders, confronting pseudo-leadership, working with leadership in facing church issues, and training leaders. Pastor Luke mentioned, "Attend all the leadership meetings. Be a voice of comfort and assure the guys." Pastor Fred remarked, "Going into a church on an interim pastoral basis, I would find two or more individuals who wanted to be in control. Either they learned to endure me or respect me." Pastor Maurice spoke of helping leadership face the issues in the church. He stated, "You have to come along side the

board and help them face the issue of discipline." Finally, Pastor Ben mentioned untrained leadership. He spoke of "untrained leadership or leadership that has never been given the right to lead because of a dominant pastor. Some of them can be brought along fairly quickly as the opportunity provides itself." These interims saw the importance of working closely with leadership in the church.

Four of the interim pastors spoke of pastoral care. Pastor Peter explained, "What I have done that has been incredibly valuable on several fronts is this, pastoral visitation. I get more mileage out of visitation than perhaps anything else I do." Pastor Luke agreed and said, "Then visit. Visit like crazy." Pastor Tim summarized this category by saying, "I try to care well for the flock." These interim pastors realized the critical place of pastoral care during a transitional time.

Four more interviewees mentioned preaching in response to question ten. They referred to preaching in terms of encouraging the congregation, challenging the congregation, and serving the people. Pastor Matt remarked, "There is a real potential for an interim pastor to say some things and help people think about some things." Pastor Trevor added, "As I go into a new interim position I try to do several sermons on what the church body should be like. That way I can iron out a few issues right off the bat." Pastor Paul mentioned, "You go in and you preach. You get them ready to roll." In each case the interim pastors viewed preaching as instrumental to care and change in the local church.

Three participants mentioned the search process in answer to question ten. Interestingly, these three spoke of the search process from different perspectives. Pastor Trevor referred to the inadequacies of search committees. He stated, "Often in

smaller churches they do not know where to look. They don't even know how to go about it. So you try to work with them in that area." Pastor Greg added that he even included the regional director in the process of searching for a pastor. He explained, "One of the things I found to be helpful was to relate very strongly with the regional director and bring him into the process of the pastoral search." However, it was Pastor John who spoke most passionately about the search process and the mistakes he made. He rehearsed, "I realized that they had rushed the job. Then when it was a disaster I asked myself, 'Should I have agreed to become an intentional interim so that they could have been more careful in choosing the right man?'" It was clear to these three that the search process was crucial for the local church.

Another three mentioned encouragement in response to the last question. Pastor Jeff stated, "The number one thing for me is to help and serve. I am there to minister to people." Pastor Mike added, "They are often losing hope. There is a need to build unanimity." Pastor Paul remarked, "The people are kind of lost and not knowing what is going on." Each of these men understood the need to encourage the congregation in times of transition.

Two interim pastors mentioned direction in answer to question ten. This direction was in terms of changing the church and finding a new pastor. Pastor Trevor stated, "Often when you go in you're trying to direct the church towards a new pastor." Pastor Maurice focused on the church mentioning, "The tricky thing is to facilitate change so that they find their own identity and not become what you want them to become."

Two more interviewees mentioned leaving the church in mention to this last question. Both pastors explained the need to exit carefully when a new pastor arrives. Pastor Tim said, "I promised that I would step out graciously. I wanted to help the church accept the new pastor. Interim pastoral work is not very flattering." Pastor Trevor added, "When you leave a church, do not go back. Let the new guy find his way." Both of these men understood the temporary and fragile nature of interim ministry.

In response to this question, two pastors mentioned growth. These two spoke of growth in the church and one added a comment on personal growth. Pastor Peter said, "I have discovered in the previous three churches, in each case the church began to significantly grow." Pastor Allen added, "The transitional ministry has changed the church and it has changed me. I can't believe how much I have changed in one year!" For these two, growth and change were critical elements of interim ministry.

Two other pastors mentioned vision in response to this question. Pastor Mike simply stated, "There is a lack of focus." Pastor Keith stated it differently saying, "What's your dream. A lot of people don't dream. I dream each year." A lack of focus and vision for what the Lord might want to do was a central thought to these two pastors.

In response to the last question, two interviewees mentioned the importance of resolving issues. Pastor Allen related, "You say we are going to be hitting some sacred cows here. Yes there will be pain. But we are here to bring about healing." Pastor Ben spoke of conflict stating, "Another situation involves conflict. For instance, when a pastor leaves a church under a cloud. Because of this the board

takes control." Each of these men realized the place of resolving conflictual issues in the church.

Two other pastors mentioned preparing for the new senior pastor in response to question ten. Pastor Paul stated, "You are not the ultimate solution. Interim people are there to correct things and get the church ready for the next pastor when he comes in." Pastor Peter added, "I try and prepare the church for their next senior pastor. So I deal with the yucky issues. I am the bad cop!" Each of these two men saw their preparatory place in the transitional life of the local church.

Two other categories were each mentioned once: joy and clarity. Pastor Fred remarked, "I've often said to people, 'Even though I have had three fruitful churches as senior pastor, this is the highlight of my life!'" Pastor Ben spoke of clarity when referring to the difference between senior pastoral candidates and interim pastors. He explained, "If you are a potential candidate, you cannot be an interim pastor. If you are the interim you cannot be a candidate. If that happens the church ends up with a pastor by default." Both of these men realized the joy and temporary nature of interim ministry.

