

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A DISCOVERY OF A PASTORAL LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLAN
AND ITS BENEFITS FOR SWEET HOPE FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

A PROJECT THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
TERRY GUILIO THORNTON

ASHLAND, OHIO
DECEMBER 8, 2023

Copyright © 2023, by Terry Guilio Thornton

All rights reserved

To The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who make all things possible

Jacqueline P. Thornton

Kezia M. Thornton

Terry, Rebecca, Abraham & Miles Thornton

Benjamin Thornton

Xander Thornton

Gloria Thornton

Alphonso Thornton

Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland

Ronald E. McNair Program, Coppin State University

In memoriam Dr. John Cheek

One of the most agonizing problems within our human experience is that few, if any, of us live to see our fondest hopes fulfilled. The hopes of our childhood and the promises of our mature years are unfinished symphonies.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

APPROVAL PAGE

Accepted by the faculty and the final demonstration examining committee of Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

Doctor of Ministry Committee:

Chair: Dr. Thomas Gilmore

Adviser: Dr. Gregory Walker

Second Reader: Dr. Shane Johnson

Director of Advanced Degree Programs and Assessment:

Dr. Dawn Morton

ABSTRACT

This project aimed to discover information related to pastoral leadership succession. The target of this project was the membership of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland. The goal was to inform the membership of a pastoral leadership succession process that makes the transition biblical and collegial.

This project was designed to discover pastoral leadership succession information through the study of biblical and Christian leadership succession models that are different from Sweet Hope's succession model. The value of this project will be realized when Sweet Hope utilizes the project findings in its next pastoral leadership transition.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW.....	1
2. BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	23
3. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	60
4. DESIGN, PROCEDURE, AND ASSESSMENT.....	81
5. REPORTING THE RESULTS.....	93
6. SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS.....	115
Appendices	
1. PROPOSAL.....	144
2. ASSESSMENT TOOL.....	165
REFERENCES.....	170

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Table 1. Goal #6: Pastoral Leadership Succession Procedures.....	95
2. Table 2. Goal #2: Theological Foundations for Pastoral Leadership Succession.....	97
3. Table 3. Goal #7: Responsibilities for Pastoral Leadership Succession.....	99
4. Table 4. Goal #5: Paradigmatic Structures for Pastoral Leadership Succession.....	101
5. Table 5. Goal #4: Historical Development of Pastoral Leadership Succession.....	104
6. Table 6. Goal #3: Biblical Examples of Pastoral Leadership Succession.....	106
7. Table 7. Goal #1: The Need for Succinct Leadership Succession.....	108
8. Table 8. Composite Scores for all Goals.....	111

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The discoveries in this project were a great achievement and the support of others was invaluable. The support of the following significant people has helped me accomplish a goal that has been long in the making:

To St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, Maryland for generously opening your doors so I may freely utilize the resources of this historic institution. A special thank you to the Dean, Dr. Brent Laytham, and Dr. Anthony Hunt, who served as Field Consultant.

To Ashland Theological Seminary for making this Doctor of Ministry program available, which continues to prepare theologians for ministry. Thank you, Dr. Dawn Morton, for being my “north star”—your guidance was invaluable. Thank you, Dr. Gregory Walker, Advisor, who became my friend and confidant—your patience and resourcefulness aided in the development of this project.

To Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church for being an incubator of thought and for graciously participating in this project.

To Deacon Herman Johnson—friend and a consistent contributor.

To Rev. Jacquelyn Clark—motivator and encourager.

To my family: Jackie, Terry, Benjamin, and Gloria Thornton—your prayers, belief, character, integrity, and support helped this project come to fruition.

I am grateful to my friend, Odessa Rose, who is a published author, for her editing assistance. Reverend Jacquelyn Woodard-Clark, Deacon Herman

Johnson, and Brother Dwayne Patterson were my D.Min. trinity fulfilling the roles of contributors, intercessors, and encouragers. They were my

motivation team and the inspiration needed in those moments of frustration, doubt, and weariness.

Finally, my wife, Jacqueline P. Thornton has been my rock throughout this process. She has been the wind beneath my wings particularly when I felt like I was tumbling. I felt the strength of her prayers throughout this process and she has found another way to honor our marriage vows by loving me tenderly until this project was completed. Thank you.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

There are many different models or processes of pastoral leadership succession or transition. Some of those models are efficient, while others are deficient. The pastoral leadership transition process that took place when I became the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church's pastor had flaws. Sweet Hope's pastoral leadership transition process was the third process I had experienced and each of those processes was lacking in either the administration of the process, the spiritual influence in the process, or the negative impact of the process on the membership of the church. I was compelled at that point to discover a process for pastoral leadership succession that was spiritually influenced, succinct, and congenial, and builds synergy within the church.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

This project aimed to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland congregation will ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession. The research question was: To what extent can a pastoral leadership succession plan for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore Maryland congregation ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession?

Overview

The focus of this project was to discover a methodology for selecting a pastor to succeed the current pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church which would lead to the development of a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan. The target of this project was the leadership and membership of Sweet Hope which decided to follow an antiquated model of pastoral leadership succession that is fraught with pitfalls. The goal was to inform the leadership and membership of Sweet Hope of a pastoral leadership succession plan that makes the transition of leadership from one pastor to another more biblical and collegial.

This project was designed to inform and sought to change the pastoral leadership succession paradigm of Sweet Hope through an integrated study of biblical and Christian leadership succession models that are vastly different from the current pastoral leadership succession model of Sweet Hope. The integrated study was presented to the membership of Sweet Hope over eight weeks. The project intended to discover a pastoral leadership succession model for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church and provide information that can be a starting point for other ministries that are seeking a new approach to pastoral leadership succession. The value of this project will be realized when Sweet Hope seeks a new pastor or when some other ministry utilizes the project's findings to assist their pastoral leadership succession process.

Foundations

As the pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, I questioned what I could do to make the process of selecting the next pastor well-organized and beneficial for the congregation and the next pastor. There are several

different models for transitioning the pastoral leadership position. The research and discoveries of this project suggest that the different models for transitioning pastoral leadership should have a level of refinement that exudes professionalism. However, I concentrated my efforts on discovering a pastoral leadership development and succession plan that will make the pastoral leadership transition process currently used by Sweet Hope, and many other autonomous churches, biblical, organized, and collegial.

This project sought to discover a succinct and efficient pastoral leadership succession plan and why it is necessary and important to have such a plan. Several foundational areas sustained the development of this project for pastoral leadership development and succession. The Personal Foundation highlighted the impetus for starting this project. The Biblical Foundation offered biblical insights and support for this project. The Theological Foundation revealed this project's Christological, Ecclesiological, Missiological, and Pneumatological elements. The Historical Foundation discussed the Church's approach and rationale for pastoral leadership development and succession from the Reformation Period until now.

Personal Background

God called me to preach in 1986. During the next three years, I did not answer or fulfill the call that God had placed upon my life. But as fate would have it, I preached my initial sermon on April 21, 1989. From that point, I have been on a quest to prepare myself for ministry. I took four semesters of classes at Arlington Bible College. I completed my undergraduate degree at Coppin State College (now University) and continued to receive my Master's Degree in

Theology from St. Mary's Seminary. During this preparation period, I began sensing God calling me into the pastoral ministry and I began gaining information about that process according to the Baptist tradition. Most autonomous Baptist churches used the "candidating process" to select their pastors. Some of what I learned was that the candidating process had its flaws and at times was not a succinct, concise, or professional process. The candidating process could have as many interpretations and processes as there are divisions of Baptist churches.

I went through three candidating processes that left me disenchanted and somewhat disheartened. The candidating process was the application process that Sweet Hope used to select their next pastor. The candidating process is initiated by a church when it establishes a pastoral search committee, declaring that the position of pastor is vacant and that they are seeking applicants to send in their résumés or complete a written application for the position. The potential is there for a church to get upwards of 100 résumés or applications for the position of pastor. Then the church will go through some unsystematic and non-prayerful process of winnowing down that number to a manageable number.

Through the experiences I have had with pastoral transition, I learned that some of the pastoral transition processes for some churches are unsystematic, disorganized, and sometimes chaotic. Some churches do not have specified qualifications for a pastor. Persons can get their names pushed to the top of the list of candidates if they know someone on the church's pastor search committee. Normally, there is no timetable set to complete the task of selecting a new pastor.

And, there are times when a person is not selected as pastor for the most frivolous reasons.

I once applied to a church and became one of the two finalists being considered for the position of pastor. After the church had gone through the process which had taken approximately one and a half years for the church to complete, I was informed that I was not selected to serve the church simply because the other candidate under consideration lived closer to the church. The effects of that process were devastating and a personal experience of the leaders of the transition process not being guided by the Holy Spirit.

However, On March 31, 2002, God privileged me to start my first Sunday as the pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. The candidating process of becoming the pastor of Sweet Hope or most Baptist churches is an antiquated, arduous task. I was motivated by those experiences to engage in this project. I wanted to assist churches and the academy with providing a pastoral leadership succession process that will enable Sweet Hope and other churches to have a Spirit-led, biblically based, and professional process for pastoral leadership transition. I wanted to assist the academy with informing pastors and lay leaders of some just and ethical techniques for pastoral leadership succession. I hoped that the discoveries of this project eliminate any undue hardship and heartache with the process of becoming the pastor or leader of a ministry. Serena Noceti contends that

Every reform comes into effect simultaneously on three levels: on the contents of collective awareness, on the form of internal relationships, and on structures, procedures, and roles through which the social body is expressed and maintained. Any reform that

hopes to be successful must affect these levels simultaneously and in a coherent way, knowing that in every case an understanding in collective awareness is underpinned by a particular relational form and a given structure, but that these relationships and structures need to be supported by a 'shared vision' of the Church. (Courau 2018, 88)

Biblical Research

The biblical foundation of this project were based on Numbers 27:12-23 and 1 Chronicles 28:1-21. These biblical narratives gave enlightenment and substantiation for the implementation of a pastoral leadership succession plan. I probed these passages of Scripture to glean from them basic precepts that support my thesis that strategic, succinct, and seamless succession and transition of pastoral leadership creates, cultivates, and encourages synthesis that sustains the divine revelation and leadership agenda and develops synergy for increased effectiveness that advances the ministry of the succeeding ministry leader.

1 Chronicles 28:1-21 gave insight into the importance of preparation for a succeeding leader. The discoveries in this passage of Scripture revealed some important steps that assist with pastoral leadership transition and succession. 1 Chronicles 28:1-7 revealed the importance of explaining the necessity for pastoral leadership transition and succession. Verses 8-10 uncovered the significance of the new leader and the people all of whom must work in harmony with one another and obey God. Steven Tuell suggested that "quite probably, the Chronicler is addressing his own community here, and calling them to faithfulness. They knew all too well what faithlessness had ultimately cost

Solomon's descendants" (Tuell 2001, 107). Verses 11-21 disclosed the contributions of David that were established for Solomon's success. Keck et. al. stated that "although he could not build the Temple, David did everything he could to help Solomon achieve that goal" (Keck 1999, 462). Tuell furthered the discussion that the responsibility of the current leader is to prepare and assist the next leader stating that the "parallel between David and Moses" continued

Just as the pattern (Hebrew *tabnith*) of the tabernacle had been revealed to Moses and preserved in the written Torah (Exod. 25:9, 40), so also the plan (also Hebrew *tabnith*) of the temple was revealed to David, and passed on by him in written form to Solomon (28:11, 12, 18, 19; see de Vries 1988, 626). (Tuell 2001, 108)

Northouse contended that providing a foundation and building the skills of the incoming leader is an approach that "provides a structure for leadership education and development programs that include creative problem solving, conflict resolution, listening, and teamwork" (Northouse 2016, 69). It was discovered that David wanted Solomon to be as prepared as possible for every aspect and circumstance of leadership to make the wisest decision for the good of the ministry and the people.

Numbers 27:12-23 supported the emphasis on God's kingdom agenda and the importance of a concise ministry focus. As in the 1 Chronicles 28 pericope, Numbers 27 represented the importance of the current ministry leader understanding his or her role in preparing to transition the pastoral leadership responsibilities to the succeeding leader and his or her participation in preparing that person to be successful. Dennis T. Olson suggested that "God's reminder of his fast-approaching death prompts Moses to ask God to appoint a new leader

for this new generation of Israelites” (Olson 1996, 168). Keck et. al. stated that the “succession of Moses’ charismatic spirit is initiated by his own request in vv. 15-17” (Keck 1998, 219). The ministry leader, just as Moses was, must be in alignment with and agreeable to the move of God to ensure succinct ministry transition and ministry harmony and effectiveness. God expected Moses to mentor Joshua and train him for leadership of the people through the time-honored tradition of discipleship and on-the-job training. Olson stated “For a brief interim period, Joshua and Moses will lead the Israelites together...Joshua will then take over full leadership of Israel...but his leadership will be guided by the written book of the Torah of Moses (Josh. 1:7-8)” (Olson 1996, 169).

These passages of Scripture offered nuggets of spiritual truths for pastoral leadership development and succession. The information garnered from these passages assisted with the discovery of foundational information that will guide any ministry seeking to have a smooth transition of pastoral leadership without disrupting the harmony and flow of ministry.

Theological Research

The theological foundations of this project were Christology, Missiology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology. Pastoral leadership succession decisions should be grounded in historical and theological perspectives. Those decisions should be able to govern and guide the decisions concerning pastoral leadership succession based on time-honored theological information rather than perspectives that are not Christocentric. That information discovered theological

fundamentals of pastoral leadership transition processes that maintain harmony among the membership and laid the groundwork for future ministry success.

Christology was the primary theological foundation and perspective that informed the subject matter of this project. The works, teachings, and ministry of Jesus Christ revealed that discipleship is directly related to the leadership development and succession process. Jesus spent intense time with his disciples to establish a pattern for living and to reveal to them how to carry on his work, particularly as leaders of the church. Discipleship as discussed in this project was an intense course of training, preparation, and exposure to ministry practices to prepare people to be qualified representatives of Jesus. Donald Senior asserts that “inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities...are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and Priscilla and Aquila” (Senior 2016, 40).

Ecclesiology was another theological theme that informed the field of pastoral leadership succession. Ecclesiology covered themes related to the Church and sub-themes such as its polity, leadership, discipline, and role in salvation. The purpose of the church reached deep into the life of humanity thereby dictating that its leadership remains knowledgeable, reliable, and seamlessly functioning. Senior argued that “the fundamental responsibility of New Testament leaders is to foster the common good of the community...Jesus the healer and teacher was committed to the restoration and well-being of God’s

people...many others were directed to building up the Body of Christ” (Senior 2016, 40).

The theological perspective of Missiology was important to fully know the dynamics of pastoral leadership succession. The mission, mandate, and message of the Christian Church are to reach the world with the love of Christ. The mission, mandate, and message are uncovered in theological reflection in the field of Missiology. In regards to pastoral leadership succession, an understanding of the *Missio Dei* and the Missiology of the church assisted in discovering a succession plan or paradigm that maintained the harmony of the ministry of the Church. Lincoln and Mamiya asserted that “In each city, there were a few leading churches and preachers who took a prophetic stance in attempting to meet the great needs of the migrants by using their church’s resources to provide help with food, shelter, clothing, and employment” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 121).

Pneumatology was another theological theme that influenced any pastoral leadership succession conversation. Accordingly, the work of the Holy Spirit impacted the service and direction of God’s people and the church. The Holy Spirit was visible in all aspects of the church including the church’s pastoral leadership and succession. The overriding pneumatological impact of the Holy Spirit in the leadership development and succession process was to make God known. Kelly and Nelson suggested that “God is made known through the enlightening inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (Kelly and Nelson 2003, 55).

This project's discovery of a framework and plan for pastoral leadership succession considered the implications that Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and Pneumatology have upon this area of study. Understanding the impact that these fields of theologies had on pastoral leadership succession determined how a succession plan model may evolve from this project.

Historical Research

The Historical Foundation explored the Church's evolution and progression of pastoral leadership development and succession from the Reformation Period until the present day. The Reformation Era of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shaped the independent, self-governing thought of many Protestant churches. Cwiekowski suggested that "the period in many ways set parameters that would last until the mid-twentieth century" (Cwiekowski 2018, 235). He continued to suggest that Martin Luther "argued for the basic equality of all Christians...and would later reject the papacy" (Cwiekowski 2018, 242). Martin Luther argued that

It is pure invention that pope, bishops, priests, and monks are to be called the "spiritual estate"; princes, lords, artisans, and farmers the "temporal estate." That is indeed a fine bit of lying and hypocrisy. Yet no one should be frightened by it; and for this reason -- viz., that all Christians are truly of the "spiritual estate," and there is among them no difference at all but that of office, as Paul says in I Corinthians 12:12, We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, whereby it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians; for baptism, Gospel and faith alone make us "spiritual" and a Christian people. But that a pope or a bishop anoints, confers tonsures; ordains, consecrates, or prescribes dress unlike that of the laity, this may make hypocrites and graven images,[4] but it never makes a Christian or "spiritual" man. Through baptism, all of us are consecrated to the priesthood, as St. Peter says in I Peter 2:9, "Ye are a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom," and the book of

Revelation says, Rev. 5:10 "Thou hast made us by Thy blood to be priests and kings. (Mundinger n.d.)

This theological rationale of Luther concerning the priesthood of all believers was one of the underlying thoughts that sought to dismantle the hierarchy of the papacy for Protestant churches and opened the door to local churches' self-governance.

Fitts, discussing the European background of Black Baptists, suggested that the church has an autonomous lineage. He stated that "the churches in those early times were entirely independent, none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction; but each one governed by its own rules and laws" (Fitts 1985, 20). Accordingly, Luther persisted that the Church had one head, who is Christ, in heaven and on earth whom the church must actively seek and serve. MacCulloch listed the 94th and 95th theses of Martin Luther as "Christians should be exhorted to seek earnestly to follow Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, hells. And let them thus be more confident of entering heaven through many tribulations rather than through a false assurance of peace" (MacCulloch 2005, 124).

The autonomous/independent African-American churches in America have a rich history, yet they are still evolving. Some African-American churches in America ascribed to the Catholicity of the church. They took their foundations and fundamentals from different denominations, even Catholicism, to form and shape their independent manner of operating as an autonomous church. Cwiekowski used Nicholas of Cusa's definition to define Catholicity as

“universality through [out] the entire world” and “from the beginning of the world to its end” (Cwiekowski 2018, 236).

When discussing the establishment of the Free Negro Church and the governance of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the catholicity of the church was apparent. Frazier stated that “a book of disciplines was adopted [by the AME Church] which embodied the same articles of religion and rules as the Wesleys” (Frazier and Lincoln 1974, 33). Lincoln and Mamiya, when discussing Baptist churches’ national, state, and local affiliations, highlighted the further independence of autonomous protestant churches stating that “the motive for coming together in these associations and conventions is fellowship and mutual support; no “book of discipline” or any other denominational authority makes participation obligatory” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 41). Very few of these churches and leaders accordingly were seeking hierarchal oversight.