Interview Summary

Question ten yielded seventeen categories. Nearly all these categories had been mentioned earlier in the interview process. The ten open-ended questions provided this researcher with a wealth of categorical data. Many of the categories appeared repeatedly. Others were mentioned sparingly. However, as this researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts and compared the categorical aggregations, a pattern of themes began to emerge. The categorical aggregations along with earlier

direct interpretation of the interview transcripts provided this researcher with a thematic framework encompassing the majority of the categories rehearsed in the above discussion.

The following section discusses ten themes that summarize these categorical aggregations. These ten themes encapsulate the main leadership practices evidenced by these successful interim pastors in The Fellowship. Each theme has three or four categories derived from the above interview discussion.

Leadership Practice Themes

The previous interview discussion revealed a significant number of identifiable leadership activities practiced by the eighteen interim pastors during their transitional ministries. These activities were categorized, aggregated, and presented using illustrative quotes from the various interim pastors. During this part of the analytic process the researcher also consulted five other sources of research information: his hand-written notes of individual interviews, field notes and correspondences, data provided by the two lay individuals who were also contacted by this writer during the research stage of this project, comments by regional directors, and written documents provided by interviewees themselves.

This researcher, having further analyzed the above sources of leadership information, combined the identified aggregated categories reducing them to ten overall themes. These ten themes summarize the successful leadership practices of the interim pastors interviewed for this project. The themes and their accompanying summarized categorical aggregations are presented in the following table.

Table 7

Leadership Practice Themes

Interim Leadership Themes	Summarized Categorical Aggregations
Appraisal	Review church's history
	Assess present condition of church
	Appraise proposed task and ability to complete
Resolution	Address past leaders and situations
	Reframe church's self-image
	Reconnect disparate groups in church
Communication	Preach and teach the Word of God
	Share information
	Speak hope and love
Ministry	Manifest compassion and encouragement
	Visit and be available
	Listen without taking sides
Revitalization	Address misunderstandings and mistrust
	Rekindle joy and growth
	Confront sin and wrong
	Release negative stakeholders
Realignment	Identify and encourage leaders in the church
	Dismantle and replace outdated forms
	Reconstruct policies and procedures
Direction	Refocus on God's purpose and will

	Set realistic goals
	Establish a step-wise plan
Management	Care for present staff
	Address administrative deficiencies
	Identify, train, and encourage lay leadership
Leadership	Clarify the interim role
	Interface with present leaders
	Guide the search process
Self-awareness	Love unconditionally and intentionally
	Recognize personal limitations
	Leave completely

Appraisal

Throughout the interview process, this theme continually emerged as an important leadership practice for interim pastors to develop and utilize. Pastor Fred likened the process to that of a doctor-patient relationship. He explained, "You have to sit down with the leader or leaders of the church over a cup of coffee to find out, like a doctor who would take a patient, what the symptoms are. And then you get a bit of a handle on it, where it hurts. They are not always telling you the whole story but at least you are getting part of it." Pastor Peter, using an investigative analogy, added, "I have to get a reading on the DNA. I have to try and get a reading on the people and understand the politics. I have to figure how to handle the people and in what way."

The interim pastors spoke of appraisal in terms of understanding the past

history, leadership practices, and hurts as well as the present tenor of the

congregation. However, the pastors also mentioned the importance of understanding

the task at hand and their ability, time, and desire to engage that challenge.

Resolution

The interims often referred to the important practice of resolving issues in the

church. As part of the healing process, these transitional leaders spoke of addressing

past leaders and members of the church, creating a positive self-image in the

congregation, and reconciling estranged groups within and sometimes outside the

church. Pastor Greg summarized this theme stating, "I guess success was seeing

people, those who were for the previous pastor and those who were against, coming

to an understanding in some sort of reconciliation." Pastor Peter added, "We've got

to bring healing from the past. If we don't deal with those issues and bury them, they

will keep rising up." The men recognized that interim leadership entailed issue

resolution in its many forms.

Communication

Each of the interviewees emphasized this aspect of interim leadership at some

point in their interviews. Communication at the board level, board to congregation

level, interim pastor to board and congregation level, and member to member level

was mentioned at varied times. Several of the men mentioned that a lack of

communication had contributed to some of the hurt in the congregation. Pastor

Maurice stated, "There's been a lot of bruising, contusions, and misunderstanding. In

other words, poor communication!" For the interims, in order to address this lack of

communication, they utilized preaching and teaching, verbal and written communiqués to the congregation, and one-to-one discussion with members. For instance, Pastor John addressed mistrust in one congregation through over-communication. He stated, "I told the leadership to be open with everything. So I started a monthly meeting after the service and said, 'This is what has been going on. Does anyone have any questions? Don't leave here and speculate on anything; ask your questions.'" For each of the men, communication was vital to congregational renewal and growth.

Ministry

Every interviewee referred to general ministry as a responsibility of an interim pastor. Because each of the men had been previously involved in full-time pastoral ministry, the concepts of caring, showing compassion, encouragement, visitation, and non-favoritism were familiar. They recognized the importance of pastoral care. Pastor Trevor summarized this theme stating, "Let them know that you are willing to go the second mile and spend time with them. You must be there to meet their needs." For the interims, pastoral ministry was considered a staple practice of leadership.

Revitalization

Many of the interim pastors spoke of correcting the wrongs in the church. This involved rekindling joy and growth by facing misunderstanding and mistrust, confronting sin and wrong in the church, and releasing divisive members when necessary. The men spoke of the unpleasant but necessary nature of some of these activities. Yet they also mentioned the renewed joy and sense of purpose among the

members of the congregation when the process was complete. Pastor Paul summarized this process stating, "Once we cleaned house. Once we had people on board studying their Bibles, the church began to grow." The interviewees recognized that revitalization was one of the unsavory leadership practices necessary in interim ministry.