Independence in governance made a pastoral leadership development and succession plan necessary for Sweet Hope and other autonomous churches. The Progressive Free Will Baptist Conference that Sweet Hope is affiliated with was created as a fellowship organization for Free Will Baptist Churches without any hierarchal oversight. Although Sweet Hope is a part of the Free Will Baptist Denomination and has its denominational book of disciplines, research of other Free Will Baptist Churches revealed different approaches for pastoral leadership transitions. The challenge of this project was to discover information for a succession plan from the history of the Church. Another challenge was to discover a paradigm of pastoral leadership development and succession that

maintained the integrity of autonomous churches. Thus, that would provide a succession plan that makes the transition of the pastoral leadership from one pastor to another more homogeneous, biblical, and collegial.

Contemporary Literature

Contemporary thoughts of vision-casting, ethical leadership, and discipleship related to pastoral leadership development and succession addressed aspects associated with the rationale, systems, and methodologies of pastoral leadership development and succession. These thoughts contributed to designing a model of leadership succession that is beneficial for the ministry of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church and the succeeding pastor.

The simplest definition of leadership was birthed out of the foundational principles of leadership in the early church. In the early church, leadership brought people together from varying life experiences and influenced them to fulfill the *Missio Dei*. Rosenbach and Taylor stated that leadership is

The process of the leader and followers engaging in reciprocal influence to achieve a shared purpose. Leadership is all about getting people to work together to make things happen that might not otherwise occur or to prevent things from happening that would ordinarily take place. (Rosenbach and Taylor 2006, 1)

The current leader and the succeeding leader equally contribute to making the overall leadership succession process succinct and beneficial. De Pree provided support for the importance of pastoral leadership succession and the role that each person has stating that “the art of leadership requires us to think about the leader-as-steward in terms of relationships: of assets and legacy, of momentum and effectiveness, of civility and values” (De Pree 1989, 10). The

ultimate goal of pastoral leadership succession was to craft a plan that is strategic, succinct, and seamless which encourages uninterrupted ministry synthesis and effectiveness.

Ethical leaders are the representatives of Christ and attract followers with the light of Christ that shines forth through their actions. Fluker understood that new/emerging leaders must be self-aware and argued that “spirituality, ethics, and leadership are linked” to the developmental model that is necessary to shape “a new generation of leaders who are spiritually disciplined, morally anchored, and socially engaged” (Fluker 2009, 11). Patsavos asserted that “as a shepherd of Christ’s Church...the morally blameless life of aspirants to the clergy has been reiterated so emphatically by all the Church’s fathers and teachers that sometimes their statements might be thought exaggerated” (Patsavos 2007, 31).

Contemporary thought emphasized that there must be ethical consistency, passion for the vision of God, and the constant guidance in every aspect of the pastoral leader’s life and ministry. Pue contended that “sometimes our first attempt at expressing vision creates a blurry image that is not clearly seen—nor understood—by others, including the leader. But wise leaders learn to gather around them trusted mentors who, under God’s guidance, help to sharpen the vision” (Pue 2005, 80). The leader’s primary responsibility is to penetrate the followers’ hearts with God’s vision. The leader is responsible for continually exposing followers to the vision. That process is arduous and laborious making it a necessity to have mentors who are a part of the current leader and the incoming leaders’ lives and ministry.

This sampling of contemporary thoughts concerning pastoral leadership development and succession offered a simple definition of leadership, discussed what are some of the responsibilities of leadership, and revealed some aspects related to leadership succession.

Context

The context of this project was the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. This project was a discovery of pastoral leadership development and succession planning that will assist with the transition of the pastoral leadership position to affect a smooth transition to a new pastor and continued effectiveness of the ministries of the church for the benefit of the people whom the church serves.

Sweet Hope has gone through two pastoral leadership changes in the last thirty years that were not as successful as hoped and they disrupted the flow and effectiveness of the ministries and the harmony within the congregation. The first pastoral change followed the course of an associate minister of the church succeeding the current pastor who was transitioning out. The second pastoral change in those thirty years followed the candidating process and the selection of the next pastor was done by a vote of the congregation. Both of the processes disrupted the harmony of the church and diminished the continued effectiveness of the ministries of the church. One clear example of disharmony was experienced when members of the official board of the church chose sides based on relationship rather than the leading of the Holy Spirit and voted to block the advancement of meaningful ministry within the church.

This project contended that all of the members of Sweet Hope have a passion for Christ and a sincere desire to see God's kingdom agenda advanced for the glory of God. The discoveries did not take away the heart and sincerity that the people of Sweet Hope have for the cause of Christ. It intended to provide the church with information to assist with the next pastoral transition. The hope was to discover a seamless transition that keeps the members of the church harmoniously working together with one another and the new pastoral leader of the church.

To that end, this project sought to honor the contributions each person makes to the pastoral leadership transition process and highlight the significance of each person to the pastoral leadership transition process. Through the project, it informed the necessity for the pastoral leadership process. It strived to make the pastoral leadership succession process benevolent and beneficial to the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church family.

Project Goals

This project aimed to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland congregation will ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession.

The following were the goals of this discovery project:

1. To discover the extent to which there is a need for succinct pastoral leadership succession.
2. To discover the extent to which theological foundations are considered for pastoral leadership succession.

3. To discover the extent to which biblical examples are used for pastoral leadership succession.
4. To discover the extent to which historical development is considered for pastoral leadership succession.
5. To discover the extent to which a paradigmatic structure benefits the pastoral leadership succession process.
6. To discover the extent to which procedures are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process.
7. To discover the extent to which participants know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process.

Design, Procedure, and Assessment

This project aimed to discover a pastoral leadership development and succession plan for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland congregation that facilitated future pastoral leadership successions. The research question was: In what ways can a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession? These discoveries met the project goals of understanding the value of pastoral leadership succession planning, presenting the theological impetus for pastoral leadership succession planning, and offering biblical examples and principles of pastoral leadership succession. Additionally, these discoveries have become the foundation for pastoral leadership development and succession plan.

The procedure of this project was to study historical and contemporary models of pastoral leadership succession. The next step in the project compiled

the information and that information was shared and discussed with the membership of Sweet Hope to heighten everyone's understanding of the pastoral leadership succession process. The discoveries were evaluated for their accuracy and truth concerning pastoral leadership succession and the potential of the information to be systematized for developing a pastoral leadership development and succession plan.

The assessment of the discoveries concerning pastoral leadership succession included a survey given to the membership of Sweet Hope. The training sessions lessons were emailed to 74 members of Sweet Hope. The integrated study sessions averaged 30 participants. There were forty total completed surveys. Their assessment included a quantitative and qualitative survey developed from the project goals. The survey used a 5-point Likert Scale to measure the discoveries' biblical, theological, and practical appropriateness. Additionally, seven open-ended questions offered further clarification of the respondent's understanding of the pastoral leadership succession process.

Personal Goals

I utilized the Doctor of Ministry process to enhance my effectiveness in ministry and prepare for the pastoral leadership transition. The main reason was to develop a better understanding of the pastoral leadership development and succession process. I expected from this process some personal enrichment that will help me to more thoroughly and capably serve the people of Sweet Hope. The accomplishment of my personal goals listed below has helped me to become more balanced in my personal life and has in turn strengthened my pastoral capabilities. My personal goals are:

1. I will be consistent with practicing my Sabbath by abstaining from activities that interfere with my Sabbath.
2. I will practice self-care by giving prioritized, proportionate attention to family, ministry, and self.
3. I will nurture my relationships with my spiritual father in ministry by committing time to him.

Definition of Terms

Leadership – the process of mobilizing, engaging, influencing, and directing individuals to accomplish specific tasks and goals. Northouse defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse 2016, 6).

Pastoral leadership succession – the process of developing the next pastoral leader for a smooth transition of pastoral leadership and ensuring the continued synergistic flow of spiritual energy among the pastor and the people to allow the ministry of the church to effectively fulfill the mission and mandate of Jesus Christ. Chand concurs, stating that “a good succession plan ensures that your wisdom and knowledge transcend the current generation” (Chand 2008, 7).

Pastoral Family Dynasty – the process of transitioning pastoral leadership from one family member to another family member—such as father to a child (ex. David to Solomon) but sometimes to other family members such as a spouse, nephew, or niece; usually the child of the current pastor becomes the next pastor.

Plan of the Paper

The focus of this project was pastoral leadership succession. I sought to underline the importance of a pastoral leadership succession plan for the ministry of Sweet Hope to ensure that the next pastoral leadership transition would result in a smooth transition that maintained harmony in the ministry and provided a good start for the next ministry leader. Chapter Two will include biblical, historical, theological, and contemporary foundations. A review of contemporary literature will be in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will be a detailed description of the method, procedures, and design of the project. The results of the survey will be found in Chapter Five. A final chapter, Chapter Six, will reflect on the findings as they apply to the ministry of Sweet Hope or any other ministry needing pastoral leadership transition assistance.

Core Team

Adviser

My Advisor was Dr. Gregory Walker. He is patient, encouraging, and resourceful. Dr. Walker is the Senior Pastor of the Warrensville Road Community Baptist Church. He is a course instructor at the Ohio Leadership Academy teaching Baptist History and Polity. Dr. Walker also serves as Chaplain and on the Spiritual Care team at Southwest General Hospital providing spiritual care, biblical counseling, and crisis intervention to patients and patient families.

Field Consultant

My Academic Research/Field Consultant was Dr. C. Anthony Hunt. He is the pastor of the Epworth United Methodist Church in Woodlawn, Maryland. He is also a cohort leader and professor at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton,

Ohio. Dr. Hunt was very helpful by making himself accessible for questions and by referring me to information that helped me with previous classes and the subject matter of my project.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

On March 31, 2002, God privileged me to start my first Sunday as the pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. The process of becoming the pastor of Sweet Hope or most independent/autonomous Baptist churches is called the candidating process.

The candidating process is initiated by a church when it establishes a pastoral search committee and declares that the position of pastor is vacant. The potential is there for a church to get upwards of 100 résumés or applications for the position of pastor. Then the church will go through some unsystematic, unprofessional, unregulated, and non-prayerful process of winnowing down that number to a manageable number. Many churches will not have a timetable set to complete the task of selecting a new pastor. And there are times when a person is not selected as pastor for the most frivolous reasons.

In applying to a church, the opportunity was mine to become one of the two finalists. After the church had gone through the process which had taken approximately one and a half years for the church to complete, the church decided to select the other candidate simply because the other candidate under consideration lived closer to the church. That process seemingly lacked any spiritual guidance.

This chapter is important because the impetus and motivation to engage in this project result from the experiences and outcomes of those candidating

processes. The project endeavors to assist churches and the academy with a pastoral leadership succession paradigm that will enable churches to have a biblically based, professional process. This project strives to provide pastors and lay leaders with some unbiased and ethical techniques for pastoral leadership succession. In this chapter, the aim is to highlight biblical passages that offer guidance for leadership succession, detail some of the historical facts related to the church's methods of pastoral leadership succession, and overview some of the contemporary theologians' and scholars' perspectives relevant to pastoral leadership succession.

The Biblical, Theological, and Historical areas of research will sustain the development of this project for pastoral leadership development and succession. These areas of research support the discovery of practical pastoral leadership development and succession plan, outline the biblical foundation for this project, reflect on the theological connections of this project, explain the historical influences that undergird this project, and discuss contemporary theologians' perspectives on the aspects and facets of pastoral leadership development and succession plan.

Biblical Research

The Biblical Research will discuss the following two scriptural passages: Numbers 27:12-23 and 1 Chronicles 28:1-21. These biblical narratives give enlightenment and substantiation for the implementation of a pastoral leadership succession plan. These passages of Scripture present some basic precepts that support the thesis that strategic, succinct, and seamless succession and

transition of pastoral leadership creates, cultivates, and encourages synthesis that sustains the divine revelation and leadership agenda and develops synergy for increased effectiveness that advances the ministry of the succeeding ministry leader.

There are many facets associated with leadership succession. The cycle of leadership within a ministry evolves for various reasons. Leaders change because of burnout. Leaders shift their location for a better opportunity. Then, there is divine intervention when God calls forward a leader with a particular gift or skill set to accomplish a specific or specialized assignment. In either case, to the best of his or her ability, the outgoing leader must assist with the nurturing and development of the incoming leader. Strategic and seamless succession and transition of leadership creates, cultivates, and encourages synthesis that sustains the divine revelation and leadership agenda and develops synergy for increased effectiveness that advances the ministry of the succeeding ministry leader.

The chosen biblical passages are important to this project because they present leadership transition models that are strategic, that build synergy, and that support the succeeding leaders' ministry. Ministry leadership transition is an aspect of ministry that can be fraught with pitfalls but the chosen biblical passages offer insight into how to develop an effective ministry leadership transition.

When the contemporary church employs Biblical Research related to the Chronicles and the Book of Numbers, it will help the contemporary church

maintain an impactful ministry even during the transition of leadership. The information gained from David's leadership transition to Solomon and Moses' leadership transition to Joshua will be beneficial to contemporary church administration and ministry. These passages in unrefined and non-methodical approaches highlight some beneficial points related to leadership succession that offer the contemporary church developmental assistance and refinement in leadership succession.

1 Chronicles 28:1-21

As the narrative of King David's second farewell discourse is presented in 1 Chronicles 28:1-21, the Chronicler leaves on record interesting points of the transition of leadership within the history of the Jewish people. What interesting points for pastoral leadership succession does 1 Chronicles 28:1-21 highlight and why is 1 Chronicles 28:1-21 important to pastoral leadership succession? The interesting points are the emphasis David puts on continued harmony between the leadership and the people, nation-building, and temple-building during the transition. John Jarick contends that "the orderly transition from David to Solomon includes the handing over of the temple 'plan' (Jarick 2007, 165). The emphasis on David developing Solomon for leadership and the meticulous instructions David gives Solomon and the leaders that the Chronicler leaves on record are foundationally significant and necessary for the contemporary church in the creation of a strategic leadership development and succession process and plan. The outgoing contemporary leader learns from David's transition to

Solomon that it is important for him or her to “hand over the temple (ministry) plans” to the succeeding leader.

The books of Chronicles are a sort of synoptic within the Old Testament alongside the books of Kings and Samuel because of themes that are repeated throughout Jewish history and the retelling of some of the same stories.

Chronicles tell of, investigate, and highlight other details of some of the same historical interactions between the people of Israel and God as do the books of Kings and Samuel. Chronicles give additional details related to a particular story, omit certain details about a certain story, or sometimes change the details of a particular story through its further examination of the history of Israel revealing aspects of the story that advance its storyline.

Mitchel Modine states that “the interpreter of Chronicles sometimes encounters a particular approach that views Chronicles and Joshua-Kings as OT “synoptic” (Modine 2014, 28). However, Modine is careful to suggest that it is important to keep in mind that the Chronicles are later writings and are loosely related to the Deuteronomist’s writings. Modine also submits that Chronicles is not a strict rewriting of the history of Israel developed from prior written sources although some themes established in earlier historical writings appear in Chronicles. Keck et. al. argues that “In Christian tradition, these books have suffered by being placed behind 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings as if they were some pale shadow instead of an epic work in their own right” (Keck, 1999, 299).

The cautions of Modine direct any biblical interpreter to incorporate all sources related to Israel's history before making any assumptions. The importance of the Chronicles to this project is not the closeness of the book to the others that it is synoptic with but the revelations regarding nation-building, God's kingdom agenda continuation, and ministry harmony from the story of the transition of leadership from David to Solomon. The Chronicles provide foundational information that influences pastoral leadership development, leadership succession, and accordance in the contemporary church. Keck quotes S. De Vries stating "I regard Chronicles as one of the richest mines of spirituality in all Scripture" (Keck 1999, 299).

Additionally, the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are the last books of the Hebrew Bible. Within the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Chronicles are just one book but modern translations have made them two books. The books of Chronicles are historical accounts of the life of Israel and are a part of the genre of historical writings. Modine contends that "Chronicles, or records of events, are of indispensable importance for human history" (Modine 2014, 24). Tuell concurs with Modine stating that "the great Christian scholar Jerome, translator of the Bible into Latin, said that we find in Chronicles "the meaning of the whole of sacred history" (Tuell 2001, 1). Jarick adds an addendum stating that "while his older brothers' families lie uncharted...once the genealogical material is complete, it will be tales of David (in 1 Chron. 10.14-29.30) and his successors (in 2 Chron. 1.1-36-21) that will fill much of the Annals" (Jarick 2007, 48). The chronicling of significant events in the life of Israel is important for the shaping

and development of the future nation of Jewish people, the eternal existence of the contemporary church in general, and the development of a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan in particular.

This chronicling and subsequent understanding of history will help the Jewish people avoid pitfalls and make the same mistakes. Unfortunately, the Chronicler leaves out some of the errors made by leaders and others, like the David/Bathsheba story or Absalom's revolt, which are significant to the development of a nation and the contemporary church. Omitting such stories bears witness to the separation or non-synoptic views of the Chronicler and Deuteronomist writings. Peter B. Dirksen insists that "the Chronicler especially wants to suggest that David in relation to Solomon is on par with Moses in his relationship with Joshua" (Dirksen 2005, 15).

Admittedly, the Chronicles focus different lenses on the history of Israel.

Modine asserts that Chronicles

Complement and provide an alternative version to the history of Israel found in other parts of the OT. Most importantly, they are inspired Scripture. This means that while they are "just" history, they also give evidence of a particular kind of history writing, namely, theologically inspired history. (Modine 2014, 24)

The telling of the particular story concerning the leadership succession in 1 Chronicles 28 is of particular importance because it helps the people of Israel understand their theological significance, the importance of their religious identity, and at least in part, it helps them understand how to prepare, develop, and assist future leaders of their nation. The telling of David's leadership transition to Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28 is important to this project because it

establishes the importance of the outgoing leader assisting and nurturing the succeeding leader. 1 Chronicles 28 helps this project because it developmentally stands as an outline of a succinct pastoral leadership succession model.

Dirksen suggests that

It is a cliché to say that Chronicles is not a history in the modern sense of the word. But if it is essential to historiography to give a coherent view of the period to be described and to lay bare underlying factors for developments, then Chronicles is most certainly historiography, also as regards its purpose. (Dirksen 2005, 10)

The writing of Chronicles or the omitting of details from a story is not just to let people know of what happened in the past but carries greater historical and biblical significance for foundational living as a people in a relationship with God by revealing complementary perspectives of that history.

Tuell contends that “the Chronicler is interested in the whole sweep of God’s plan and purpose for Israel, and in Scripture as the means by which that plan and purpose are revealed” (Tuell 2001, 2). The plan of God as revealed in 1 Chronicles 28:1-8 foundationally supports a pastoral leadership succession plan. The complementary perspectives of Chronicles influence the development of strategic leadership development and succession plan. When the Chronicler addresses David’s succeeding message to the leaders and the people in 1 Chronicles 28:8-19, he outlines how David introduces the path for the ministry to continue and the role he had in shaping Solomon’s life which enables how seamlessly the ministry transitions and continues when Solomon assumes full leadership responsibilities. For effective contemporary leadership development and succession plans, 1 Chronicles 28:20-21 inspires harmonious ministry

continuation, the mentoring or discipleship process of the succeeding leader, and a functional method of passing leadership roles and responsibilities from the current leader to the succeeding leader.

Numbers 27:12-23

The Book of Numbers is a more linear, stand-alone book telling of the continuation of the journey of the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land. How does Numbers 27:12-23 present the story of Moses and Joshua to inform pastoral leadership succession? David L. Stubbs states that the opening phrase of Numbers “alerts readers they are with Moses and Israel in the middle of a story...on their way from the slavery of Egypt through the wilderness toward life in the promised land” (Stubbs 2009, 19). Dennis T. Olson states that “some have referred to Numbers as “the junk room of the Bible,” suggesting that the book’s editors simply threw miscellaneous bits of tradition randomly into the text without much thought or meaning” (Olson 2009, 4). It is from those random miscellaneous bits of tradition that the story of the leadership transition from Moses to Joshua informs this project’s thesis. Olson continues to argue for the importance of Numbers in relation to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. In his argument, he asserts that an

Important generational transition is made in the Book of Numbers. In fact, the transition from the old generation of the wilderness to the new generation of hope and promise on the edge of the promised land forms the primary structure and theme for the book of Numbers. (Olson 2009, 4)

David L. Stubbs argues that “the thematic center of the passage is arguably not the death of Moses, but the commissioning of Joshua” (Stubbs 2009, 210).

Katherine Doob Sakenfeld concurs with Stubbs stating that “Moses does not carry out God’s instruction to go to the mountaintop...Rather, Moses responds by expressing his concern for the future leadership of the people” (Sakenfeld 1995, 151). Numbers 27:12-23 is important to this project because it contains a valuable lesson about Moses’ understanding of the need for seamless continuation of leadership and the input he offers to Joshua as his disciple and mentee. As Moses’ disciple and mentee, Joshua received important information that would assist him as he led the Israelites.

Olson does not speak specifically about Moses’ leadership transition to Joshua as a theme for Numbers but a continuation of the theme of the transition of the old generation to the new generation in general and the transition of the old leadership of Moses to the new leadership of Joshua outlined in chapter 27, by inference. Stubbs argues the point that “the passage mainly focuses on the acts that complete the transfer of leadership from the old generation to the new” (Stubbs 2009, 211).

Equally important and significant to this document discussing the importance of succinct leadership succession for a smooth continuation of ministry endeavors, Olson infers that the transition theme continues from Moses to Joshua by stating that “although Joshua is not simply a carbon copy of Moses, an essential continuity of leadership exists between them” (Olson 2009, 169). One of the things that makes Joshua less of a carbon copy of Moses but still the leader that God uses to lead the Israelites is the difference in the

relationship/interaction between God and Moses as compared to the relationship/interaction between God and Joshua.

Numbers 27:12-14 reveals the closeness of God's relationship with Moses when God discusses with Moses why he was going to enter into eternal rest and not the Promised Land. It is also a glimpse at the difference in the relationship that God will have with Joshua. Moses was both a secular and governmental leader as well as the spiritual leader of the people. Moses functions as the secular or governmental leader when he leads the Israelites from Egyptian bondage through the wilderness to the cusp of the Promised Land. One instance of Moses' spiritual leadership is when he interceded on behalf of the people that God would not destroy all of the people for Korah's sin in Numbers 16:20-24.

Joshua becomes more of the secular or governmental leader while the spiritual responsibilities and connection are given to Eleazar the priest. "The transfer of the high priesthood from Aaron to Eleazar has already taken place in a narrative similar to the one here (20:22-29)" (Stubbs 2009, 210). Calum Carmichael contends that

In Numbers, Joshua as a political and military leader has to "stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him [Joshua] after the judgment of Urim before Yahweh: at his word shall they [the congregation] go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation (Num 27:21). (Carmichael 2012, 147)

Sakenfeld furthers the assertion of Joshua's leadership role stating that

Two technical Hebrew expressions are used here: to "go out and come in" before the people and to "lead them out and bring them in." each of these expressions is used elsewhere to indicate the full range of leadership responsibilities (e.g., 1 Kgs. 3:7). Sometimes these phrases are specifically associated with military

leadership...Here in Numbers the phrases probably refer to a whole range of leadership skills, but with particular focus on military leadership. (Sakenfeld 1995, 151-152)

Numbers 27:15-17 informs us that Moses does not ask God for a leader that will function as he does. Moses asks God to provide a leader who will handle the secular or governmental duties of leading the people governmentally not relationally and spiritually by God. William Thomas Miller contends that “Eleazar’s role will be to guide some of Joshua’s decisions by using lots” or communicating with God through the Urim and Thummim, while “there is no tradition of Moses using them” (Miller 2013, 140). Miller further asserts that “the understanding is that Joshua will not have the direct access to God that Moses had, and so will need more help from the high priest,” Eleazar (Miller 2013, 141). This change in leadership responsibilities and the addition of the priestly responsibilities highlights the role and influence of God in the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua.

God further instructs Moses in Numbers 27:20 to give Joshua some of his authority “so that all the congregation of the Israelites may obey.” God made this passing of authority a part of the transition process to maintain the integrity of the group and allow for the Israelites' uninterrupted progression to the Promised Land. W.H. Bellinger Jr. asserts that “Joshua is to receive enough of this authority to obtain the respect and obedience of the people, but no one is to receive all of Moses’ authority. A figure like Moses will not again come forth” (Bellinger 2012, 285). The authority that Moses gives to Joshua is akin to a sitting pastor providing an opportunity to his mentee/successor to interact,

engage, and understand the depth of the pastoral position before he or she fully assumes all of its responsibilities. The purpose of engaging in a pastoral leadership succession plan is to begin preparing a succeeding leader and hopefully have the process employed even if the current leader passes suddenly. This allows the congregation the opportunity to develop respect for the developing leader and strengthen their relationship. Bellinger continues asserting that

For a time, both Moses and Joshua will be in leadership positions. With the death of Moses...Joshua becomes the leader. He is to act in accord with the instruction of Moses, the written Torah (Joshua 1:1-9). The mosaic tradition will continue to provide guidance for Israel. The choice of Joshua as leader suggests continuity with the past and planning for the future. He has experience and is prepared to lead the people into the new land. (Bellinger 2012, 285)

Biblical Research Summary

The Chronicler and the Book of Numbers highlight the value of the discipleship of the succeeding leader, the relationship between the people and the new leader, and the role of the current leader in developing that synergy. Accordingly, the developing leader who has the benefit of a succinct pastoral leadership transition will have been allowed to learn great leadership methods, gain valuable leadership experience under the nurturing hand of a senior coach/mentor, and bond with the congregation—much the same way Joshua and Solomon learned from Moses and David, respectively.

The writers of Chronicles and Numbers provide examples of Moses and David who obediently mentored and instructed the incoming leaders

so they may develop their leadership skills and have an idea of the direction that their ministry would continue. This instrumental process would reap the benefit of harmony and accordance among the body and continuity and permanence of ministry and mission outreach. Chronicles and Numbers reveal how Moses and David's mentoring of Joshua and Solomon fostered synthesis which would propagate and sustain God's mission. The invaluable process of succinct pastoral leadership development and transition as outlined in Chronicles and Numbers becomes foundational for the concomitant theological foundations that support successful pastoral leadership transition.

Theological Research

The chosen theological foundations that support this project are Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and Pneumatology. These are the core theological foundations for pastoral leadership succession that build, perpetuate, and maintain harmony among the body and continuity of ministry and mission outreach for a fruitful successive ministry. Pastoral leadership that follows the model of leadership ministry from which it is birthed must remain grounded in Jesus Christ as the center/head and be open to receive its directions from the leading of the Holy Spirit to develop an atmosphere of harmonious and united ministry that will encourage members on all levels to be integral and willing participants. In other words, ecclesiological vitality and missiological import grow from Christocentric leadership that is governed by the Holy Spirit. Or as Nathan

Kerr states “the church just as it is constituted by God in its witness to God’s Kingdom as defined by Christ’s lordship over history” (Kerr 2009, 97).

Christology

Pastoral leadership succession decisions should be grounded in theological perspectives that are historical and can govern and guide the decisions concerning pastoral leadership succession based on time-honored theological information rather than perspectives that are not Christocentric. Theological and Christocentric perspectives of pastoral leadership succession maintain harmony among the membership, lay the foundation for future ministry success, and keep God preeminent. What makes Christology the nucleus of Theological perspectives? Christocentrism maintains Christ as the hub throughout any theological study or position. William C. Placher contends that “Christian theology has sometimes adopted a few key concepts from the rich diversity with which the Bible speaks of Jesus and of God” (Placher 2001, 199).

Christology is the primary theological foundation and perspective that informs various subject matters related to the Church. Donald K. McKim defines Christology as “the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The church’s understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what he has done grew and developed through the centuries. Early church councils produced Christological statements” (McKim 1996, 48). Gerald O’Collins asserts Tillich’s Christology as presenting “the revealed truth of Christ as answering questions raised by the cultural situation” (O’Collins 2015, 3). Thabiti M. Anyabwile cautions that “any discussion of the history of African American views of Jesus Christ must guard itself against

the commonplace errors of either insisting that a particular idea is correct simply because it is older or that it is correct because it is new” (Anyabwile 2007, 167).

Christology is the understanding of the importance and relationship of Jesus Christ to the church and its message to the world. The life and ministry of the church become empty when it avoids the incarnate person and name of Jesus Christ. The heart of the church and Christological studies center on the incarnate person of Jesus Christ, the centrality of Jesus Christ to the life of the church, and how His ministry and work impact and inform what the church does during its ministry. Anyabwile continues his caution stating that “people naturally long for solutions and ideas appropriate for their time and setting, new custom-fitted ideas are not any more trustworthy for their newness or for their identification with a particular place and time (Anyabwile 2007, 167). Thiselton argues that “the *historical context* of Jesus is of primary importance...the prophetic context, and its relations to the *OT and Judaism*, remains extremely important, and cannot be overrated” (Thiselton 2015, 231). The reality of the person of Jesus Christ must be examined from every possible aspect, historical, biblical, and theological, to gain the full revelation of Christ and His impact on the church.

The Bible, “given by inspiration of God,” records Jesus’ life and is the source of the message about the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:16 KJV). Helmut Gollwitzer asserts that “the theme of Barth is God as He has revealed Himself to the world in Jesus Christ according to the witness of Scripture” (Gollwitzer 1994, 1). Karl Barth has the understanding that the church

and its ministry are birthed from the life, ministry, work of salvation, and anticipated return of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, everything related to the church is birthed from Jesus Christ who is the chief cornerstone. Gollwitzer continues by stating that

The truth is we continuously stumbled across that name (Jesus Christ) in matter and substance. We stumbled across it necessarily. For as we proceeded along that path, we found that that name was the very subject, the very matter, with which we had to deal. In avoiding the different sources of error, we saw that they had one feature in common: the negligence or arbitrariness with which even in the Church the attempt was made to go past or to go beyond Jesus Christ in the consideration and conception, and definition of God, and in speech about God. But when theology allows itself on any pretext to be jostled away from that name, God is inevitably crowded out by a hypostatized image of man. Theology must begin with Jesus Christ, and not with general principles, however better, or, at any rate, more relevant and illuminating they may appear to be: as though He were a continuation of the knowledge and Word of God, and not its root and origin, not indeed the very word of God itself. (Gollwitzer 1994, 87-88)

Gollwitzer informs us, based on his understanding of Barth, that the name and person of Jesus Christ are categorically significant to every area of theological study. To develop a succinct pastoral leadership succession paradigm, it becomes apparent that it is necessary to avoid the temptation to “go past or...beyond Jesus Christ.”

The theological and foundational importance of Christ to theological studies in general and leadership succession, in particular, will be the principle upon which the paradigm is rooted, grounded, established, and sustained. Developing a pastoral leadership succession plan for Sweet Hope that is Christocentric must disregard any plan that may appear to be more relevant or illuminating to ensure that the roots of Sweet Hope’s pastoral leadership

succession plan are in Jesus Christ in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28 KJV). “Christology has received its richest input from a broad range of biblical scholars and from writers who have wrestled with the question of Christ’s saving work being mediated through the Holy Spirit to the whole of humanity” (O’Collins 2015, 12). Throughout this work, every endeavor will be made to allow God to speak through the person of Jesus Christ because specific attention will be given to allowing “the name of Jesus Christ to be maintained in our thinking as the beginning and the end of all our thoughts” (Gollwitzer 1994, 88).

The works, teachings, and ministry of Jesus Christ reveal that discipleship is directly related to the leadership development and succession process. How does the discipleship ministry of Jesus inform the pastoral leadership succession process? A succinct pastoral leadership transition process will characteristically look like the discipleship model that Christ used. Jesus spent intense time with his disciples to establish a pattern for living and to reveal to them how to carry on the mission of God, particularly as leaders of the church. Discipleship is a deliberate and focused course of training, preparation, and exposure to ministry practices to prepare people to be qualified representatives of Jesus. Jesus deliberately modeled to His disciples how to minister to people like “a certain ruler” with the dying daughter or the woman with the issue of blood in Matthew 9:18-26. Jesus gave His disciples focused training through extracurricular explanations of parables as He did in Matthew 13:36-41. Jesus directly taught His disciples things like prayer in Luke 11:1-4.

LeRoy Eims suggests that the disciple-making process does not

emerge from a philosophy of speedy growth and instant maturity. True growth takes time and tears and love and patience. On the leader's part, it takes faith to see people as God expects them to be and wants them to become. And it takes some knowledge to help get them there. (Eims 1978, 12)

Respectively, the discipleship process becomes representative of the Christological process of training, transferring, and transitioning leadership responsibilities from the current leader to the successive leader. The discipleship model exposes the successive leader to ministry practices and experiences that will strengthen and reinforce that leader's skills and abilities and place that leader in a position to gain some practical experience. The discipleship model is the obvious choice for a current pastoral leader to use in mentoring and preparing a successive leader to make the transition process smooth, harmonious, and effective. The discipleship process aligns with the Christological process that Christ used to prepare and transition leadership to the Apostles.

Donald Senior asserts that "inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities...are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and Priscilla and Aquila" (Senior 2016, 40). In summary, understanding the Christological importance of succession remains significant for the success of the succeeding minister to the harmonious ecclesiological relationships and the enduring stability of the missiological work and outreach.

Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is the study of church life—what the church does, the purposes of the church, and how the policies, procedures, and processes impact the life of the church. In what ways is the life of the church important to pastoral leadership succession? Donald K. McKim defines Ecclesiology as “the study of the church as a biblical and theological topic. The New Testament presents various images of the church that the early church struggled with as it sought its self-understanding in light of the gospel and controversies” (McKim 1996, 85).

Cornelis van der Kooi and Gijsbert van den Brink contend that

The essence of the church is found in its communion with its living Lord...The Holy Spirit is one who pulls people into the communion that exists between the Son and the Father...the Trinitarian motif indicates that the church did not originate by human initiative but, in the final analysis, is grounded in God's own acts. (Kooi and Gijsbert 2017, 574)

Ecclesiology weaves through the discipline of pastoral leadership succession. It progresses through its historical and contemporary examination of leadership in the church, the relationship of the leader with God and the members of the church, and the church's governance. Gunton and Hardy assert

When we seek the christological dimensions of ecclesiology, the enquiry is complicated by the fact that there are two interlocking factors in operation. There is first the matter of what can be called the historical determination of the Church, the way in which we may suppose that in the economy of things the Church was instituted by Jesus, and that, of course, means a Jesus conceived to have been invested with divine power or authority. Most would hold to the fact of the instituting; disagreements arise over the manner and character of the action, and how it affects the present. Second, distinguishable but not separable from the first, is the way the Church is conceived to be patterned or moulded by the shape and direction of Jesus' life and its outcome: here the stress is as much on the dogmatic as on the historical significance of Jesus. (Gunton and Hardy 2019, 58)

Additionally, Ecclesiology examines Christ's influence on sub-themes such as discipleship, missions, doctrine, and Christian education. Ecclesiology is another foundational theological perspective that underlines the importance of a strategic, succinct pastoral leadership succession plan.

Ecclesiology further outlines the necessity of communicating the importance of and establishing a model or paradigm for pastoral leadership succession that maintains Christ as its spiritual center. A pastoral leadership succession plan creates a seamless transition of leadership which encourages synthesis that sustains the divine revelation and the leadership agenda and develops synergy for increased effectiveness that advances the ministry of the church and the succeeding ministry leader.

Anthony C. Thiselton asserts that "God called and elected a "people," and Christ entrusted to a "people" the vocation of being a worshiping community, with *corporate* responsibility for mission and service to the world" (Thiselton 2015, 291). Ecclesiologically, a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan birthed out of the understanding that God called and elected a people has as its objective keeping the people united as a worshiping and ministering community during one of the church's most important seasons. Furthermore, it creates a foundation in which members, who are considered "limbs," according to Thiselton's understanding of J.A.T. Robinson's concept of the body of Christ, can participate thereby building synthesis and synergy fostering "organic and ontological" relationships within the church and with Jesus Christ further propelling the ministry of the church forward (Thiselton 2015, 292).

The relationship or connection of the “limbs” is further strengthened through the discipleship process where all are spiritually nurtured together. The discipleship process knits together the believers in Christ in a bond of love that draws them together on one accord to positively and productively impact the world with the grace, love, and gospel of Jesus Christ. In “Deep Church Rising,” Andrew G. Walker and Robin A. Parry outline a Greek paradigm of educating citizens to become model citizens, similar to the discipleship method that seeks to develop model Christians. They state that

In ancient Greece, *paideia* referred to the education of model citizens for the city. It referred not so much “to the principles and practice of teaching as the formative task of transmitting a cultural heritage in order to school virtue and cultivate character.” In this chapter, we are arguing that churches need to be preoccupied with kingdom *paideia* and that starts with catechesis. Catechesis, in turn, should be the prolegomenon to a life-long educational process in and for a deep church. (Walker and Parry 2014, 132-133)

It is exactly this “life-long educational process” and practice of “kingdom *paideia*” that is foundational for the formation of model kingdom citizens who understand the necessity for general Christian knowledge or catechesis (Walker and Parry 2014, 133). This life-long process develops unity and adherence to the understanding that within the Christian ministry and life, everything must be done professionally and methodically, particularly a plan that leads to systematic and methodical pastoral leadership succession.

In summary, the body of believers understands that Christ remains the center of the ecclesiological body from which the policies, procedures, and processes of the church flow to maintain an orderly process in every area of the church including pastoral leadership succession. Good ecclesiological

connections from thorough kingdom paideia that started with sound catechesis within the church lead to more seamless, meaningful missiological ministry effectiveness.