Realignment

Another often mentioned aspect of transitional leadership practice was the revamping of the structure and leadership of the church during the interim time. Several of the men bemoaned the archaic structure and policies of some of the churches. Pastor Ken stated, "Sometimes as an intentional interim you are brought in to do that, to restructure the church." Others spoke of the need to identify and enliven new leaders within the congregation. In some situations the church had lost significant numbers of members, including former board and committee members. As a result the churches were bereft of competent lay leadership. The task of the interim pastor was to raise a new group of leaders to function with a new incoming senior pastor. Pastor Luke, in speaking of re-instituting a key leader stated, "It was definitely a leadership move because I knew he was a key player. I needed to influence him to gain assurance that he could perform leadership in the church." Several of the interviewees recognized that realigning the structure and lay leadership of the church was a central practice of interim leadership.

Direction

The pastors spoke often of giving direction to churches during the interim time. They mentioned that congregations were often aimless and without a sense of

purpose or vision. The men recognized that they needed to focus the church on the Lord's purpose for them and then map out a plan to accomplish that vision. Pastor Keith remarked, "I would ask the church questions to make them think about what they should dream." Pastor Ken added, "In interim ministry, one of the big areas that I have addressed is helping people be open to vision, being willing to stretch." The interim pastors recognized that providing direction to a church in transition was a major leadership practice.

Management

Among the regular practical activities of interim pastors during the course of their ministry was attending to the administrative and training needs of the church and its staff. This management often took the form of caring for existing staff, training lay leadership, and attending to the more mundane features of pastoral work, budgets and finances. Some of the interviewees focused on the important task of caring for staff. Pastor Keith summarized this activity saying, "I did a lot of leadership development. I would work with the board, congregation, or the staff. In some places the staff was hurt so I would encourage them." Pastor Mike also encountered "weak leadership, lack of training because most of the major leaders had left because of difficulties." The interims recognized that church management was a needed aspect of the interim ministry.

Leadership

Another key theme that emerged pertained to leadership practice during the interim time. Involved in this theme was guidance of the search process, interim pastoral role clarification, and a cautious interface in the selection of the new pastor.

There was an interesting contrast among the interviewees on this theme. Pastor John explained, "One of my policies was to never interfere with the search committee." Yet, Pastor Alex stated, "If you are in a situation where they really don't know what they are doing, you have to take them by the hand and lead them." Pastor Maurice added "It is one of the most satisfying parts of the process."

The other significant element of interim leadership mentioned by the men was role clarification. Pastor Ben emphasized, "If you are the interim pastor, you cannot be a candidate." Pastor Maurice added "if an interim pastor chooses to stay, he will be ministering to a different church. Their expectations of him will change and I have to explain that each time." The interims recognized the unique and delicate aspect of leadership throughout the transitional time.

Self-awareness

The tenth theme that emerged from this research pertained to self-awareness. Several of the pastors spoke at length on the importance of one's heart and life in this challenging role. Because of the unique aspect of transitional ministry, the interim must be aware of his role, vulnerabilities and risks. He must manifest transparency and commitment, yet be willing to sever relations with the church upon the arrival of the new pastor. Such a challenge requires a significant degree of self-awareness. Pastor Alex remarked, "You need to be open to the Lord and open to people so that you are not missing something that is very obvious." Pastor Dan mentioned, "It was only as I felt the Spirit of God had given me an okay that I proceeded with an interim ministry." Pastor Ken added one further thought, "An important area is to realize what you cannot do, what you must leave for the senior pastor to do. You must know

what you are not to do." When speaking of leaving the church, Pastor Alex shared, "The excitement shifts from the interim to the new senior pastor and as interim you need to get out of there shortly. This is a very hard time for the interim pastor." The interim pastors recognized the essential place of self-awareness in interim pastor leadership practice

These ten themes served as a summary of the categorical aggregation analysis. Each of the themes encompasses previously identified categories of leadership activity and practice. Not every theme was evidenced in all situations or among all pastors. However, the ten themes nevertheless represent the research data pertaining to leadership practice among the eighteen interim pastors serving in The Fellowship.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the data analysis and results of the research conducted for this project. The chapter has included a rehearsal of the purpose, the research questions guiding this project, a brief discussion of the research process, a review of the research participants, a presentation of the analytic procedure, a categorical aggregation of the interview data, and an analysis of the resultant interim leadership practice themes.

The thematic analysis of the categorical aggregations revealed ten major leadership themes reflecting the practice of the eighteen interim pastors interviewed for this project. The ten themes were appraisal, resolution, communication, ministry, revitalization, realignment, direction, management, leadership, and self-awareness.

The following chapter will present conclusions and recommendations from this research.   The chapter will discuss implications for further research as well as suggestions for the work of transitional pastors. It also will include a final summary.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions, Implications, and Summary

Introduction

Chapter five presents a discussion of the principal findings of this research project. In this chapter the researcher will briefly rehearse the problem, purpose, and value of this study. He will also review the project's findings in light of the literature reviewed in chapter two, the methodology described in chapter three, and the research questions guiding this study. His examination will include the study's limitations, the implications of the project's findings, suggestions for future research, and a summary.

The Problem, Purpose, and Value of this Study

The Problem

This study has shown that the transitional time between pastors is challenging for most churches. In fact, elevated levels of trauma, grief, and dysfunction are quite common in churches that have faced a forced or sudden termination of a senior pastor. In these settings the role of an interim pastor is uniquely challenging. Understandably, transitional pastors who excel in such settings require particular skill sets and leadership practices. Consequently, the particular identification of those practices, skills, and behaviors is needful for those who would seek to excel in this necessary interim ministry.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify common, successful leadership practices of pastors actively serving in transitional ministry. This researcher sought to

understand the unique settings of the participants and their resultant leadership

practices exhibited in those contexts.