Missiology

Missiology naturally flows from Ecclesiology in that it continues the conversation about the life of the church and the performance of its ministry to the world. What makes Missiology significant to pastoral leadership succession? The Christian Church's mission, mandate, message, and relevance to a succinct pastoral leadership succession are uncovered in theological reflection in the field of Missiology. Missiology is knitted to pastoral leadership succession because the goals and objectives of developing a succinct plan are to assure that the work of ministry and its outreach continues to operate seamlessly during and particularly after the transition. Gregg Okesson states that

Public missiology builds on the foundations of public theology and fills in some of the critical gaps...missiologists appeal to the Scriptures to argue for the intrinsically public nature of theology. The *missio Dei* is the story of God's reign over the entire cosmos, which naturally includes the public realm...the word public reminds missiology of what has always been the case and makes explicit our need to broaden the scope of our missiological energies to include the publics within the world. (Okesson 2020, 104)

Missiology is not so much a study of the policies, procedures, and processes of the church but a study of what the church does once it has its governance rationale and guidelines set. Missiology is the study of how the church carries out its mandate given by Jesus Christ to reach the world with His redemptive gospel message, engage in kingdom paideia, and make disciples. Missiology unpacks how theological principles are applied to everyday church life to fulfill the

mandate of Jesus Christ to minister to those who have the least and to ensure justice. Missiology discusses working with God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit on their mission to reconcile humanity to an everlasting, peace-filled relationship with God. Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile assert that

The triune God is a missionary God. The biblical narrative tells the story of a Creator who forms the world in love, ordering life for relationships of flourishing. When humanity turns away from God, each other, and the earth, God compassionately and painstakingly seeks to heal and restore humans, calling and sending particular people to embody God's promises to the world. (Gelder and Zscheile 2018, 134)

The theological theories and concepts of missiology foundationally support and give a rationale for the correlating aspects of a pastoral leadership succession plan. A pastoral leadership succession plan that has missiological foundational support and attends to its overall theological goals and objectives will develop into a plan that properly prepares the people for continued ministry and pastoral transition. The pastoral leadership succession plan that has a missiological foundation is a medium that undergirds the continuous harmonious output of the church's ministry and equips the succeeding pastoral leader.

In regards to pastoral leadership succession, an understanding of the Missio Dei and the Missiology of the church will assist in producing a succession plan or paradigm that is in alignment with the intent and objectives of God to reconcile and minister to humanity and increase the church's effectiveness. J.R. Woodward states that the mission of God "is to redeem the world and restore it to its intended purpose. The church exists to fulfill God's mission, and when we

participate in God's mission we become living signs of God's intended future for the world, bringing glory to God" (Woodward 2012, 28). Woodward suggests that God desires the church in all aspects to be an active participant with Him to minister to the world. The successful pastoral leadership succession plan will functionally fit into the framework of the church to be a vehicle that does not hinder or interfere with the ministry of the church.

Pneumatology

Pneumatology is a look at the intricacies of the Holy Spirit in the life, work, and ministry of the church. How does the work of the Holy Spirit influence pastoral leadership succession? The work of the Holy Spirit is complex. Jürgen Moltmann states that "the Holy Spirit is the unrestricted presence of God in which our life wakes up, becomes wholly and entirely, living, and is endowed with the energies of life" (Moltmann 1997, 10-11). Paul D. Molnar further contends that "the relevance of the Holy Spirit in our knowing God refers to the fact that we truly know God only as that knowledge is enabled by God himself in his act of uniting us to himself through faith by an act of the Spirit uniting us to Christ and thus to the Father" (Molnar 2015, 83). Pneumatology reveals the various aspects and activities of the Holy Spirit in relationship to God's people as He empowers and equips the people of God towards reconciliation with God and as He leads the church's life in *koinonia* and service for the glory of God. Thiselton asserts that the "Spirit offers empowerment to the individual, but also in the context of the community of God's people" (Thiselton 2015, 431).

Pneumatology is a correlating field of theology that functions concomitantly with Christology, Ecclesiology, and Missiology to become foundational for developing a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan. It discusses the influence of the Holy Spirit in the manner that the church operates and the work that the church performs. The disciples in Acts 1:23-26 sought God's guidance through casting lots to determine who should replace Judas of Iscariot. Casting lots for guidance, a function of the Holy Spirit is the method that the disciples used to include God in their decision. The church seeking to minister for God's glory must seek and incorporate the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all things, particularly pastoral leadership transition, and succession. Keck states that "the witness of the Paraclete and that of the community are not two distinct acts; rather, the community's witness is the visible sign of the Paraclete's work as witness. The witness of each provides continuity between the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the church" (Keck 1995, 765).

When we talk about the church in "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit", we are presupposing that the community between people and God which is the work of the Spirit reaches out beyond the church. It takes hold of people in Christ's church, and drives them out into the world of the living 'for according to the promises in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is 'poured out upon all flesh'...At the very point where the church confesses its faith in Christ, it experiences itself in the wider cosmic dimensions of the coming of the Holy Spirit for the redemption and transfiguration of the world. (Moltmann 1997, 92-93)

Kelly and Nelson suggest that "God is made known through the enlightening inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (Kelly and Nelson 2003, 55).

Accordingly, the work of the Holy Spirit influences and impacts the direction of the church. The Holy Spirit must be visible in all aspects of the church including

the church's pastoral leadership and succession. Pneumatology is another theological theme that has a foundational influence on any pastoral leadership succession conversation. The overriding pneumatological purpose of the Holy Spirit in the leadership development and succession process is to make God known and to reveal God's selection process.

Theological Research Summary

Developing a framework and plan for pastoral leadership succession at the least must take into consideration the implications that Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and Pneumatology have upon this area of study. The understanding that we have about the importance and impact that these fields of theological studies have on pastoral leadership succession determines the validity of a pastoral leadership succession model and how a succession model is developed and implemented.

These historical theological themes are proven to be foundational for successful pastoral leadership succession. The Christological research maintains that Christ as the central figure of Christianity must inform the pastoral leadership succession process. The Ecclesiological research maintains that a pastoral leadership succession plan with Christ as the center creates and sustains synergy within the church. The Missiological research maintains that the development of a pastoral leadership succession plan assists the church and the succeeding leader with seamlessly continuing works of ministry. The Pneumatological research maintains that there is unrestricted guidance of the Holy Spirit during the pastoral leadership succession process. Allowing these

theological themes to influence the pastoral leadership succession process will assist any ministry with its goals of creating a transition process that is foundational, systematic, and synergistic.

Historical Research

The Church's Historical Foundation begins with the Apostles in the Book of Acts. William H. Willimon states that "taken in the context of Luke's narrative as a whole, this account of the conversions at Pentecost may be most significant as a piece of the larger story of the amazing growth of the Christian Community" (Willimon 1988, 37). What prevailing historical church occurrences impact pastoral leadership succession? We will explore the Church's evolution through the Reformation Era to contemporary church autonomy. Additionally, a conversation about expanding autonomy will show the continuous evolution of autonomous theological thought and input and the progression of incorporating a greater cross-section of theological voices.

The historical foundation associated with pastoral leadership succession is not monolithic. However, historical foundations that are Christocentric and theologically grounded circuitously and indirectly support and give credence to and rationale for the varying methods of pastoral leadership succession. In turn, the historical foundation assists the biblical and theological foundations with maintaining the harmony of the membership, laying the groundwork for the succeeding leader's development and success, and keeping God preeminent.

The Reformation Era

The Reformation Era of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shaped the independent, self-governing thought of many Protestant churches. What are the principal thoughts of the Reformation Era? Frederick J. Cwiekowski suggests that “the period in many ways set parameters that would last until the mid-twentieth century...At the same time, developments in this period stand in relationship to the total history of attempts to express the nature and mission of the church” (Cwiekowski 2018, 235). Though the Reformation Period is considered a schism like that of the Eastern Church with the Western Church, there still arose arguments for the “unity” or “union” of the Church. These arguments of “union” and “unity” invariably assisted with the transmission of traditions from one church generation to the next generation. Cwiekowski outlines two Reformers who argued that “unity” was possible even with a diverse approach to church but he also discusses the opposition to the new, more liberal, divergent views of the Reformation Period. He states that

James of Viterbo distinguished between “unity,” which excluded multiplicity, and “union,” which allowed it, and so argued that the oneness of the church is more properly found in the latter. Reformer Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, recognized that the church is one but is distinguished by “a multiple and beautiful variety,” a work of the Spirit. Champions of papal authority argued that the church’s oneness depended on apostolic authority coming solely through Peter’s mediation and that apart from Peter there was no grace or forgiveness of sins. (Cwiekowski 2018, 236)

These arguments of “unity” or “union” kept the issue at the forefront of theological and doctrinal discussions but also became vehicles for transporting traditions that support some of the foundations of the 21st-century Church. Some of those enduring traditions from the Reformation Period still govern the 21st-century

Church. Cwiekowski asserts that “ultimately, understanding how the church is one, holy, or catholic was related to and dependent on how one understood the church’s apostolicity, and that in turn centered on the nature and locus of authority in the church” (Cwiekowski 2018, 237).

Martin Luther, “argued for the basic equality of all Christians: “All [are] consecrated priests through baptism” and would later reject the papacy” (Cwiekowski 2018, 242). Thomas P. Rausch says that

Avery Dulles has proposed a pluralistic model of authority...First, professional theologians have an authority based on their competence or scholarship. Secondly, there must always be room for prophetic voices in the church, men and women who can help the church discern the truth through prophetic insight. Finally, the bishops speak with an authority based on their sacramental ordination to the Church’s pastoral office, assisted by the graces particular to it. These doctoral, prophetic, and pastoral ministries have been present with the Church since biblical times. (Rausch 2005, 128)

The impartial, reasonable weight given to all Christians lays the foundation for the expansion of independent thought and the development of dissimilar, yet spiritually relevant and doctrinally faithful, methodologies of church polity and governance. This theological rationale of Reformers is one of the underlying thoughts that sought to nullify the authority, regulations, and mechanisms of the papacy and any hierarchal structure for Protestant churches. This nullification creates the opportunity for local, independent churches’ autonomy and self-governance to be based on a variety of faithful, professional Christian experiences, deliberations, and contemplations. Rausch concludes by stating that “The Church, both Roman Catholic and Orthodox, needs again today to

recognize the pluralistic sources of teaching authority with which it has been gifted” (Rausch 2005, 128).

Contemporary Church Autonomy

A local church’s independent autonomy is the framework within which so many variations of governing the church have developed. What are some factors of church autonomy? The Reformation and the Protestant movement gave liberties to churches to control their doctrinal focus and their governance practices. Leroy Fitts discussing the European background of Black Baptists suggests that the church has an autonomous lineage. He states that “the churches in those early times were entirely independent, none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction; but each one governed by its own rules and laws” (Fitts 1985, 20). Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen present W.E.B. DuBois’ essay entitled “The Function of the Negro Church” in which he states that

The moral standards are therefore set by the congregations and vary from church to church in some degree. There has been a slow working toward a literal obeying of the puritan and ascetic standard of morals which Methodism imposed on the freedman; but condition and temperament have modified these...the cleft between denominations is still wide, especially between Methodists and Baptists. (Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen 1971, 80)

This melding of Methodism and Baptists reveals the overarching thought that the Church had one head, who is Christ, in heaven and on earth whom the church must actively seek and serve. Diarmaid MacCulloch lists the final two statements of the whole ninety-five theses of Luther as “Christians should be exhorted to seek earnestly to follow Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, hells. And let them thus be more confident of entering heaven through many

tribulations rather than through a false assurance of peace” (MacCulloch 2005, 124). Lincoln and Mamiya give insight into the liberty of the independent Black church stating that

Prior to the Civil war, the major areas of black urban concentration were tidewater Virginia and Maryland; the Virginia and North Carolina piedmont; the southern coastal cities of Baltimore, Washington, Charleston, Mobile, and New Orleans; and the northern cities of Boston, Cincinnati, New York, and Philadelphia. It was among this sector of free blacks that the independent black church movement received its greatest organizational impetus. Independent black urban churches were founded only a few years after their rural counterparts and the first formation of the independent black denominations—the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816 and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1822—were primarily urban phenomena which occurred in the cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York. (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 115)

The African American churches in America embraced that liberty as it correlated also to the liberty that was given to them through the Emancipation Proclamation and has become the hub of the life of the Black community. Du Bois continues to suggest that “the Negro church is the peculiar and characteristic product of the transplanted African” (Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen 1971, 77). He conclusively says that the church “has come to be an expression of the organized life of Negroes in a great city” (Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen 1971, 81).

The autonomous/independent African-American churches in America have a rich history of serving their community as the social, political, fraternal, and spiritual center, yet they are still evolving. Some have assented to the Catholicity of the Church and accepted the foundations and fundamentals from different denominations, even Methodism and Catholicism, to form and shape

their independent manner of operating as an independent, autonomous church. Cwiekowski uses Nicholas of Cusa's definition to define Catholicity as "universality "through [out] the entire world" and "from the beginning of the world to its end" (Cwiekowski 2018, 236). This "universality throughout the entire world" provides the resource for churches and denominations to obtain doctrinal and governing methods that support and serve the objectives and goals of the establishing church or denomination.

When discussing the establishment of the Free Negro Church and the governance of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the catholicity of the church is apparent and E. Franklin Frazier contends that "a book of disciplines was adopted [by the AME Church] which embodied the same articles of religion and rules as the Wesleyans" (Frazier and Lincoln 1974, 33). Although Sweet Hope is a part of the Free Will Baptist Denomination and has its book of disciplines, familiarity with other Free Will Baptist Churches reveals different approaches, methodologies, and rationale for pastoral leadership transitions. The current book of disciplines for the Progressive Free Will Baptist Conference does not offer any direction or instruction for pastoral leadership succession and there is no stated hierarchal guidance. Churches that do not have that direction or guidance generally rely on the candidating process for pastoral leadership transitions.

Expanding and Embracing Autonomy

Lincoln and Mamiya contend Baptist churches' national, state, and local affiliations with Conferences, Conventions, or Reformations, highlight the further

independence of autonomous protestant churches stating that “the motive for coming together in these associations and conventions is fellowship and mutual support; no “book of discipline” or any other denominational authority makes participation obligatory” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 41). Very few of these churches and leaders are seeking hierarchal oversight and Lincoln and Mamiya suggest that if these churches are affiliated with a Conference or Convention, the church and its membership are usually connected with local or state associations as opposed to the national association. The Progressive Free Will Baptist Conference that Sweet Hope is affiliated with is a local association without any association with any national Free Will Baptist Conference.

Why is it necessary to expand church autonomy? Efrem Smith, when discussing “Biblical Foundations for Compassion, Mercy, and Justice,” was disheartened by the disconnect of contemporary conservative churches from social justice and the expansion of local church autonomy. He discussed how the stories of the Bible reveal how “social justice is biblical, and throughout the scriptures, we see it brought about by God” (Smith 2012, 54). Smith continues to strongly emphasize support for the necessity of faithful, Christian independent, autonomous thought to fully express the reality, purposes, and objectives of God, which include social justice. The primary voice espousing theological concepts and precepts has too long been privileged male voices. Talking about God from a purely privileged male perspective is diversity deficient and diminishes room for the expansion of local church autonomy. The patriarchal paradigm for theological

dialogue, discussion, and participation is deeply entrenched, excluding the theological voice and contributions of every minority voice.

Elizabeth Johnson contends that there is a dominance and prominence of men's theological voices over women's voices. She asserts that "Androcentrism, or male-centeredness, refers to ways of thinking that privilege men; it makes men's way of being human normative for all human beings" (Johnson 2007, 95). Privileged male-dominated theological assertions and notions bias perspectives and traditions that express the nature, character, and qualities of God—supposedly including but systematically excluding minority voices and diminishing the Church. The finite theological expressions of God purely from a man's point of view are devoid of the many varied expressions of God from every majority or minority group. This in turn neglects and eliminates an immeasurable amount of theological insight and understanding that can only be obtained from hearing what all believers have come to know about God, particularly from the disenfranchised and the disinherited.

David Tuesday Adamo contends for cultural diversity and theological inclusion stating that

Another method in African Cultural Hermeneutics that was employed at this period (1970-the 1980s) was the methodology of using Old Testament to interpret Africa and African to interpret the Old Testament. In this approach, a combination of historical critical method and anthropological/sociological methods is used. While the historical critical method was used to analyze the biblical text, the anthropological/social method was used for the analysis of the African culture and situation for the purpose of understanding a biblical text in light of African tradition and culture. The purpose is also to arrive at authentic Christianity that is both biblical and African. (Adamo 2006, 17)

James Henry Harris argues for the necessity of autonomy to ensure all voices, from all perspectives are heard and validated stating that

African Americans identify with Jesus at the intersection of election and rejection, or disfavor. This is where race and ethnicity converge, where nearly 300 years of chattel slavery and the systematic extermination of six million or more Jews came into focus as similar experiences of extermination and annihilation—a type of demoralizing of the soul, an abject violation of another’s freedom to be. I am appalled even as I write with Germany’s highfalutin and glorious doctrines of God and other grand theological discourses and America’s preoccupation with freedom, human rights, and individual liberty and justice—while each produced and nurtured Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust on the one hand and American slavery, with its unknown number of unrecorded lynchings, on the other. (Harris 2002, 47-48)

Paul Harvey furthers the argument for African American autonomy and relevance stating that

Throughout its history, black American Christianity has served as a forum African Americans have used to secure their place in a country that historically has denied them citizenship and equality. Black Christianity has survived through the storm and through the night of American history, and it remains a vital element of American religious life today. (Harvey 2011, 137)

Independence in governance, theological diversity, and respect for theological input from all groups make a pastoral leadership development and succession plan practical. The level of influence of denominational affiliations, theological traditions and dogma, social engagement, and Christian customs must be determined by local autonomy.

Historical Research Summary

The contemporary church’s challenge is to birth a succession plan from the history of the Church. The contemporary church is also challenged to present a paradigm of pastoral leadership development and succession that maintains

the integrity of autonomous churches. Finally, it must provide a succession plan that makes the transition of pastoral leadership from one pastor to another more homogeneous, biblical, and collegial. The Biblical, Theological, and Historical Foundations upon which a church operates will determine any church's success in developing a pastoral leadership succession plan. The objective of all local and autonomous churches is to evolve pastoral leadership succession so it remains biblically grounded while at the same time working with time-honored historical and theological traditions. The exploration of the Church's evolution through the Reformation Era to contemporary church autonomy revealed the necessity of every theological engagement being biblical and collegial. The expanding autonomy of the Church has shown the continuous evolution of autonomous theological thought and the progression of incorporating a greater cross-section of theological voices while maintaining theological integrity.

Chapter Three will be an exploration and review of contemporary literature related to the foundational concerns of pastoral leadership succession. It will examine some of the major themes related to pastoral leadership succession. The literature review will present theologians' perspectives associated with the pastoral leadership succession process. The discoveries from the literature review will increase our understanding of the pastoral leadership succession process and will influence our future work in framing and implementing a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An exploration of contemporary concerns for leadership succession provides foundational and fundamental information to help guide pastoral leadership succession decisions. It opens the door to understanding that leads to seamless ministry transitions. This endeavor pushes those in pastoral leadership and those concerned with maintaining the effectiveness of the pastoral ministry to strive for the smooth transition of pastoral leadership to ensure that the pastoral ministry is still beneficent, producing good, and avoiding any form of pastoral or theological malpractice and negligence. An exploration of the contemporary perspectives and foundational concerns of pastoral leadership succession will assist in developing a framework of pastoral leadership succession that is most conducive for any ministry.

The need for succinct pastoral leadership succession or transition is based on many varied reasons. Whatever the case, a departing leader bears some responsibility, as much as possible, to disciple, educate, and assist with the development of the incoming leader to the best of his or her ability. Strategic, succinct, and seamless leadership succession and transition create, cultivate, and encourage synthesis. Succinct pastoral leadership succession sustains the divine revelation and leadership agenda and develops synergy for increased effectiveness that advances the ministry of the church thereby, aiding the success of the next ministry leader. Adelle M. Banks contends “Pastoral

successions...are one of the most crucial times in a congregation's life cycle...When done well, the congregation's ministry and life is re-energized and revived for the future. When done poorly, decades of successful and thriving ministry can deteriorate, heading the congregation into a downward slope" (Banks 2014, Sojourners). A Barna research summary entitled *Planned Pastoral Transitions Lead to Better Outcomes* concurs stating that

When transition is planned in advance, pastoral and leadership staff have time to map out the shift without emotions and lack of time being thrown into the equation. This approach is more likely to lead to positive outcomes once all is said and done. In general, churches where the pastor departs entirely—most common in unplanned transitions—have more tumultuous outcomes. (Barna 2019)

An exploration of contemporary perspectives for pastoral leadership succession assists with discovering conventional concepts that create a succinct plan. The study of contemporary models for pastoral leadership development and succession will reveal how these models may inform and produce a pastoral leadership succession model that is pragmatic and expedient for the ministry of Sweet Hope.

Contemporary Models for Pastoral Leadership Succession

The prevailing contemporary models for pastoral leadership succession that scholars and practitioners address vary among denominations. An understanding of the contemporary pastoral leadership succession models will help create a pastoral transition plan that cultivates and encourages synthesis. The cultivation of synthesis sustains the preparedness and development of principled leadership.

Baptist Church Model

Baptist churches are a part of what is considered a congregationalist denomination. A congregationalist denomination means each church governs itself and is autonomous. Baptist churches generally form a pastor search committee to find potential pastoral candidates. Lovelace reports “Respected pastor Walter August vehemently contests the use of search committees in the process of selecting a pastor. He purports, “When a pastor dies suddenly, 80% of search committees choose the wrong pastor.” He draws this conclusion based on his understanding of Scripture, his personal experience with other pastors, and his conviction that the current pastor should appoint a successor” (Lovelace Jr. 2014, 5). The American Baptist Churches USA’s webpage entitled *10 Facts You Should Know About American Baptists*, fact number 2, states that “Baptist roots date back four centuries to a people seeking the opportunity to worship God as individual members of freely organized and freely functioning local churches. Baptists always have maintained the need for autonomous congregations, responsible for articulating their own doctrine, style of worship, and mission” (ABC-USA 2023).

The American Baptist Churches USA offers assistance to churches that are in pastoral leadership transition. They have two internal documents that member churches can access entitled “Succession Planning Tasks” and “Succession Planning Activities” that offer general guidance as a church navigates the pastoral leadership transition process. Additionally, The American

Baptist Churches USA supports the use of transition pastors or Ministers-at-large. An article entitled, “When Your Pastor Departs, Transition Ministries Holds the Key to a Bright Future,” outlines the role and functions of an interim/transitional minister. Through the Center for Congregational Health, the American Baptist Churches USA “concludes that effective use of interim time can shape congregational growth, identity, and health for years to come.” The primary goal of the “interim minister and the congregation will focus on growth, healing, renewal, and revitalization of the church during the interim period.” Five areas of focus according to the article are: “Focus on the congregation’s history...Focus on the church’s identity...Focus on leadership...Focus on new relationships beyond church walls...and, Focus on preparing for a new pastor” (ABC-USA 2017).

Michael R. Pelt states, when discussing polity within the Free Will Baptist Church, that “it is a well-known fact that other state organizations and even district associations had their own statements of faith and discipline” (Pelt 1996, 282). The Biblical, Theological, and Historical Foundations upon which an autonomous church operates will determine any church’s method of pastoral leadership succession and its success in developing a pastoral leadership succession plan. The objective of all local and autonomous churches should be to work as a cohesive unit to position pastoral leadership succession in its governing processes and to build a succession plan that prepares or discipless the next pastoral leader. Positioning a pastoral leadership succession plan in the governing processes helps pastoral leadership succession remain structurally

and biblically grounded while concomitantly working with time-honored historical and theological traditions to ensure smooth transitions of pastoral leadership.

Other Succession Models

The contemporary autonomous church's challenge is to develop a succession plan that is birthed from the history of the Church that presents a paradigm of pastoral leadership development and succession that maintains the integrity of autonomous churches and provides a succession plan that makes the transition of the pastoral leadership from one pastor to another more homogeneous, biblical and collegial. How does the contemporary church perform pastoral leadership succession? There are several processes for calling, replacing, or transitioning to a new pastor as the current pastor retires or moves on to another position or a new ministerial endeavor.

Vicki Brown acknowledges in an article entitled "*Churches Have Several Models for Choosing a New Pastor*" four contemporary and currently used succession plans. Brown lists those plans as "the Family Plan," "the Denominational Plan," "the Process Only Plan," and "the Intentional Overlap Plan" (Brown 2015, Word & Way).

The Family Plan

Brown defines the Family Plan as "someone in the current pastor's family is chosen as successor. African Methodist Episcopal churches, other African-American congregations, some nondenominational groups, and many single-founder churches sometimes follow this model" (Brown 2015, Word & Way). Within the Family Plan, the senior pastor has prevailing influence and primary

responsibility for the appointment and any potential training/discipleship of the succeeding pastor. Dr. Quinten White, an African Methodist Episcopal Presiding Elder, contends that within congregationalist denominations like the Baptist, tenured “pastors have garnered respect and give unofficial appointments based on their influence” (White 2023, Interview). One of the strengths of the Family Plan is that it provides an opportunity for the transitioning pastor to disciple the succeeding pastor. Brown concurringly states “African-American Baptist pastors tend to groom several younger leaders from within their congregations, and when the time comes for the retirement of the senior pastor, the retiring pastor ‘passes the mantle’ to one of those whom he has groomed” (Brown 2015, Word & Way). Bass and Dykstra assert “the quotidian life of a congregation is the crucible in which pastoral identity and competence are formed” (Bass and Dykstra 2008, 293). The impact of the Family Plan on the congregation and its ministry prepares the succeeding pastor for ministry, maintains congregational harmony, and preserves the ministry’s effectiveness.

The Denominational Plan

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church states that “the bishop shall preside in all of the annual conferences within the episcopal district where assigned, and in conjunction with the presiding elders, determine what shall be the appointments of all of the pastors at the Annual Conference” (African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012, 117-118). Brown contends that the Denominational Plan occurs when churches are affiliated with hierarchal structured denominations and the denominations “exercise more

control over local church governance – often appointing pastors to local churches” (Brown 2015, Word & Way). The African Methodist Episcopal Church has a pastoral leadership succession process which is directed by the denomination’s hierarchal process governed by the active bishop of the annual conference. The African Methodist Episcopal Church’s pastoral succession involves bishops appointing new pastors based on the church's needs and the suitability of the candidate. The Denominational Plan has congregational affiliations, hierarchal structures, and governances in which the denomination controls pastoral appointments.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states that “clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the Episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part” (United Methodist Church 2012, 337). Pastoral succession in the United Methodist Church involves the bishop appointing pastors to local churches based on the district superintendent's recommendations and assessments, the local church's pastor-parish relations committee, and other relevant factors such as the candidate’s compatibility with the congregation. Dr. Anthony Hunt, a United Methodist District Supervisor, states “The United Methodists are careful when making appointments to not disrupt the ministry operations of the church” (Hunt 2023, Interview). Concurring, the United Methodist Book of Discipline states that “appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God’s grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities

of congregations and institution, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy” (United Methodist Church 2012, 337).

The Process-Only Plan

Brown explains the Process Only Plan as the pastor working with “church leaders to develop specific steps to take to replace the pastor in any eventuality — disability, unexpected death, retirement or a move to a new ministry” (Brown 2015, Word & Way). The Process Only Plan is seemingly a variation of the Denominational Plan, Brown reports that “denominations such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Methodist Church sometimes modify their policy while working with larger congregations. The denomination works with a larger church to identify leaders and a possible successor, and apparently, willingly works with leaders to develop an appropriate succession strategy” (Brown 2015, Word & Way). The bishop considers the church's needs, potential pastors' gifts and qualifications, and builds a succession strategy based on those important factors. Collaboration among denominational leaders, congregational leadership, and the congregation with their ratification of prospective candidates builds a successful modified or hybrid succession plan.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's pastoral succession procedure is a hybrid appointment/selection process. This method is equivalent to the Process Only Plan in that the process allows input from the congregation, receives guidance from the hierarchy of the denomination, and allows the transitioning pastor to mentor and disciple the succeeding pastor. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's website informs that “every rostered

minister goes through theological training and a candidacy process. The candidacy process raises up, prepares, certifies and places public leaders in the ELCA” (ELCA 2023, Rostered Ministers of the ELCA). “A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly” (ELCA 1997, 32). The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America’s appointment/selection transition decision is arrived at by including input from various segments of the church; it is therefore considered a hybrid appointment/selection process.

Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution. (ELCA 1997, 32)

In Lutheran denominations, the pastoral succession process can vary based on the specific synod or tradition within that denomination.

The Intentional Overlap Plan

Brown describes the Intentional Overlap Plan as “the church names a new senior pastor who works with the “former” pastor for several months or even a couple of years” (Brown 2015, Word & Way). Lovelace asserts “The predecessor pastor provides both spiritual and emotional guidance towards a transition that is most often very difficult for a church” (Lovelace Jr. 2014, 6). Bass and Dykstra contend “The point is to establish both a deep and broad encounter with ministerial practices” (Bass and Dykstra 2008, 294). The deep and broad

encounter with ministerial practices is a course of training, preparation, and exposure to ministry principles and procedures that prepare people for pastoral ministry. The guidance of the predecessor pastor and the associated mentoring prepares the succeeding pastor and congregation for continued ministry effectiveness and functionality.

Denominations with hierarchal and governing structures occasionally use the Intentional Overlap Plan to prepare ministers for a pastoral appointment. Dr. White states that within denominations with hierarchal and governing structures, there is a process where a minister “serves an apprenticeship under a pastor to further his or her development” (White 2023, Interview).

The strength of the Intentional Overlap Plan is the opportunity to utilize the discipleship/mentoring paradigm Jesus employed for leadership development and preparation. Lovelace discusses the Apostle Paul’s use of Jesus’ paradigm for discipleship/mentoring with his protégé Timothy. He contends that

The apostle carefully instructs his pastoral apprentice, noting that the gospel and the testimony of Jesus Christ must continue beyond his imminent physical departure. It would appear that Paul embraces the idea that his ministerial assignment includes that of assuring a continuity and perpetuation of the church’s teachings. Paul shares directives with Timothy that address the need for faithfulness, sustainability, and impartation. The heart of Jesus Christ reveals this idea as He exhorted the importance of disciples making other disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). The emphasis of faithfulness to the truth constitutes effective and true pastoral succession. The least of Paul’s concern is that of any materialistic, ego-sustaining, or societal status posturing. He acknowledges that there are others beyond himself that play an integral part in presenting the message of the kingdom to the world. He also presents analogies that reflect the process of implementing succession infrastructure and culture. (Lovelace Jr. 2014, 2)

For Paul, as Lovelace contends, the discipleship paradigm was the favored model to impress upon Timothy the urgency of continuity with the gospel message of Jesus Christ and the development and preparation of others to spread that gospel. The Intentional Overlap Plan makes it possible for the church to be strengthened foundationally and functionally with leaders who have the heart of Jesus Christ as it is passed down from one pastoral leader to a succeeding pastoral leader.

A Healthy Pastoral Succession Plan

Lovelace's article entitled *Planning and Implementing Successful Pastoral Transition* "explores how intentional and strategic pastoral succession planning provides a means by which a church develops healthy constructs that facilitate the possibilities of growth and expansion" (Lovelace, Jr. 2014, 1). Weese and Crabtree, experts in the field of church leadership with experience working with churches in a wide variety of denominations, open their work with a statement that underlines the importance of why congregations must put in the communal and spiritual work to develop a succession plan by stating that "the personal and corporate spiritual work required in a successful pastoral transition is critical." They continue to argue that within the corporate or congregational efforts of developing a plan the "people must find enough strength in their relationship with God and their trust of one another to be able to talk openly, pray, confess, and seek grace and healing if they are to develop excellence in a leadership transition" (Weese and Crabtree 2004, 13). Lovelace interjects that "ideally, an effective succession planning process should allow for on-the-job training and

observation” (Lovelace Jr. 2014, 5). Lovelace favors the Intentional Overlap Plan discussed earlier by Brown.

Vanderbloemen and Bird stress greater exigency for every ministry to have a pastoral succession plan in place stating that “in reality, succession is more urgent than you think and probably more important than you have imagined” (Vanderbloemen and Bird 2014, 20). Vanderbloemen and Bird continue to stress the urgency for a pastoral leadership succession plan by stating that “most importantly, too many churches flounder and lose momentum simply because a church’s leadership failed to anticipate and begin planning for one of their most important responsibilities” (Vanderbloemen and Bird 2014, 29).

Pastoral succession is inevitable for every pastor. Vanderbloemen and Bird’s sobering statement informs us that “God is never caught by surprise. If you’re the pastor, God is preparing you for your arrival at a church, departure, and successor. After all, every pastor is an interim pastor of some sort” (Vanderbloemen and Bird 2014, 14). Accordingly, a healthy pastoral succession plan is just a sober assessment of what’s needed within every ministry.

Denominations, such as African Methodist Episcopal and United Methodist, with the denominational hierarchal or appointment pastoral leadership succession process, do not worry so much about pastoral transitions. The Denominational Plans dictate the responsibility upon the bishop to make appointments regardless of the current pastor’s reason for leaving his or her post as pastor.

A pastoral succession plan is critical for developing a strategy for a pastoral leadership transition, providing governing information related to the

inevitable pastoral leadership transition process, and articulating the purpose and intent of the pastoral leadership succession plan. Stuart W. Boyer contends that “the practice of leadership development, particularly within the church, ought to be derived and maintained from careful hermeneutics and orthodox theology” (Boyer 2019, 14). Additionally, it is critically important that a pastoral leadership succession plan is established from careful hermeneutics and orthodox theology. Careful hermeneutics and orthodox theology provide a calculated path forward for the succeeding pastoral ministry and maintain the spiritual and foundational health of the congregation and the succeeding pastoral leader. This practice of leadership development will help the congregation remain on one accord, functioning as a cohesive unit to establish a pastoral leadership succession plan that will maintain the effectiveness and progression of the ministry and the succeeding pastoral leader. Weese and Crabtree concurringly state that

A healthy pastoral transition enables a church to move forward into the next phase of its external and internal development with a new leader appropriate to those developmental tasks, and with a minimum of spiritual, programmatic, material, and people losses during the transition. The focus should be on preserving spiritual, programmatic, material, and people resources as much as possible during the transition. (Weese and Crabtree 2004, 41)

Discipleship in Pastoral Leadership Succession

The discipleship or mentorship process is a mandatory or implied component of the Intentional Overlap Plan previously discussed. The discipleship process is representative of Christ’s model of developing, preparing, transferring, and transitioning leadership responsibilities from the current pastoral leader to the successive leader. In the Intentional Overlap Plan, “in which the church

names a new senior pastor who works with the “former” pastor for several months or even a couple of years,” the former pastor has the opportunity to impart experiential wisdom to the succeeding pastor that prepares him or her for pastoral ministry (Brown 2015, Word & Way).

The Intentional Overlap Plan is the plan that is most conducive to providing opportunities for the discipleship of the successive pastoral leader. The Family, Denominational, and Process Only plans may only have educational requirements but may not provide an opportunity for discipleship or mentorship. The Intentional Overlap Plan is intentionally set up for the transitioning pastor to disciple or mentor the succeeding pastor. The discipleship process exposes the successive leader to ministry practices and experiences that will strengthen and reinforce that leader’s skills and abilities. The discipleship process places that leader in a position to gain some necessary practical experience. The discipleship process becomes a viable choice for a current pastoral leader to use in developing and preparing a successive leader to make the pastoral leadership transition process trouble-free, harmonious, and effective.

The discipleship process aligns with the process that Christ used to prepare and transition leadership to the Apostles. Andrew D. Clarke contends that

Paul is confident in the trustworthiness of his teaching, indeed he urges Timothy to hold onto the pattern of teaching that was passed on to him by Paul (2 Tim. 1.12; 2.2). He believes his teaching to be consistent with the Old Testament and the gospel that he had received from Christ. (Clarke 2008, 153)

Lora-Ellen McKinney considers the mentor “both teacher and protector.” She extends that thought stating that

Mentors provide preachers with teaching: information about Scripture, critiques of sermons, and advice about how best to manage the administrative functions of the church. They also provide protection: vastly experienced preachers themselves, they guide less-experienced preachers around the potholes and alert them to problems. Also, given their broader experience, mentors serve as an additional set of evaluative eyes for understanding issues experienced by those in their care. (McKinney 2004, 87)

Discipleship is important to pastoral leadership succession because it is foundationally important for the development and preparation of the succeeding leader. The Intentional Overlap Plan places a high degree of responsibility upon the transitioning pastoral leader to disciple/mentor/train the succeeding leader. Additionally, along with teaching, protecting, and giving advice, mentors in their discipleship and training are models of ethical leadership.

Successive Leader's Discipleship

Discipleship is a path to pastoral succession. The discipleship of the successive leader is an important component of a pastoral leadership succession plan, while the development and the preparation of the successive leader become an important outcome of a plan. Plummer and Terry state that for the Apostle Paul “leadership development was thus much more than a program; it was a relationship. The connection between Paul and Timothy was a divine intersection that must have been difficult to deny” (Plummer and Terry 2012, 228). To maximize the time of the discipleship process, the relationship between the disciple-leader and the one being discipled must be undeniably intersectional in as many places as possible. Lovelace concurringly stresses the importance of

an intersectional relationship by giving an example of the relationship between the disciple-leader and the one being disciplined stating that

During this time, the senior pastor and young mentee continued to meet weekly for periods of affirmation and edification. Both viewed these weekly one- to two-hour meetings as critical opportunities to discuss interpersonal matters and concerns. Though informal, they gave these meetings top priority for the purpose of continuing the assessment phase and providing opportunities of building trust...Again, the idea was to provide opportunities by which the pastor could work alongside the senior pastor and experience and acknowledge the culture of the church and the trends of the predecessor. (Lovelace Jr. 2014, 12)

Plummer and Terry continue to assert that “it was also this closeness—particularly evidenced in Paul’s appreciation for, commitment to and encouragement of Timothy—that gave Paul the right to challenge his protégé to use his gifts (2 Tim 1:6)” (Plummer and Terry 2012, 228). The closer and more intersectional the relationship, the easier it is for the transitioning leader to encourage, equip, empower, and challenge the successive leader.

Discipleship and Leadership Development

Jesus spent intense time with the disciples to establish a pattern for living and to reveal to them how to carry on the work of showing others how to live and minister for the glory of God the Father, particularly as leaders of the church.