The Value

The value, and indeed necessity, of this study was evidenced in the following.

First, the frequency of interim pastoral ministry in the lifespan of a local church has

increased as senior pastors move more frequently. Second, the length of the average

interim ministry was significant, up to twenty percent of total ministry time in the

local church. Third, the trauma and grief faced by congregations after a senior

pastor's departure required a unique set of identifiable leadership skills. Fourth, the

element of change facing churches in transition necessitated interim pastors who

exhibited the leadership practices necessary for congregational stabilization prior to

the installation of new pastoral leadership. Consequently, because of the varied

challenges associated with interim pastoral ministry, it was crucial to identify the

practices of those pastors who successfully navigate the transitional environment.

The Literature Review and the Project Findings

Chapter two of this study examined some of the literature pertaining to

organizational leadership. Three basic areas of leadership were highlighted: business,

education, and ministry. First, the writer discussed business leadership in the

literature. The theories of leadership that were examined in this section were trait

theory, behavioral theory, situation leadership theory, contingency theory, path-goal

theory, leader-member exchange theory, transformational leadership theory, servant

leadership theory, and ethical leadership theory. The writer discussed the progress in

leadership theory from its earlier beginnings in trait theory to the later

transformational and servant models of leadership.

Second, the writer discussed leadership literature in the educational field. The

writer focused on educational leadership at the superintendent/administrator,

principal, and teacher level. He noted that educational leadership reflects a mixture of

transactional and transformational leadership styles at all levels. He also noted that

the principal and teacher levels evidenced greater transformational leadership

characteristics than the administrator level.

Third, the writer examined pastoral leadership in the Holy Bible and

throughout church history. Pastoral leadership axioms and practices were highlighted

and traced through history to the modern era. The writer then examined pastoral

leadership practices in the contemporary congregational setting. He noted that

several factors have affected the practice of pastoral ministry in the modern era.

These included the constant state of change in contemporary churches, the

disintegration of western cultural norms, the multi-faceted nature of contemporary

pastoral ministry, and the varied approaches to pastoral leadership. Each of these

factors has contributed to the challenging nature of modern pastoral leadership.

The above three areas were also examined in terms of interim leadership

practice. First, this writer discussed the development of interim business

management. While being a recent addition to the management field, interim

management provides an immediate level of expertise to firms in need of temporary

executives. Interim managers fulfill an immediate need in many firms looking to

bridge the vacuum caused by either an outgoing executive or a current project requirement.

Second, this writer discussed the place of interim leadership in education. Noting that the interim leadership literature in this field was relatively limited, this researcher nevertheless discussed the necessary practices required by interim administrators. He noted that the use of interim administrators in academia was quite a common experience. Yet the literature defining the task of an interim administrator was limited.

Third, the writer examined interim pastoral leadership. He observed that the literature in this field of leadership practice included anecdotal material, denominational and para-church training materials, and some Doctor of Ministry dissertation material. However, he noted a relative paucity of literature at the Doctor of Philosophy level. This scarcity of research underscored the need to research the leadership practices of interim pastors in The Fellowship.

The chapter two literature review highlighted leadership practices in business, education, and pastoral ministry. It also focused on the unique leadership contexts of interim managers, academics, and pastors. The literature review identified a number of leadership theories, behaviors, and practices. From the literature review this researcher was able to begin rudimentary leadership practice identification. These initial steps ultimately influenced the categorical aggregations and thematic summaries.

The Research Methodology and the Project Findings

Chapter three of this project focused on the research method employed in this study. Chapter three topics included a definition of the terminology utilized in the research and a lengthy discussion of qualitative research including data analysis. This chapter presented the rationale and form of research utilized to gather and analyze the project findings.

A number of terms, discussed in this chapter, were used throughout the data reporting stage of this research project. This researcher explained these terms primarily because they pertained to the context of the interviewees. The terms discussed included The Fellowship, FEB CENTRAL, FEB Pacific, FEBCAST, FEBMID, Fellowship Atlantic, senior pastor, regional director, local church, interim pastor, lay person, board of elders, and board of deacons. As these terms were often used throughout the interviews, the explanations elucidated the later categorical aggregations.

The discussion of the research method included a differentiation between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach, the particular features of qualitative research, the application of naturalistic research to this study including the axioms and characteristics of naturalistic inquiry, the research design, and the data analysis methodology. This researcher purposely detailed the important aspects of qualitative research within the naturalistic paradigm. In doing so, the writer presented the advantages of using qualitative case study methods to gather rich and thick detail pertaining to interim pastoral leadership.

This writer, in his discussion of the research design, purposed to trace the interview process, categorical aggregation, and thematic summary presented in chapter four. This researcher presented the trustworthiness of this research process discussing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. He explained his data analysis methodology utilizing the procedures outlined by Gillham in his work, *Case Study Research Methods.*

The case study methodology discussed in chapter three produced a wealth of data for this researcher. This data was coded, categorized, aggregated, and summarized into the themes discussed in chapter four. These findings are the result of the case study methodology presented in chapter three.

The Research Questions and the Project Findings

The findings of chapter four addressed the three research questions that guided this project. Consequently, chapter four was discussed in terms of these research questions. These three questions focused on the actual leadership practices of individual interim pastors, the aggregated leadership practices evidenced across the pool of participants involved in this study, and the factors influencing the use of these practices in varied transitional settings.