Leroy Eims states that “that training was the foundation of His whole ministry...He knew that in order for His mission to succeed, much would depend on the dedication, loyalty, courage, and faith of the men whom He had chosen and trained” (Eims 1978, 37-38). Stuart Boyer, when discussing leadership development, further suggests that it is “better to integrate principles than models” (Boyer 2019, 14). The discipleship process integrates Christ-like

principles into the development of leaders so those leaders can maintain the ethics or ethos that their position and the people expect from them. Walter Earl Fluker describes

Ethical leadership as the critical appropriation and embodiment of moral traditions that have shaped the character and shared meanings of a people (an ethos) ... ethical leadership does not emerge from a historical vacuum but from the lifeworlds of particular traditions and speaks authoritatively and acts responsibly with the aim of serving the collective good. Ethical leaders are, therefore, those whose characters have been shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of particular traditions—often more than one—yet they tend to be identified with a specific cultural ethos and narrative. (Fluker 2009, 33)

Discipleship and the development of ethical leaders seek the same results. The ultimate goal of both is to develop leaders who have been immersed in the crucible of the church culture under the tutelage of an ethical leader and have learned from that ethical leader as she or he followed established principles of how to minister to the people without variance or prejudice and sought an equitable and just outcome.

Christ opened the hearts of his disciples through his earthly ministry to create passion, purpose, and an understanding of their potential. He creates within the disciples a passionate determination and faith to enter into the leadership role of the church with expectations of success and fruitfulness. Christ-centered inspiration helps people avoid the pitfall of striving for leadership positions without any intellectual understanding of who Christ is, the works He has done, and the expectations He has upon those who seek to lead the church. Some persons strive for leadership positions without any passion, purpose, or determination but Christ imbued his disciples with fire through the discipleship or

“follow me” process in which they learned and appreciated the liberty to do something otherworldly in this world that was unadulterated by any worldly power. Rowan Williams presents it this way, as one lives

In Jesus’ company...you become a citizen of a new world, the world in which God’s rule has arrived. You will still be living in the everyday world in which many other powers claim to be ruling; but you will have become free of them, free to co-operate or not, depending on how far they allow you to be ruled by God. And what you do and say will become a sign of what is coming. Your life will give a foretaste of God’s rule; and it will be directed to inviting as many as possible to come under the same rule, and to resisting the powers (natural and supernatural) that work against God and seek to keep people in slavery. (Williams 2010, 58)

Keith L. Johnson contends that

The risen Jesus, who shares a perfect relationship with the Father in the Spirit, lives the eternal life of God. Because we exist in Christ, we are hidden participants with Christ in the life of God. While our own place in this life will not be unveiled until the future, we experience a foretaste of it now as Christ lives in and through us. (Johnson 2015, 73)

This rule of God stirs the passion of the disciples and those who follow the discipleship model for leadership succession enriching Jesus’ paradigm of discipleship and opening the doors of the potential success that abounds for those who follow this model. The model and method of discipleship are foundational and fundamental to the purpose and potential of the Intentional Overlap Plan of leadership preparation and succession.

Conclusion

As stated above, the Intentional Overlap Model presents favorable conditions for discipling and mentoring the succeeding pastor. Greater emphasis is given to the Intentional Overlap Model with its discipleship underpinnings

because of the inherent and intentional training, development, and mentoring aspects of this model. Training is one of the primary objectives of discipleship.

David L. McKenna outlining a discipleship process as a leadership cycle states that

Consistent with the three stages of the leadership cycle, Jesus saw his disciples progress through selection, service, and succession. Each stage is framed within the Father's redemptive purpose. In the selection stage, Jesus chooses his disciples based upon their character for the mission; in the service stage, he works to develop their competence in the mission; and in the succession stage, he counts on them for continuity of the mission after he is gone. The legacy of Christ's leadership is written not in the glitter of success, but in the gifts of succession. (McKenna 2014)

The works, acts, teachings, and ministry of Jesus Christ reveal that the discipleship paradigm establishes principles directly related to leadership development and establishes a paradigm for ministry and leadership succession or how to prepare others to lead. The discipleship paradigm of Jesus is more easily achieved in the Intentional Overlap Plan of pastoral leadership succession.

The Intentional Overlap Plan makes accessible an experienced senior pastor who otherwise would not be available to disciple the succeeding pastor. Robert Dilday outlines a discipleship story of the Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas that contemporarily develops leaders through

A two-year pastoral residency program...to provide "confidence and skills necessary to become effective pastors...The residents are part of our staff, but they don't have a program assignment...They participate in all kinds of things like hospital rotations and worship planning, preach on a regular basis and take Wednesday night prayer times...We largely teach them what is involved in the pastoral life, so that when they leave us and go to a senior pastorate, the goal is that nothing will surprise them. They know how to exegete a congregation, how to develop a budget, how to

hire and fire staff, if they need to do that. (Dilday 2009, Word & Way)

Discipleship is an experience guided by one indoctrinated in the principled ways of Christ and familiar with the traditions of the church that allows followers to learn the ways of Christ, embody the purposeful intent of those principles, and move into areas of responsibility for the furtherance of God's kingdom agenda. The lessons are not always according to a scripted lesson plan but may sometimes be derived from life situations and encounters. Some may consider Christ's discipleship method of leadership preparation and succession antiquated or impractical but the paradigm that Christ left on record is the archetype and it has proven to be efficacious and successful for all believers. Donald Senior asserts that

The inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities of compassion, integrity, and selfless service in the carrying out of his mission are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and Priscilla, and Aquila. (Senior 2016, 40)

Discipleship is the process that permits disciples to blossom under the watchful eye and wisdom of their teacher who follows Jesus' model, gain practical on-the-job experience, hone their potential, and gain confidence in their ability to replicate the process for the development of others. The discipleship lessons are taught to instill principles and correct behavior and encourage the disciples to appropriately respond in a manner that glorifies God in all situations as representatives of Jesus Christ. Robert Dilday contends

There was a time when pastors were always trained at the feet of other pastors. They lived in pastors' studies and read their books and learned ministry that way...Seminaries and divinity schools can

do things better than churches when it comes to the intellectual aspect of training...But the practical dimensions of ministry — exegeting a culture or a church, not a text — are better learned in practice and in a church setting. (Dilday 2009, Word & Way)

The Intentional Overlap Model for developing pastoral leaders is conducive to inspiring faith, developing the courage to lead, and setting ablaze passion to lead. Pastoral leadership development and succession preparation born out of the discipleship paradigm of Jesus Christ can be employed in every ministry and get the same successful results. Conclusively, the contemporary church and succession are best formed with careful hermeneutics and orthodox theology. The Intentional Overlap Model of pastoral leadership succession currently utilized is effective for an exceptional pastoral leadership succession model that incorporates Jesus' discipleship process of leadership development and transition.

Chapter Four is a guide to the methodology of this project. This chapter will provide an understanding of how this project was formed and conducted. Chapter Four will present the procedure used to inform the case study group of the purpose of the project and outline the information sessions related to the project. It will outline the assessment tool utilized for discovering the knowledge and opinions of the membership and leadership of Sweet Hope concerning the pastoral leadership succession process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESIGN, PROCEDURE, AND ASSESSMENT

This project aimed to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland congregation will contribute to efficient pastoral leadership succession. The overall outcome of the project is to institute a new method of transitioning pastoral leadership at the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. With a new method of transitioning pastoral leadership from the current pastor to a successive pastor as the overall outcome, this project targeted the leadership and membership of the church. It is the leaders who determine the process of pastoral succession used by the church and the membership cosigns or approves the leadership's decision with their affirmative vote. Currently, both groups have decided to follow an antiquated model of pastoral leadership succession that has its drawbacks and disadvantages. Therefore, the goal was to introduce and enlighten the leadership and membership of a pastoral leadership succession plan that makes the transition of leadership from one pastor to another more biblical and collegial.

The measurable goals of this project are goals 1 and 7. Goal #1 measures the participant's understanding of the need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession process. Goal #7 measures how many participants know their roles and responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. As this project is a discovery project, the goals of the project as outlined in the Preliminary

Assessment Tool for Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan are mainly for information purposes for the participants in the project. Goals 2-6 of the project are for the edification of the participants to increase their understanding of the pastoral leadership succession process. Goals 2-6 seek to inform the participants of the theological foundations of pastoral leadership succession, biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession, the historical development of pastoral leadership succession, and structures and procedures for the pastoral leadership succession process. The final measure of these goals will be determined the next time Sweet Hope goes through the pastoral leadership transition process.

This project was designed to inform and sought to change the pastoral leadership succession paradigm of Sweet Hope through an integrated study of biblical and Christian leadership succession models that are different from the current pastoral leadership succession model of Sweet Hope. The integrated study presented to the leadership and membership of Sweet Hope was eight weeks. Over the eight-week integrated study, each week, a different goal in the Preliminary Assessment Tool was the topic of study. The integrated study outlined the theological foundations, historical development, biblical examples, structures, and procedures for pastoral leadership succession. The procedure for the integrated study was a simple lecture model that presented the information related to pastoral leadership transition and at the end of the lecture, an opportunity was given to the participants to ask questions for further clarification of the particular goal presented.

The integrated study helped the leadership and membership discover a pastoral leadership succession model for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church that will make the transition of pastoral leadership concise and provided information that became the starting point for a new approach to pastoral leadership succession. This project has reaped benefits. The leadership and membership of Sweet Hope have adopted and plan to implement the more biblical and collegial process of transitioning pastoral leadership through the disciple/mentor paradigm. The full value of this project will be realized when Sweet Hope's leadership and membership seek a new pastor or when some other ministry utilizes the project's findings to assist their pastoral leadership succession process.

The overarching goal of this project was to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland will contribute to an efficient pastoral leadership succession. Concurrent and supporting goals were to highlight the importance of the current pastor to the pastoral leadership transition process, to highlight the significance of each leader and member to the pastoral leadership transition process, to highlight the importance of the necessity for a biblical and collegial pastoral leadership transition process, and to strive to make the pastoral leadership succession process benevolent and beneficial to the Sweet Hope Family. The sharing of other pastoral leadership succession processes with the leadership and membership of Sweet Hope was incorporated into the integrated study sessions. Those sessions combined sharing information related to other

methods of pastoral leadership transitions and succession with biblical passages that outline the transition of leadership and authority from one leader to another. Additionally, question and answer sessions to broaden the leaders' and members' understanding of the disciple/mentor pastoral succession process were included to further explain the benefits that biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession reveal. The Bible Study or integrated study sessions related to pastoral leadership succession were chosen because they more directly revealed the benefits of the disciple/mentor pastoral leadership succession paradigm.

Context

The context of this project is the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland. Sweet Hope was established in 1936 and since that time had seven pastors—I am number seven. This project was developed because the pastoral leadership transition process Sweet Hope used to select me as the pastor in 2002 left the church leadership with high disregard in the sight of the membership for how the process was handled. The pastoral position and authority were diminished. The church became a divided body because the members chose sides behind the two pastoral candidates which carried over into the life and ministry of the church during the early years of my tenure. The church's lack of harmony and accord was detrimental to its overall ability to effectively fulfill its ministry obligations.

Within Sweet Hope, this project focused on the leadership and the membership of Sweet Hope because they are the ones to decide the pastoral

leadership transition process. The integrated study associated with this project was presented to the leadership and membership of Sweet Hope in the church's general Bible Study sessions or what I term in this project as integrated study sessions. They are the experts concerning how pastoral leadership transition was done within the church and the survey was also given to this group for that same reason to discern how much the integrated study influenced their understanding and position on pastoral leadership succession.

The only pastoral leadership transitions within Sweet Hope Church that I have information about are the transitions that occurred in 1952 and 1986. The pastor who transitioned into the position in 1952 was already serving in ministry at Sweet Hope and was elevated to the position of pastor to replace the outgoing pastor. The pastor who transitioned into the position in 1986 was also already serving in ministry at Sweet Hope in an associate minister capacity and was also elevated to the position of pastor to replace the outgoing pastor. However, in this case, the outgoing pastor led and influenced the congregation to select this gentleman as the next pastor. I do not have information on whether the outgoing pastor in 1986 used the disciple/mentor model to prepare the next pastoral leader. Unfortunately, the church and the 1986 pastor divorced one another fourteen years later which positioned the leadership of the church to change the method of selecting the next pastor. The leadership of the church in 2000 decided to not choose a pastor from the pool of associate ministers serving the church but decided to use the "candidating" process for pastoral leadership selection. The candidating process for pastoral leadership selection is a process

that invites clergy who think they are qualified to submit an application or résumé. From this group of applications and résumés, the leadership selected those they thought were qualified to serve Sweet Hope. These selected persons were then narrowed down through a comparison of their qualifications to just two finalist candidates whom the leadership presented to the church to make their final selection of who would serve as the pastor. Being negatively impacted by this process and understanding its impact on the church caused me to initiate this project to make the pastoral leadership transition process more collegial and biblical for Sweet Hope.

Participants

This project was developed with the participation of the leadership and membership of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland. The leadership and membership of Sweet Hope were selected because they were the ones who would ultimately decide to change the pastoral leadership succession paradigm within the church. Any member of Sweet Hope could have been a participant in this project. A general announcement was made to the entire body of the church and a notice was put in the church's bulletin that the project would commence as an incorporated part of the church's weekly Bible Study. To allow as many members to participate in this project, the weekly Bible Study lesson for the integrated study was emailed to seventy members who make up our church's email list. Forty members participated in the survey. Most of those who participated in the project made a conscious effort to attend the Bible Study sessions. However, not all of the survey participants had the benefit

of gaining information from the integrated study sessions because they did not participate in those sessions.

The leadership of Sweet Hope consists of ten people who are either a part of the deacons, trustees, or finance ministries of the church. Sweet Hope consists of approximately seventy-five active members. The median age of the leadership and membership of Sweet Hope is 65 years old. Thirty of the participants were a part of the pastoral selection process in 2002 when I became the pastor. Thirty-four of the participants have been members of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church for more than sixteen years. Additionally, the majority of the participants were either a part of the leadership or a general member during the 1986 pastoral leader transition. Two of the members who were part of this project were members of Sweet Hope in 1952 during that pastoral leadership transition but they do not recollect the process that was used to transition the leadership responsibilities from one pastor to the next.

None of the participants have any human resource or personnel management expertise. Human resource or personnel management professionals are generally not consulted or contracted for input related to pastoral leadership transition procedures. The majority of the participants in this project are blue-collar, high school-educated people who are respectfully considered lay people within the ministry of Sweet Hope. Lay people are more active in the life and ministry of the church. Those that were a part of this project are considered faithful, available, and teachable members. They have shown a greater level of commitment to and concern for the church by being active in the

life of the church through volunteerism and financial support. Anecdotally, those are the persons who typically have the best interest of the church at heart and it is that interest that drives their passion and desire to support and participate in the life of the church.

Procedure and Assessment

One of my favorite passages of Scripture is “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17 KJV). I understand prayer is a discipline that ought to be employed within every aspect of my life and this project is not excluded from that understanding. I started this project with much prayer to make sure I am doing the right project for myself and Sweet Hope, and to make sure I am aligned with God in the development of this project for Sweet Hope and any other ministry that wants to employ what I present. I prayed for guidance to discern what is most important for this project and direction in leading the people of Sweet Hope to embrace the project’s findings by shifting to a more biblical and collegial pastoral leadership transition and succession.

After much prayer, I compiled from the biblical text several leadership transition passages to determine which ones would provide a Biblical Foundation for this project and address the stated objective of this project to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland will contribute to efficient pastoral leadership succession. I had to keep in mind that the overall outcome of the project is to institute a new method of transitioning pastoral leadership at Sweet Hope. With that in mind, I exegetically and thoroughly

studied the following passages that reflect biblical leadership transition and succession: Numbers 27:12-23 (Moses and Joshua); 2 Kings 2:1-18 (Elijah and Elisha); 1 Chronicles 28:1-21 (David and Solomon); John 20:19-30 and Acts 1:1-11 (Jesus and the Apostles); and 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8 (Paul and Timothy).

All of these passages are clear disciple/mentor relationship passages but they all did not fully express the direction of this project. I did not choose the most obvious New Testament pastoral/discipleship passage of Paul/Timothy because there would be too much conjecture about how this passage meets the objective of this project. I chose the Biblical Foundation of this project Numbers 27:12-23 and 1 Chronicles 28:1-21 because they more fully illustrated key areas of pastoral leadership transition and succession that helped to meet the objective of this project. I chose Moses/Joshua and David/Solomon to highlight the role of the current leader in discipling, developing, and supporting the succeeding leader. These passages also highlight the role of the people or the congregation to ensure continued ministry synergy, harmony, and effectiveness. The chosen passages of Scripture also highlight the role of the succeeding leader to receive wisdom-laden discipleship/mentorship and willingness to harmoniously work with the people.

Next, I sought resources that addressed the topics of leadership in general and pastoral leadership transition and succession in particular. What I discovered was there are numerous resources concerning the topic of leadership but those resources did not specifically address “pastoral leadership transition and succession.” As such, it became necessary for me to expand my search for

resources using keywords like “leadership transition,” “discipleship, coaching, mentoring” or “leadership succession.” I hope you noticed that I dropped off “pastoral” from “leadership succession.” My search for resources at that point led me to secular resources that dealt with the subject of leadership mainly within the corporate setting and those resources scarcely mentioned transition and succession. From those two groupings of leadership resources, I began to develop a path to pastoral leadership transition and succession that included information from Christian and secular resources on discipleship and leadership.

Once the literature resources were compiled and the information was synthesized, I prepared to present it to my experts—the leaders and members of Sweet Hope. All of the information presented during the eight-week Bible Study/integrated study sessions were emailed to the members on the church’s email list and an open invitation once again was given to all of the members of Sweet Hope to participate in the sessions.

The information was presented to the experts during the church’s regularly scheduled Bible Study which typically opened with a song and prayer. During the first week of the sharing of information, a brief history of the pastoral leadership transition process of Sweet Hope was given along with an overview of the purpose of this project to inform the participants of the scope of the project and the first session concluded with a question-and-answer period. The second week of the integrated study was just an open, honest, and very candid discussion about the selection process that Sweet Hope employed when selecting me as the seventh pastor of the church. I need to emphasize at this point how candid

our conversation was because it helped the group to understand some of the findings of the project particularly the point of needing a succinct pastoral leadership transition and succession plan to help maintain harmony, collegiality, and synergy of the overall ministry of the church. As the leaders and members are the experts, the Bible Study sessions were open and free-flowing so that I as the facilitator of the sessions would be able to learn from them as well.

In the third through the fifth weeks, I shared with the experts the project proposal and the Biblical, Theological, and Historical Foundations with each of those sessions ending with a period of questions and answers or feedback or insights from the experts. In the sixth and seventh weeks, the group shared in the exegetical study of the biblical passages of Numbers 27:12-23 and 1 Chronicles 28:1-21. The final Bible Study session opened with a period of discussion and reflection on the presented material and concluded with the experts participating in a twenty-eight-question assessment that had the objective of garnering their opinion of the pastoral leadership transition and succession process.