Chapter four presented a brief rehearsal of the project purpose including the three research questions guiding the study. As well the chapter included a review of the participants in this study, the categorical aggregations of the interview question data, and an analysis of the resultant interim pastoral leadership practice themes. The categorical aggregations, thematic summaries, and identified contextual factors addressed the research questions and ultimately the overarching purpose of this

project, namely the identification of leadership practices of successful interim pastors in The Fellowship.

In chapter four, this researcher presented the demographics of the eighteen participants in the study. All were former pastors in The Fellowship. All had held at least one interim pastoral position in The Fellowship. All held post-secondary degrees with six having doctoral degrees. All were married males. Twelve were past retirement age and six were continuing in active ministry. Five of the interviewees had been involved in seminary education. All maintained that they had had successful transitional ministries.

The initial interview question pertaining to demographics yielded the above data. However, the succeeding interview discussions revealed a rich trove of uncategorized details about these interim pastors. While this added material may be beyond the immediate scope of this project, it bears mentioning here. In short, this data pertained to the passion, compassion, thankfulness, and unbridled joy expressed by these interim pastors. Frankly, this researcher was unprepared for the scope of emotions expressed by the participants as they recounted their trials, disappointments, and ultimate successes in transitional ministry.

This researcher had purposely focused his research on the leadership practice of these interim candidates. However, in the process of gathering the data, he uncovered a wealth of material on the emotional toll, physical strain, personal fulfillment, and pure joy evidenced in the interim ministries of these men. Their stories overflowed with the passion of having rescued a congregation, the challenge of facing a Diotrephes in the church, or the regret of a failed pastoral search. They

shared their personal aspirations, successes, and failures in transitional ministry.

They recounted their sleepless nights, perplexing problems, personal regrets, and even

self-doubts. In a few instances, their wives who were present rehearsed their stories

from a deeply passionate perspective. In essence, this researcher inadvertently

acquired far more than he had anticipated at the outset of this project. As will be

mentioned later in this chapter, this collection of unanticipated and unused material

could well be the subject of further research.

As mentioned above, the three research questions covered this project's

problem and purpose, specifically the identification of leadership practices of

successful interim pastors in The Fellowship. However, these three questions

particularly addressed three different aspects of the findings of this study. Question

one was designed to focus on interim pastoral leadership practices in their broadest

categorical forms. Question two was designed to narrow those aggregated categories

to the principal leadership practice themes. Question three was designed to provide

the context and rich texture that framed these themes. In essence, the research

findings discussed in chapter four answered the three research questions guiding this

project.

Research Question One

Research question number one asked, "What leadership practices are

evidenced by the successful interim pastors examined in this study? This question

was designed to identify any identifiable leadership practices that surfaced during the

discussion by the participants. In particular, two interview questions, number six and

seven, concentrated on these practices. A third question, number ten, asked the

interviewees to add any further information they deemed to be germane to the discussion. Questions six and seven asked, "How did you address these challenges as an interim pastor?" and "What leadership practices and activities have been most effective in your personal interim pastoral ministry?" Both of these questions yielded a significant amount of leadership practice data. The interviewees identified eighteen separate leadership practices in question number six and eleven categories of leadership practice in question seven. In addition, question number ten, a question in which participants were asked to add any further data, yielded seventeen leadership practices.

Admittedly, a degree of overlap occurred between these three questions. Yet a significant amount of categorical data was generated. The categories of leadership practice included preaching, pastoral care, structural renewal, leadership attention, staff care, church assessment, vision renewal, encouragement, relationship repair, self-awareness, communication, search process attention, issue resolution, joy, clarity, stability, direction, growth, preparation for the new pastor, visitation, confrontation, counselling, prayer, and restoration of relations with the previous pastor. These three interview questions yielded a significant quantity of data in answer to research question number one. Added to this categorical base was the data generated by two other open-ended questions, questions four and nine. While these two questions focused on the interim pastoral objectives and situational variants, they nevertheless produced the following additional leadership practices: fostering unity, providing counsel, wisdom, denominational relationship renewal, successful interim departure,

dealing with hurt, managing distance challenges, effective planning, love, financial management, and addressing lethargy in the church.

The open-ended interviews yielded significant categorical data. This researcher, while not entirely surprised by the number of leadership items, nevertheless faced a challenge of aligning these categories with some of the initial leadership themes identified in the literature. Only after significant analysis, summarization and repeated re-analysis did this researcher aggregate these categories into ten summary leadership practice themes.

Research Question Two

Research question two focused on the primary leadership practices evidenced across the pool of transitional participants. Specifically the researcher asked, "To what extent are common leadership practices evidenced across the sample of interim pastors in this study?" This question focused more specifically on the project purpose, the identification of leadership practices of interim pastors in The Fellowship.

The above-mentioned ten leadership practice themes summarized the categorical aggregations generated from the interview questions. Table six in chapter four presented the summary alignment of the categories with the ten primary themes. Each of the themes summarized three or four categorical aggregations.

The first theme, appraisal, summarized three categories. First it included reviewing the church's history. This may have included identifying the reasons for a pastoral dismissal, reviewing previous leadership conflicts, measuring congregational decline, and gauging previous attitudes to leadership. Second, this theme

incorporated the assessment of the present condition of the church congregation. This involved determining the church's financial and emotional health, identifying the key stakeholders in the congregation, gauging the well-being of staff and lay leadership, and evaluating the reputation of the church in the greater community. Third, this theme focused on evaluating the proposed task in light of the interim's ability to complete it. This involved evaluating the required time commitment to complete the assignment, gauging the amount of change required in the church, and assessing the emotional toll on the interim himself. As a theme, assessment was practiced early and often by the interims during their transitional assignments.

The second theme, resolution, summarized three categories. First, it involved addressing past leaders. In several situations, the previous pastor had left under negative circumstances. The congregation often ignored or shunned the former pastor. The interim pastor sought to restore relations with the previous pastor. Second, this theme addressed reframing the church's self-image. Congregations in transition often faced self-doubt, recriminations, and guilt. The interim's assignment in such cases was to restore congregational health, joy, self-esteem, and excitement. Third, the theme entailed the reconnection of disparate groups in the church. Invariably, with the loss of a previous senior pastor, various reactions would surface among groups within the church. Some were happy to see him go and others were heartbroken. This variance often led to splits in the membership, especially if the pastor was dismissed. The task of the interim pastor was to address these divisions and promote unity within the congregation prior to the calling of a new man. The

theme of resolution proved to be a contentious and often continuous task for some of the interim pastors.

The third theme, communication, included three categories. First, the theme necessitated the careful preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Every interim pastor viewed this task as instrumental in addressing varied challenges in the church. Second, the theme comprised the intentional and repeated sharing of information with the congregation. This might involve a members' meeting once a month or a weekly communiqué to each congregant. Third, this theme entailed speaking hope and love, both privately and publically. Interims spoke of needing to practice this form of communication often. The theme of communication in interim ministry was central to aligning the congregation and moving them in the right direction. As a leadership practice, it was critical in preparing the church for the new pastor.

The fourth theme, ministry, included three categories and primarily encompassed what might often be referred to as pastoral care. First, this theme meant showing compassion and encouragement. Individuals and entire congregations were often in serious need of care. They were experiencing self-deprecation, bewilderment, and significant hurt. A compassionate word from an interim pastor was valued and restorative. Second, this theme entailed visiting congregants and being available for counsel and advice. The interims often expressed that through visitation underlying issues and hurts were addressed. They stated that this was one of their most powerful tools in ministry. Third, this theme meant listening without taking sides. This aspect of ministry was particularly critical in situations where the previous pastor had been dismissed or left suddenly. The variant groups in the church

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often held opposing viewpoints on the previous pastor's departure. Added to this scenario were the occasional conflicts that emerged between key stakeholders in the church. Too often power plays severed relationships within the congregation. The interim pastors emphasized the wisdom of listening to both sides and remaining as a non-anxious presence in the church. The theme of pastoral care in ministry proved to be a staple function for these interim pastors in each transitional context.

The fifth theme, revitalization, included four categories. First, this theme involved addressing misunderstandings and mistrust in the transitional congregation. While misinformation and mistrust is present in most congregations, these attitudes become accentuated during the interim period. In effect there is no one person who communicates, leads, and directs the congregation. This is particularly true in churches that have suffered an exodus of lay leadership during the transitional time. The interim pastor's challenge is to create understanding and trust among the congregants so that the new pastor will inherit trusting followers of Christ. Second, this theme requires the rekindling of joy. Admittedly, there will be some in the church who are joyful over the departure of the previous pastor. However, generally, the interim pastors encounter a disheartened or numerically reduced membership. In these cases rekindling joy and growth is a long-term goal. Third, this theme necessitated the confrontation of sin and wrong in the congregation. Admittedly, this aspect of leadership practice was unpleasant to most but necessary in order to recalibrate the congregation's sense of vision and direction. The interim pastors recognized the essential nature of confrontation in the ultimate restoration of the congregation. Fourth, the theme involved the release of negative stakeholders. While

this practice was not frequent, it nevertheless was part of the interim pastor's responsibility of confronting sin in the church. Unrepentant and recalcitrant individuals were encouraged to leave the congregation. The theme of revitalization was often multi-faceted and somewhat negative in scope. The ultimate goal preparing the church for the new senior pastor sometimes required this challenging activity of congregational management.

The sixth theme, realignment, included three categories. First, the theme focused on the identification and encouragement of leaders in the church. In some cases leaders were reluctant to assume leadership during the interim era due to previous criticism and hurt. In other instances the existing leadership was disorganized and unfocused. In these situations the interim pastors sought to reinvigorate these individuals or boards so that they might reassume responsibility in the church. Second, the theme meant dismantling and replacing outdated forms in the church. This often involved realigning the leadership of the church, reconstituting committees, or eliminating unnecessary aspects of administrative structure. Third, this theme focused on the reconstruction of policies and procedures. This might involve rewriting the constitution, revamping church policies, or realigning procedures to meet the new needs of the church. For the interim pastors, this aspect of leadership activity was both invigorating and sometimes tedious. The reinstatement of a leader or board encouraged the interim and the church. Yet the necessary aspect of revamping policies and procedures was a necessary yet tedious exercise. However, for some of the interim pastors the aspects of this theme were essential for the long-term stability and direction of the church.

The seventh theme, direction, involved three categories. First, this theme meant refocusing on God's purpose and will. In short it was a lesson in vision casting. Many of the transitional congregations had lost vision, often because the previous pastor had been the vision caster. They inadvertently developed a maintenance mentality. It was the interim pastor's task to remind them that even in transition they were part of God's purpose and will. Second, the theme required the setting of realistic goals. In light of the fact that the congregation was part of God's purpose and will, they needed to set goals to achieve those purposes. It was the interim pastor's task to help the church set realistic goals. Third, this theme implied the practical task of establishing a step-wise plan to reach the goals and fulfill God's purpose and will. Once again the interim pastor was central in this process of congregational planning.