The design and method of developing this project as outlined in this chapter prepare us for the results of the Preliminary Assessment Tool for Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan. The Preliminary Assessment Tool for Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan was given to the leaders and members of Sweet Hope. The results are outlined in the next chapter. Chapter Five gives us an indication of the impact this project had on the participant's knowledge of the development of the pastoral leadership succession process. It further reveals the need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession process and the role of the

current leader, the successive leader, and the members of the church in the pastoral leadership succession process.

CHAPTER FIVE

REPORTING THE RESULTS

The members of Sweet Hope participated in the Preliminary Assessment Tool to share their understanding and knowledge of the pastoral leadership succession process. This project aimed to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland congregation will ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession. The research question for this project was, in what ways can a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore Maryland ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession?

The assessment tool was a survey that had five demographic questions, twenty-one quantitative statements, and seven qualitative statements. The qualitative statements allow the participants to more broadly and thoroughly answer the questions related to each goal.

Within this chapter, the interpretation of the data from the results of the members' answers will be organized and charted from the most prominent result (which is based on the average score calculated for each goal) to the next most prominent to help us discover what the members of Sweet Hope understand to be the order of prominence of the goals of this project.

The following were the goals of this discovery project:

1. To discover the extent to which there is a need for succinct pastoral leadership succession.
2. To discover the extent to which theological foundations are considered for pastoral leadership succession.
3. To discover the extent to which biblical examples are used for pastoral leadership succession.
4. To discover the extent to which historical development is considered for pastoral leadership succession.
5. To discover the extent to which a paradigmatic structure benefits the pastoral leadership succession process.
6. To discover the extent to which procedures are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process.
7. To discover the extent to which participants know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process.

Goal Seven: Responsibilities for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #7 scored the highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #7 is “to discover responsibilities for all participants in the pastoral leadership succession process.” Three statements on the survey addressed this goal (see Appendix II). The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #7 was 3.62. The three quantitative statements related to Goal #7 were: I know my responsibilities are necessary for

the pastoral leadership succession process (statement #11); I know my responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process (statement #7); and, I know my designated role in the pastoral succession process (statement #15). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #7 are in Table 1.

Table 1: Goal #7: Responsibilities for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Project Goals	Average	Responses
11 – I know my responsibilities are necessary for the pastoral leadership succession process	4.0	40
7 – I know my responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process	3.7	40
15 – I know my designated role in the pastoral leadership succession process	3.18	40
Total Composite Score	3.62	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which my responsibilities are necessary for the pastoral leadership succession process. The average score for the responses to statement #11 was 4.0. Thirty-one respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that my responsibilities are necessary for the pastoral leadership succession process. Two of the remaining respondents were neutral, six strongly disagreed, and one slightly disagreed that my responsibilities are necessary for the pastoral leadership succession process.

The survey discovered the extent to which the respondents know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. The average score for the responses to statement #7 was 3.7. Twenty-five respondents responded

strongly agree and slightly agree that they know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. Ten of the remaining respondents were neutral, four strongly disagreed, and one slightly disagreed that they knew their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process.

The survey discovered the extent to which respondents know their role in the pastoral leadership succession process. The average score for the responses to statement #15 was 3.18. Seventeen respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that they know their designated role in the pastoral leadership succession process. Ten of the remaining respondents were neutral, nine strongly disagreed, and four slightly disagreed that they knew their designated role in the pastoral leadership succession process.

The survey discovered the extent to which the responsibilities of all participants in the pastoral leadership succession process are understood. The survey discovered that most of the respondents understand that their roles and responsibilities are important to the process but it also informs us that more effort needs to be made to help all participants know their designated roles and responsibilities and to help them know that they are important to the process.

Goal Two: Theological Foundations for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #2 scored the second highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #2 is “to discover the extent to which theological foundations are considered for pastoral leadership succession.” Three statements on the survey addressed this goal. The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #2 was 3.61. The three quantitative

statements related to Goal #2 were: the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church considers the biblical mission of the church (statement #9); the current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is a reliable transitional procedure (statement #2); and the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process (statement #20). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #2 are in Table 2.

Table 2: Goal #2: Theological Foundations for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Project Goals	Average	Responses
9 – the current pastoral leadership succession process considers the biblical mission of the church	3.73	40
2 – the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with biblical principles	3.68	40
20 – the current pastoral leadership succession process reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process	3.43	40
Total Composite Score	3.61	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process considers the biblical mission of the church. The average score for the responses to statement #9 was 3.73. Twenty-five respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process considers the biblical mission of the church. Ten of the remaining respondents were neutral, two slightly disagreed, and three strongly

disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process considers the biblical mission of the church.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with biblical principles. The average score for the responses to statement #2 was 3.68. Twenty-five respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with biblical principles. Nine of the remaining respondents were neutral, two slightly disagreed, and four strongly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with biblical principles.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process. The average score for the responses to statement #20 was 3.43. Twenty-four respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process. Seven of the remaining respondents were neutral, six strongly disagreed, and three slightly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process.

The survey discovered the extent to which theological foundations are considered for pastoral leadership succession. The survey discovered the extent to which theological foundations are important for developing a succinct pastoral leadership succession process.

Goal Six: Pastoral Leadership Succession Procedures

Goal #6 scored the third highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #6 is “to discover procedures related to the pastoral leadership succession process.” Three statements on the survey addressed this goal. The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #6 was 3.53. The three quantitative statements related to Goal #6 were: following a pastoral leadership succession plan is most beneficial (statement #12); developing the next pastoral leader is most beneficial (statement #6); and succeeding pastoral leadership from one family member to the next is most beneficial (statement #16). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #6 are in Table 3.

Table 3: Goal #6: Pastoral Leadership Succession Procedures

Project Goals	Average	Responses
12 – following a pastoral leadership succession plan is most beneficial	4.03	40
6 – developing the next pastoral leader is most beneficial	3.73	40
16 – succeeding pastoral leadership from one family member to the next is most beneficial	2.83	40
Total Composite Score	3.53	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which following a pastoral leadership succession plan is beneficial. The average score for the responses to statement #12 was 4.03. Twenty-eight respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that following a pastoral leadership succession plan is beneficial. Eight of

the remaining respondents were neutral, three respondents strongly disagreed, and one respondent slightly disagreed that following a pastoral leadership succession plan is beneficial.

The survey discovered the extent to which developing the next pastoral leader is most beneficial. The average score for the responses to statement #6 was 3.73. Twenty-four of the respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that developing the next pastoral leader is most beneficial. Eleven of the remaining respondents were neutral, four respondents strongly disagreed, and one respondent slightly disagreed that developing the next pastoral leader is most beneficial.

The survey discovered the extent to which succeeding pastoral leadership from one family member to the next is most beneficial. The average score for the responses to statement #16 was 2.83. Thirteen respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree while sixteen other respondents responded slightly disagree and strongly disagree that succeeding pastoral leadership from one family member to the next is most beneficial. The remaining eleven respondents were neutral.

The survey discovered the extent to which the respondents are on one accord with following a concise plan to transition the pastoral leadership of Sweet Hope. The survey also revealed that the group understands that the well-developed pastoral leadership succession paradigm of pastoral leadership transition is the best process.

Goal Five: Paradigmatic Structures for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #5 scored the fourth highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #5 is “to discover the benefits of utilizing a paradigmatic structure for pastoral leadership succession.” Three statements on the survey addressed this goal. The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #5 was 3.48. The three quantitative statements related to Goal #5 were: the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps for a positive outcome (statement #13); the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of the church (statement #17); and the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process benefits the congregation (statement #5). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #5 are in Table 4.

Table 4: Goal #5: Paradigmatic Structures for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Project Goals	Average	Responses
13 – the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps	3.63	40
17 – the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of the church benefits the congregation	3.43	40
5 – the current structure of the pastoral leadership process benefits the congregation	3.38	40
Total Composite Score	3.48	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps for a positive outcome. The average score for the responses to statement #13 was 3.63. Twenty respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps for a positive outcome. Twelve of the remaining respondents were neutral, three strongly disagreed, and five slightly disagreed that the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps for a positive outcome.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process benefits the congregation. The average score for the responses to statement #5 was 3.38. Twenty-two respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process benefits the congregation. Nine of the remaining respondents were neutral, four strongly disagreed, and five slightly disagreed that the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process benefits the congregation.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current structure of the pastoral leadership process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of the church. The average score for the responses to statement #17 was 3.43. Twenty respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of the church. Thirteen of the remaining respondents

were neutral, six strongly disagreed and one slightly disagreed that the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of the church.

The survey discovered the extent to which the respondents' responses hope for a paradigmatic structure that becomes a concise, succinct pastoral leadership succession process that will benefit the overall life, health, harmony, and ministry of the church.

Goal One: The Need for Succinct Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #1 scored the fifth highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #1 is "to discover the extent to which there is a need for succinct pastoral leadership succession." Three statements on the survey addressed this goal. The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #1 was 3.3. The three quantitative statements related to Goal #1 were: the current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is a reliable transition procedure (statement #1); the current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church (statement #21); and the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church creates positive morale among the church membership (statement #10). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #1 are in Table 5.

Table 5: Goal #1: The Need for Succinct Leadership Succession

Project Goals	Average	Responses
1 – the current pastoral leadership succession process is a reliable transitional process	3.42	40
21 – the current pastoral leadership succession process helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church	3.37	40
10 – the current pastoral leadership succession process creates a positive morale among the church membership	3.12	40
Total Composite Score	3.3	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process is a reliable transitional process. The average score for the responses to statement #1 was 3.42. Eighteen respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process is a reliable transitional process. Fifteen of the remaining respondents were neutral, two strongly disagreed, and five slightly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process is a reliable transitional process.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church. The average score for the responses to statement #21 was 3.37. Twenty respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church. Nine of the remaining respondents were neutral, four strongly disagreed, and seven

slightly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process creates a positive morale among the church membership. The average score for the responses to statement #10 was 3.12. Seventeen respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process creates a positive morale among the church membership. Eight of the remaining respondents were neutral, seven strongly disagreed, and eight slightly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process creates positive morale among the church membership.

The survey discovered the extent to which more teaching and training is needed to inform the leadership and membership about the benefits of a succinct pastoral leadership succession process. The survey also suggests that the leadership and membership have not fully experienced the negatives of a haphazard pastoral leadership transition.

Goal Three: Biblical Examples of Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #3 scored the sixth highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #3 is “to discover biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession.” Three statements on the survey addressed this goal. The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #3 was 3.3. The three quantitative statements related to Goal #3 were: biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership

succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church (statement #3); the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader is used by Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church (statement #8); and the biblical example of succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church (statement #19). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #3 are in Table 6.

Table 6: Goal #3: Biblical Examples of Pastoral Leadership Succession

Project Goals	Average	Responses
3 – biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership succession process	3.38	40
8 – the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader is used by Sweet Hope	3.28	40
19 – succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope	3.23	40
Total Composite Score	3.3	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership succession process. The average score for the responses to statement #3 was 3.38. Twenty respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership succession process. Thirteen of the remaining respondents were neutral, six strongly disagreed, and one slightly disagreed that biblical examples of pastoral

leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership succession process.

The survey discovered the extent to which the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader is used by Sweet Hope. The average score for the responses to statement #8 was 3.28. Seventeen respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader is used by Sweet Hope. Fifteen of the remaining respondents were neutral, six strongly disagreed, and two slightly disagreed that the biblical examples of mentoring the next pastoral leader are used by Sweet Hope.

The survey discovered the extent to which succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope. The average score for the responses to statement #19 was 3.23. Twenty-one respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope. Seven of the remaining respondents were neutral, six strongly disagreed, and six slightly disagreed that succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope.

The survey discovered the extent to which biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession are important for the process and that those same principles and examples should apply to the pastoral leadership succession process at Sweet Hope.

Goal Four: The Historical Development of Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #4 scored the seventh highest in order of prominence based on the average score calculated. Goal #4 is “to discover the historical development of

pastoral leadership succession.” The average score for the three quantitative statements related to Goal #4 was 3.26. Three statements on the survey addressed this goal. The three quantitative statements related to Goal #4 were: the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes (statement #4); the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church relies on the historical process used in previous transitions (statement #18); and the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is consistent with the pastoral leadership succession processes of the last three pastoral leadership transitions (statement #14). The survey participants responded to the survey using a five-point Likert scale. The results for Goal #4 are in Table 7.

Table 7: Goal #4: Historical Development of Pastoral Leadership Succession

Project Goals	Average	Responses
4 – the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes	3.38	40
18 – the current pastoral leadership succession process relies on the historical process used in previous transitions	3.33	40
14 – the current pastoral leadership succession is consistent with the pastoral leadership succession processes of the last three pastoral transitions	3.08	40
Total Composite Score	3.26	N=40
1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Slightly Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.		

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes. The average score for the responses to statement #4 was 3.38. Nineteen respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes. Sixteen of the remaining respondents were neutral and five strongly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession process relies on the historical process used in previous transitions. The average score for the responses to statement #18 was 3.33. Twenty respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process relies on the historical process used in previous transitions. Thirteen of the remaining respondents were neutral, six strongly disagreed, and one slightly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process relies on the historical process used in previous transitions.

The survey discovered the extent to which the current pastoral leadership succession is consistent with the pastoral leadership succession processes of the last three pastoral transitions. The average score for the responses to statement #14 was 3.08. Nine respondents responded strongly agree and slightly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession is consistent with the

pastoral leadership succession processes of the last three pastoral transitions. Twenty-six of the remaining respondents were neutral and the remaining, three respondents strongly disagreed, and two slightly disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession is consistent with the pastoral leadership processes of the last three pastoral transitions.

The survey discovered the extent to which the respondents have some knowledge of some form of historical pattern for the pastoral leadership succession process. The survey discovered that the project increased the participants' understanding of the historical purpose, development, and application of the pastoral leadership succession process.

Composite Scores for All Seven Goals

Based on the quantitative analysis of the respondents' responses, the project discovered the extent to which respondents understood the importance of a succinct pastoral leadership succession process. The average total score for the twenty-one survey statements was 3.44. This score was in-between "neutral and slightly agree" on the five-point Likert scale.

Table 8: Composite Scores for all Goals

Goal No.	Name	Average
7	Responsibilities for Pastoral Leadership Succession	3.62
2	Theological Foundations for Pastoral Leadership Succession	3.61
6	Pastoral Leadership Succession Procedures	3.53
5	Paradigmatic Structures for Pastoral Leadership Succession	3.48
1	The Need for Succinct Leadership Succession	3.3
3	Biblical Examples of Pastoral Leadership Succession	3.3
4	Historical Development of Pastoral Leadership Succession	<u>3.26</u>
Average Composite Score		3.44

Qualitative Analysis

The survey concluded with seven open-ended questions. The majority of the respondents picked and chose which open-ended questions to answer and two of the respondents did not answer any of the open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were designed to garner responses from the respondents that expanded their responses in the quantitative section of the survey. Three categories are developed from the open-ended questions. Those categories are Membership's Responsibilities to the Pastoral Leadership Succession Process, Structured Pastoral Leadership Succession Process, and The Biblical and Historical Trends of Pastoral Leadership Succession.

The open-ended question related to members' responsibilities to the pastoral leadership process asked "what do you consider to be your responsibilities to the pastoral leadership succession process?" The consistent

responses from the respondents related to their responsibilities were to pray, be an active participant in the process, and be knowledgeable about the particular pastoral leadership succession process that is being used at Sweet Hope. One respondent offers this as a summary of the responsibility of members to the process by stating that “the process would be enhanced by having a selection process that included people of faith who have experienced this event and understand their responsibilities to the process.” That suggests that the overall success of the pastoral leadership succession process hinges on the engagement with, the knowledge of, and the participation of every member of the church from the current pastoral leader to the succeeding leader to the lay leaders and members.

There are three open-ended questions related to a structured pastoral leadership succession process: which procedures do you think are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process at Sweet Hope; how do you think a structured pastoral leadership succession process will benefit Sweet Hope; list one or two reasons why a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan is needed for Sweet Hope. The respondents assert that a structured pastoral leadership succession process helps the church follow God’s plan for pastoral leadership change, helps the members have a clear understanding of the process being utilized for a pastoral leadership transition, and helps to maintain harmony and accord within the church because it would reduce any misunderstandings about the process. One respondent summarized the need for a structured pastoral leadership succession process stating that “a succinct

pastoral leadership plan is needed to move Sweet Hope forward with clarity, understanding and alleviate unnecessary confusion.” My assessment of the respondents’ responses is that a structured pastoral leadership succession process benefits the church by maintaining the integrity of the process and by maintaining unity among the members. The overall purpose of a structured pastoral leadership succession process as understood by the respondents is to engage a process of leadership change that will keep the church moving steadily forward without any interruptions to its overall mission and ministry.

There are three open-ended questions related to the biblical and historical trends of pastoral leadership succession: what historical trends have you observed in the pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope; how are biblical foundations considered for pastoral leadership succession at Sweet Hope; and what biblical examples influence pastoral leadership succession at Sweet Hope? Ten of the respondents either left the questions related to biblical and historical trends blank or answered that they did not know. Three of the respondents listed the following for biblical examples of pastoral leadership successions: David to Solomon; Moses to Joshua; Jesus to the Disciples; and Paul to Timothy. Two of the respondents outlined the former pastoral leadership transition process of Sweet Hope which was to develop a search committee, narrow down the candidates to two, and present those two candidates to the congregation to vote upon them. That was the process used to select me as pastor. That process is the root of this project. One of the respondents concurs with me and maintains this process was lacking stating that “it is not an open and

transparent process.” Another respondent stated that “the process excluded God and we are to look to God in all decisions dealing with pastoral succession.” The responses of the respondents suggest a need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession process that has biblical and theological foundations that support historical trends of following the examples that God has established for continued harmony and accord within the church.

Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative data helped to discover that the respondents understand the pastoral leadership succession process but it also reveals some gaps in their knowledge of the biblical and historical trends in the pastoral leadership succession process. The data suggests that the knowledge of the respondents is wide-ranging but would be best served with a pastoral leadership succession process that provides guidance for and training about the pastoral leadership succession process.

Chapter Six will reflect on the discovered information from Chapter Five. It will also discuss the path forward for the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church to institute a pastoral leadership succession plan that will govern future pastoral leadership transitions. I will finally offer some reflection on the data in the survey and my personal development and growth because of this process that will hopefully inform and guide others who will at some point embark upon a pastoral leadership succession process.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

I have had the privilege of wrestling with this project for several years. During that time, the current COVID-19 pandemic has come to life and provides another level of relevance to this project. Covid19 has wrestled me for my time and attention but it also gave me another level of perspective as it relates to the need for a succinct pastoral leadership transition process. As you have already read, this project was started because of my experiences of applying to churches for their vacant pastoral positions. Those experiences did not go well—including the process for Sweet Hope. Those experiences revealed flaws in the pastoral succession process that many churches use and the negative impacts of those processes.