The eighth theme, management, included three categories. First, this theme implied care for the staff. Not all of the situations had full-time paid staff during the interim process. Many of the churches were small with volunteer workers. However, in the contexts in which staff members were present, the interims recognized the need to care for them. In some situations this meant reconnecting disparate members of the staff into a more cohesive team context. In other settings it entailed encouraging disheartened and bewildered individuals. Second, this theme necessitated the addressing of administrative deficiencies. Some of the interim pastors added new committees, transitional teams, and key workers to facilitate the redirection of the congregation. Third, this theme required the identification, training, and encouragement of leadership in the church. The interims found that many boards

were inadequately trained and unable to handle the transitional context. In other instances, the board members were afraid to lead or ready to resign. In each of these cases the interim pastors sought to assess the leadership context, train new or existing leaders, encourage disheartened leaders to recommit to the work, and refocus the leaders on their role in the church. The interim pastors recognized this theme as vital to the ultimate growth and development of the church under a new pastor.

The ninth theme, leadership, included three categories. First, the theme implied the clarification of the interim pastoral role in the church. This activity meant stipulating what the interim pastor would and would not do in the transition time. It also entailed delineating the interim's position in terms of the search process. The interim pastor was not a candidate for the senior pastoral position. Second, the theme involved working with present leadership in board and committee work. Third, this theme involved working in the search process. The interim pastors characterized this practice as a delicate balance between guidance and non-interference. The interviewees recognized their unique place in guiding the process. Yet they also understood that they could not choose the new pastor. As a theme, leadership clarification, interfacing with present leadership, and guiding the search process was identified as an essential practice for the interim pastor.

The final theme, self-awareness, included the last three categories. First, self-awareness necessitated loving the congregation unconditionally and intentionally. Several interim pastors mentioned this critical element in pastoral care. Many of the congregations had been hurt, rejected, or demoralized. It was the interim pastor's role to love and build them again. Second, this theme required knowing personal

limitations. This awareness was somewhat different from that discussed in theme number one. The first theme focused on assessing the task and the amount of time and resources needed to complete it. This thematic category referred to understanding the interim role in terms of the transitional context. Third, the theme required a complete and thorough severing of ties with the church once the new pastor was called. This was particularly challenging for the interim pastors who had served for longer periods in transitional situations. This final theme, self-awareness, addressed the personal issues facing interim pastors in their very temporary roles.

The ten themes discussed above summarized the common leadership practices evidenced by the interviewees identified in this study. Not all practices were equally applied or employed at the same level, at the same time, or by the same individual. However, across the research sample as a group, these practices surfaced as the key themes of interim pastoral leadership practice.

Research Question Three

Research question three asked, "What factors influence, and in what ways, the identified leadership practices of these pastors in their interim settings?" This third research question provided the researcher with the context for the identified themes as well as thick description of the transitional settings in which these leadership practices were evidenced. While no particular interview question specifically addressed this research question, question five, and to a lesser extent questions eight through ten provided insights into the interim contexts faced by the interviewees.

Interview question five asked the participants to identify the challenges they faced in the churches. The participants answered this question personally and in

terms of the churches they served. They mentioned the issues of unity, change, leadership, structure, morals, vision, the search process, staff problems, lethargy, pastoral care, confrontation, preaching, encouragement, love, legalism, wisdom, finances, relationships, and prayer. Interview question eight asked the interviewees to identify major concerns they addressed in their interim contexts. In answer to this question they mentioned the above issues, but added well-being, self-awareness, trust, direction, and spiritual understanding. Interview question nine asked the interviewees to identify aspects of interim ministry that vary from church to church and those that remain the same. In answer to this question, the above items were mentioned with the addition of hurt, distance, stuckness, closure, leaving the church, and communication. Lastly, interview question ten asked for any other areas of interim pastoral ministry that the interviewees felt they needed to mention. In answer to this question the interviewees mentioned joy and clarity.

Certainly the factors that influenced the leadership practice of the interim pastors in this case study were numerous and varied. These factors encompassed personal strengths and weaknesses, church function and dysfunction, pastoral responsibilities and limitations, leadership and management, and personal and public communication. Consequently, because the factors varied significantly, there were a commensurate number of identified aggregated categories of leadership practice. These categorical aggregations, once summarized, reflected the ten leadership practice themes that address the purpose of this research study.

The Limitations of the Project Findings

This research project focused on interim pastors in The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. Consequently, the findings of this research study pertained to a narrow group of individuals, namely eighteen interim pastors from the FEB Central, FEB Pacific, and FEBCAST regions of The Fellowship. Understandably, a number of limitations relate to this research project. First, there are some personal limitations. This researcher faced time limitations. Due to time constraints, the research interview stage of this project was limited to three months in the fall of 2010. The researcher faced distance limitations. Face-to-face interviews were limited to those participants situated within a reasonable driving distance of the writer. Others were contacted by telephone. The researcher faced limitations in overall sample size. The total number of interviewees available to this writer from The Fellowship numbered twenty five. From this number eighteen were interviewed. The researcher faced regional limitations. Interviewees were selected from three of the six regions of The Fellowship. Of the three regions that were not used, one was French speaking and the other two were unresponsive to this writer's requests.

Second, there were some general pre-determined limitations. This writer limited his research to interim pastors from The Fellowship. Other denominational groups were excluded from the research. As well, this writer focused on Canadian interim pastors. Pastors from other parts of North America were not included. This researcher chose to use a multiple case study format thereby limiting the depth to which he might study individual cases. The researcher limited his research to the identifiable leadership practices of interim pastors. Other aspects of interim pastoral

ministry including the emotional/psychological component were excluded. This was

alluded to earlier. Finally, this researcher limited his research to active or recently

active interim pastors. Others that may have served as interim pastors in a more

distant past were not included. In light of the obvious limitations of this research

project the following implications for further research stem from these project

findings.

Further Research Implications and the Project Findings

The limited scope of this research project suggests some obvious options for

future research in this field. First, there is a scarcity of research in the area of

leadership practice and transitional ministry. This field of research is yet in its early

stages. Second, this project examines a few interim pastors from one group of

churches in three parts of the vast country of Canada. Consequently, research into

other denomination settings, other parts of this country, other cultural groups, and

more broadly based sample sizes could yield helpful data in the field. Third, this

research is restricted to Canada. Further research in this field in other countries, other

larger denominational groups with varied ecclesiastical structures could yield greater

amounts of data. Fourth, this research project followed a qualitative approach. The

design of a quantitative methodology with a larger survey sample size might yield

significant results. Fifth, this project was limited to that which one researcher could

accomplish. A larger research project, perhaps initiated by a denominational office or

school could enlist several researchers and produce an extensive body of data.

Finally, this researcher chose to study the leadership practice aspect of interim

ministry. Further research into this aspect of pastoral work might focus on the

emotional component for interim pastors, the stresses on family during the interim time, the nature of congregational dynamics during the transitional period, the context of lay leadership during the interim time, the dynamics of staff relationships through a transitional period, or aspects of leadership and the pastoral search process. All of these subjects would add invaluable material to this relatively under-researched area of ministry.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research project was to identify leadership practices evidenced by successful interim pastors in The Fellowship. Using a multiple-case study methodology, this researcher interviewed eighteen active or recently active interim pastors from the FEB CENTRAL, FEB Pacific, and FEBCAST regions of The Fellowship. The individual pastors interviewed for this study provided this researcher with a wealth of leadership practice material. This material was read a number of times, coded, aggregated, and summarized to produce the ten leadership practice themes discussed in chapter four. These themes summarized the over thirty aggregated categories gleaned from the interview data and encapsulated the primary leadership practices used by successful interim pastors in this study. The research problem was addressed and the research questions were answered yielding a wealth of leadership practice data. Certainly this study added significant insight into the leadership practices of successful interim pastors. However, it also did much more.

While the project's ten leadership practice themes specifically addressed the research problem, the study also revealed the intricate and widely varied nature of transitional ministry. The pastoral interviews revealed the passion and sacrifice of

men who invested their reputations and indeed their hearts in struggling

congregations.   But perhaps above all else, this study showed the crucial need for

highly skilled and sincerely compassionate pastors who will navigate the troubled

waters of interim ministry. The caring work of interim pastoral ministry is not for the

casual participant. It is complex, intense, and perplexing at times. The personalities

and problems are often emotionally charged and the solutions are seldom clean. Yet

the men interviewed for this study referred to the task of interim ministry as a

privileged highlight in their ministry lives. Consequently, while for this researcher

this project has been a privilege and blessing, for the sake of future interim pastors

further research into the challenges of transitional leadership is more than warranted.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Leadership Practice and Transitional Pastoral Ministry

Dr. D. Brent Powell
Tennessee Temple University
Temple Baptist Seminary

You are invited to participate in a research study on the leadership practices of interim Pastors. This study seeks to identify common leadership practices that augment the functions of interim Pastors. Would you please read this form asking any questions that you might have concerning your participation and the interview? After reading this form and agreeing to participate, please sign your consent.

This study is being conducted by Rev. Dr. D. Brent Powell, doctoral candidate at Tennessee Temple University's Ph. D in Organizational Leadership program.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to identify leadership practices in interim Pastoral ministry contexts.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked a series of interview questions regarding your experiences in interim Pastoral ministry. The interviewer will record these answers and transcribe them. You will be given a copy of the transcription for your review, comment, and correction.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:

This study has minimal risks that are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

There are no benefits to participation.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be stored in a secure and private context. When any information is used for the research report or any further publication, be assured that no information will be used that could identify the subject being interviewed. All interviewees will be assigned pseudonyms and any churches, organizations, or other

groups mentioned in their interviews will also be given assumed names. Great care will be given to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

Voluntary Nature of this Study:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate is most appreciated. But should you feel unable to continue, you may withdraw from this study at any time. As well, you are free not to answer any of the questions asked by the interviewer.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is D. Brent Powell. You may ask any questions prior to the interview beginning or after the interview. If you have questions later, please contact him at 519 448 1744 or at brent@centralbaptistbrantford.com.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I may have. I consent to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

INTERIM PASTORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interim Pastoral Interview Questions

Thanks again for taking the time to review and answer these open-ended questions. Your input is very important to this research.

1. Could you give me some information regarding your background and experience? (education, family, experience etc.)

2. How did you come to begin interim Pastoral ministry?

3. What, if any, were your expectations of interim Pastoral ministry prior to beginning?

4. What objectives (if any) did you have as an interim Pastor?

5. What challenges have you faced as an interim Pastor?

6. How did you address these challenges as an interim Pastor?

7. What leadership practices and activities have been most effective in your personal interim Pastoral context? (For instance what areas of your ministry have been the most effective?)

8. What are the major concerns that you have addressed in your interim Pastoral ministry? How do you measure success in your interim ministry?

9. Are there aspects of interim Pastoral ministry that vary from situation to situation (from church to church)? Are there aspects of interim Pastoral ministry that are the same in each interim situation (common to all churches)?

10. What other areas of interim Pastoral leadership and ministry do you feel are important to share?