The Covid19 Pandemic has taught me several things but I will only discuss two of them here. One, the pandemic taught me the importance of being proactive in my health care and well-being to have as strong of an immune system and mental health stability as possible to maintain a healthy mental state but also to assist in fighting this dreaded disease. Although that seems completely unrelated to the pastoral transition process, it is germane to this discussion because churches either unexpectedly lost pastors due to their succumbing to the virus because of a compromised immune system or churches' pastors quit. After all, the stress of ministry during the pandemic was too much for them to mentally handle. Either of those scenarios left the church in the

position of needing to hurriedly and unexpectedly go through the pastoral transition process. Two, it taught me the importance of unity, harmony, and synergy within the church. The pandemic revealed to me the need for a succinct pastoral leadership transition process, the need for harmony among the members of the church, and the need for synergy within the church for times when pastoral transition unexpectedly arises. I have concluded that the unity, harmony, and synergy that we have at Sweet Hope were major factors that helped Sweet Hope successfully navigate the pandemic.

My hypothesis for this project states that every church should have a succinct, concise pastoral leadership transition process that makes for a seamless pastoral transition while at the same time maintaining unity and harmony within the church which creates synergy within the church to continue a high level of ministry functionality.

Project Goals

The purpose of this project is to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland will ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession. The research question this project sought to answer was “To what extent can a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore Maryland ensure efficient pastoral leadership successions?” The project goals to be analyzed were as follows:

1. To discover the extent to which there is a need for succinct pastoral leadership successions.
2. To discover the extent to which theological principles are considered for pastoral leadership succession.
3. To discover the extent to which biblical examples are used for pastoral leadership succession.
4. To discover the extent to which historical development is considered for pastoral leadership succession.
5. To discover the extent to which a paradigmatic structure benefits the pastoral leadership succession process.
6. To discover the extent to which procedures are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process.
7. To discover the extent to which participants know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process.

Goal Seven: Responsibilities for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #7 is to discover the extent to which participants know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. The questions to discover the input of the participants asked whether the participants know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process, whether the participants know that their responsibilities are important to the pastoral leadership succession process, and whether the participants know their designated roles in the pastoral leadership succession process.

The participants understand that the members of the church have a significant role in the pastoral leadership succession process. The data suggest that the participants are informed of their roles and responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. This topic was heavily discussed during our integrated study sessions. The participants stated that they “did not have much say” in the pastoral leadership transition process that was used when I became the pastor of Sweet Hope. I proffer that the lack of membership participation in the pastoral leadership transition process is where the process begins to break down. However, after our discussion and the accompanying training, one of the participants stated that he or she “understood that his or her responsibility was to follow the biblical examples of pastoral leadership, follow the vision God has given to the current pastoral leadership, and support the work of securing a successor to maintain peace in the church.”

Those types of statements from the participants express their understanding of their roles in the pastoral leadership transition process. The majority of the participants know that their responsibilities are necessary. Although the participants are more evenly split in their overall understanding of their designated roles, which we will discuss in the next paragraph, at least the participants realize that their roles and responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process are necessary and important.

The data informs us that the participants were nearly evenly split about understanding their designated roles in the pastoral leadership succession process. One of the participants wrote that “the official leadership of the church

are the only persons with a significant role in the pastoral leadership succession process.” That statement and the responses to this goal inform us that more work needs to be done to assist the membership and leadership with understanding their designated roles. Additionally, this split in understanding their designated role also indicates that it is necessarily important for churches to have in place a concise pastoral leadership succession plan and process that gives instructions on the process which would also help the membership and leadership to know and understand their designated roles and responsibilities in the process. A step-by-step plan that outlines the responsibilities of the church leadership, membership, and the new/succeeding pastoral leader is necessary for the pastoral leadership succession process.

The information presented to the participants during this project has developed a deeper understanding of their role and responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process and lays the foundation for a step-by-step plan. After this project, the participants are more informed about the roles and responsibilities of pastoral leaders, lay leaders, and members associated with the pastoral leadership succession process. Some of the participants were apprehensive about their level of understanding of their roles and responsibilities, stating that they were not as knowledgeable as some of the others in the project group. However, the data informs us that most of the participants understand that their roles and responsibilities are important to the process. It also informs us that more effort needs to be made to help all participants know their designated roles and responsibilities and to help them know that they are essential to the process

and when that work is done, it will lead to a more successful and synergistic pastoral leadership succession process.

Goal Two: Theological Research for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #2 is to discover the extent to which theological fundamentals are considered for pastoral leadership succession. The questions related to this goal ask whether the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is consistent with biblical principles. The next question asks whether the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope considers the biblical mission of the church. The final question asks whether the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process. The questions related to this goal assessed whether the participants understood the theological principles of the pastoral leadership succession process.

The participants mostly agree that the pastoral leadership succession process should be foundationally supported and influenced by biblical and theological principles. The participants overwhelmingly agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope is consistent with biblical principles. However, the experience of pastoral transition that I went through when I came to Sweet Hope suggests that there were some gaps in the biblical and theological use in the pastoral transition process. I believe that the participants' responses were based on the information that they received during our integrated study sessions.

The integrated study sessions provided theological information that expanded the participants' knowledge regarding pastoral leadership transitions. The participants who agree confirm that theological principles are important to the pastoral leadership succession process. Each question concurrently reveals that the participants substantiate that the pastoral leadership succession process must be biblically based. The high number of participants who agree and the low number of participants who disagree make it clear that the participants believe that Sweet Hope considers the biblical mission of the church important to the pastoral leadership succession process.

The use of biblical influences by the church in the pastoral leadership succession process also reflects the importance of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit during a pastoral transition. Although this was not an overwhelming majority, most of the participants believe that Sweet Hope follows the Holy Spirit's influence on the pastoral leadership succession process. This goal gives us the greatest number of participants who disagree, but the majority of the participants still agree that Sweet Hope is influenced by theological principles and the leading of the Holy Spirit in the pastoral leadership transition process. Although there is no concurrence on this goal, it still bears out the importance of the pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope to follow theological principles. The majority of the participants still stated that they agree that theological principles are important for developing a succinct pastoral leadership succession process. The data reveals the seriousness and importance that the

participants argue that theological principles are to the pastoral leadership succession process.

Goal Six: Pastoral Leadership Succession Procedures

Goal #6 is to discover the extent to which procedures are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process. The questions related to this goal determine the most beneficial process for pastoral leadership succession. These questions consider if the procedure of developing the next pastoral leader, following a pastoral leadership succession plan, or succeeding pastoral leadership from one family member to the next family member is the most beneficial pastoral leadership succession process. I consider this particular goal to be the heart of this project. This project was birthed from my experiences of going through several poorly managed pastoral leadership transition processes and I determined to help Sweet Hope implement and utilize a concise pastoral leadership succession process for the next pastoral leadership transition.

This goal came the closest to having a unanimous agreement and affirms that this project is reaping the benefits of preparing the people of Sweet Hope to implement a concise pastoral leadership succession plan. The participant's responses to this goal suggest that following a pastoral leadership succession plan is the most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process. There was one dissenting voice to this belief, but it is muted by the overwhelming majority who suggest that a pastoral transition plan makes the process more harmonious and synergistic. The data strongly suggest that the participants are on accord with following a concise plan to transition the pastoral leadership of

Sweet Hope. The data also reveals that the group contends that the well-developed pastoral leadership succession paradigm of pastoral leadership transition is the best process to maintain harmony among the membership and to build synergy within the ministry. One of the project's participants states that "this process must reflect decency and order. The transition must be as smooth as possible."

The majority of agreement among the participants suggests that the participants affirm discipleship, mentoring, and coaching of a successive leader will provide the church with a person who is willing and prepared to succeed the current pastoral leader and fulfill the mission and vision of the church. One of the participants added that "dialogue with the current pastoral leader would be very important." Additionally, through the succeeding leader's dialogue with the current pastoral leader, information will be shared with the succeeding leader that could range from outlining the current vision and mission of the church to detailing the purposes and functions of current ministries which will add harmonious synergy within the church. Those same dialogues could also fulfill biblical examples of pastoral development, discipleship, and succession.

Now, concerning what I have termed, "pastoral family dynasties" the participants were split, and the data suggests that they had mixed feelings about the benefits of this particular pastoral leadership transition process. It must be noted that this was a vigorously discussed topic during one of our integrated study sessions. The pros and cons related to this topic were put forth by the members and the conclusion left the group still split on whether they thought it

would be best to have a “pastoral family dynasty” or to have a succinct process that is open to other qualified candidates. This split suggests the need for continued instruction on the pastoral transitioning process so no matter which process is followed, the keys to pastoral transitioning, such as discipling the succeeding leader, informing the leadership and membership of their designated roles and responsibilities, and undergirding the process in theological foundations, are still implemented.

Most of the participants nonetheless agree that a well-developed pastoral leadership succession paradigm of pastoral leadership transition is the best process. The aggregate of the participants agrees that standard procedures related to the pastoral leadership succession process should be established and implemented by Sweet Hope. The data determines that it is critically important that standardized procedures for pastoral leadership succession become foundational and implemented for every pastoral leadership transition.

Goal Five: Paradigmatic Structures for Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #5 is to discover the extent to which a paradigmatic structure benefits the pastoral leadership succession process. The questions related to this goal reveal the benefits of the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession at Sweet Hope, whether the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope follows specific steps for a positive outcome, and whether the current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of

Sweet Hope. This goal also points to the ability of a concise pastoral leadership succession process to build or sustain harmonious synergy within Sweet Hope.

The data from the participants' input suggests that the current process is somewhat sufficient to help Sweet Hope continue to move forward while maintaining ministry harmony and accord. The current process managed to select me as the pastor but the downside to the process was the disruption to the harmony and synergy that it caused within Sweet Hope. The fact of the last transition process suggests that the current process of Sweet Hope functioned enough to accomplish the goal of selecting a pastor but it also was lacking because the church's morale and accord were fractured and the authority of the pastoral office was diminished after I was elected to lead the church as pastor thereby leading to this particular project.

Half of the participants agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps for a positive outcome. I do not want to seem biased by pushing back against the participants, but the current process left the church divided, caused people to leave the church, and emboldened others to disrespect and disregard the pastor's office and authority. After the pastoral leadership transition process that elected me as pastor, there were deep fractures among the membership that took years to overcome and some of those deep wounds still have scabs on them which means that they are still in the healing process.

The data suggest that some of the participants maintain that the current process for pastoral leadership transition "strengthens the bonds" of the

membership but again the actuality of what happened suggests otherwise. The participants, according to their responses, confirm that the current structure for the pastoral leadership succession process makes the overall process more succinct, cordial, and synergistic. Most of the participants agree that the current process produced great benefits to the life and ministry of Sweet Hope and this current pastor. My only assessment is that the data and the participant's responses are more their hope of what will result from the conclusion of this project. The data reveals that the participants hope that a concise, succinct pastoral leadership succession process will be the result of this project and that will lead to benefits for the overall life, health, harmony, and ministry of the church and the next transition process.

Goal One: The Need for Succinct Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #1 is to discover the extent to which there is a need for succinct pastoral leadership successions. The questions used to achieve that discovery ask if the current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope a reliable transitional procedure is or if the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope creates positive morale among the church membership or if the current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church. This is the goal that I thought would offer support for the purpose statement of this project. This goal does not help to achieve that objective and it does not refute the purpose of the project either.

The data suggest that nearly half of the participants agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope is a reliable transitional

procedure. However, just as many of the participants were neutral, the remaining participants disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process is a reliable transitional procedure. That information from the data does not suggest an overwhelming need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan nor does it suggest any deficiency in the current pastoral leadership succession plan of Sweet Hope. The unfortunate reality is that the pastoral transition did have deficiencies. The observation that is relevant here is during the in-person discussions, the group expressed that the morale of the church during my election as pastor was contentious, and they, as one participant stated, “remembered the lingering uneasiness within the church” during and after that pastoral leadership transition.

The next question for this goal reveals that most of the participants were either neutral or disagreed that the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope creates positive morale among the church membership. However, several participants still agree that the process created good morale within the church. That data does not bring us to an overwhelming conclusion that there is a dire need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession process. However, a pastoral leadership transition process that is built upon Biblical and Theological foundations can work to maintain positive morale and build synergy for the smooth, continuous functioning of the church.

The participants did not provide the overwhelming majority of agreement for the need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession process that I thought was apparent and desperately needed for Sweet Hope and all autonomous

churches. The reason I embarked upon this project was that I thought it was urgently needed and necessarily important for Sweet Hope and all other autonomous churches to have a succinct pastoral leadership succession process in place to help propagate and effectuate ministry. The data informs us that more teaching and training are needed to inform the leadership and membership about what constitutes a succinct pastoral leadership succession process and the benefits of a succinct pastoral leadership succession process. The data suggest that the participants have not fully realized the negatives of a haphazard pastoral leadership transition. As such, the goal is still to revamp the pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope.

Goal Three: Biblical Examples of Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #3 is to discover the extent to which biblical examples are used for pastoral leadership succession. The questions related to discovering biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession determine if biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope along with discovering if the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader is the process used by Sweet Hope, and discovering if the biblical example of succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope. This goal indicates how much the survey participants contend Sweet Hope utilizes biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession in its transition process.

The leadership and membership of Sweet Hope overwhelmingly agree that the Bible offers instructive and supportive examples of pastoral leadership

succession models for the church to follow and replicate. During the integrated study sessions with the participants, the discussions related to biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession were revelatory for the group. Except for the Paul to Timothy transition, most of the participants viewed the other Biblical examples (David to Solomon and Moses to Joshua) as a change in leadership but did not associate or correlate those examples to a change in pastoral leadership. Our discussions helped the participants understand how other examples of biblical leadership change informed, influenced, and provided principles for what makes a concise pastoral leadership succession process in contemporary times.

The data determines that most of the participants agree that the Sweet Hope process of pastoral leadership succession is influenced by biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession. Some participants disagreed and others remained neutral. The disagreeing participants suggest that they disagree that Sweet Hope disciplined the incoming pastoral leader, or they know that the outgoing leader in any way, shape, or form contributed to the succeeding pastoral leader's ministry, or they do not contend that Sweet Hope followed any Biblical, Historical, Theological or Ecclesiological principles when considering the process of selecting the next pastoral leader. Those who disagreed, though they were in the minority, were more accurate about the process of pastoral leadership transition of Sweet Hope than the majority. Although the data suggests, based on the responses of the majority, that Sweet Hope used the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader, in actuality that was not

the case because the former pastor had been dismissed from the church 2 years before I became the pastor and I did not have any interactions or conversations with the former pastor before I became the pastor of Sweet Hope. While a small minority of the participants disagreed that Sweet Hope utilized the biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader and other participants remained neutral, the data suggests that those survey participants are more perceptive of the pastoral transition process of Sweet Hope and most participants are uncertain of the intentionality of Sweet Hope to utilize the biblical example of mentoring in the pastoral leadership succession process. Another question would have helped the participants understand fully how to answer based on what had happened in previous pastoral transition processes and not respond based on what they learned during our integrated study sessions.

The responses to the next question more accurately indicate what is the pastoral transition process of Sweet Hope. The participants were nearly equal in their response of either agreeing or disagreeing that Sweet Hope used the biblical example of succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs. The participants are more split on this goal. I got a sense from the integrated study sessions that many of the participants knew that the right thing to do is to transition pastoral leadership as God directs but did not want to say that Sweet Hope did not follow God's lead. As a result of this project, in the future, Sweet Hope should follow biblical examples, replicate biblical models, and incorporate biblical principles in the pastoral leadership succession process. The data suggests that the participants argue that the Bible provides examples of pastoral

leadership succession that should be implemented in the pastoral leadership succession process. The data from the participants suggest that they are comfortable with the examples the Bible provides for pastoral leadership succession and that those same principles and examples should apply to the pastoral leadership succession process at Sweet Hope.

Goal Four: The Historical Development of Pastoral Leadership Succession

Goal #4 is to discover the extent to which historical development is considered for pastoral leadership succession. This goal determines whether the focus group participants are knowledgeable about how pastoral leadership succession historically happens. The questions related to this goal ask if the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes. The other questions related to Goal #4 discover if the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope is consistent with the pastoral leadership succession processes of the last three pastoral leadership transitions or if the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope relies on the historical process used in previous transitions.

Historically, the Free Will Baptist Denomination was a hierarchal structure that authorized the overseeing bishop to appoint the next pastor. The development of persons for the pastorate was the responsibility of the denomination. However, that structure has all but disappeared in the Free Will Baptist Denomination and most of the Free Will Baptist churches are completely autonomous and self-governing.

Half of the participants agree that the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes. The responses of the participants who disagreed or remained neutral are more aligned with what happened during the last pastoral transition process at Sweet Hope. There was no hierarchical oversight from the Free Will Denomination. The overseeing bishop did not have the authority to appoint anyone as pastor. The church had total autonomous control of the process.

With the next question related to this goal, the participants were overwhelmingly neutral because they were not sure if the current pastoral leadership succession process was consistent with the last three pastoral leadership transitions. The participants' neutrality suggests a lack of knowledge and understanding of the overall pastoral leadership succession process and a lack of understanding related to the historical relationship of previous pastoral transitions with the current process. The participants' lack of understanding related to the historical nature of pastoral leadership transition became an in-depth teaching session to inform the participants of the Free Will Baptist Church's history related to pastoral leadership transition and the history of pastoral leadership succession at Sweet Hope.

During the in-person discussion around this goal, I determined that the participants did not know much about the history of the process of pastoral leadership succession. I was the historian informing the group of what the process used to be, how it evolved, and what it is today. Sweet Hope used to be

a part of the main Free Will Baptist Denomination. In 1963, Sweet Hope along with other Free Will Baptist Churches splintered off and established their own Free Will Baptist Conference which also allowed them to be more independent. The overseeing bishop had some authority to recommend but not appoint a pastor. When I became pastor of Sweet Hope, the overseeing bishop was not consulted nor a part of any of the pastoral leadership transition proceedings. So, each church that is a part of this splintered conference is independent and responsible for the process that it will employ to determine who will be its next pastor.

The leadership and membership of Sweet Hope did not have the basic information on the historical trends of the pastoral leadership succession process among Free Will Baptist Churches or at Sweet Hope. Most of the responses for this goal were neutral. For this particular goal, a neutral answer meant that the participants were not knowledgeable enough to agree or disagree that they had an understanding of the historical development of the pastoral leadership succession process. The data informs us that very few of the participants had some knowledge of some form of historical pattern for the pastoral leadership succession process. The time spent on this project for the participants was invaluable as it increased their understanding of the historical purpose, development, and application of the pastoral leadership succession process. The research leads to the contention that members of most churches are unaware or ill-informed of the historical aspects of the pastoral leadership succession process of their church. An exhaustive pastoral leadership succession resource

or handbook should include a section on biblical and historical aspects of pastoral leadership succession to further expand the members' knowledge of the biblical and historical aspects of pastoral leadership succession. What I discovered from this goal of the project was that the members became more excited about participating in the pastoral leadership succession process so they could continue biblical traditions and maintain historical principles that make for smooth future pastoral leadership transitions.

Application

The focus of this project is to change the methodology of selecting a pastor to succeed the current pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church. The results of the project affirmed that the participants somewhat understand the pastoral leadership transition process, but the results did not exactly conclude what I hypothesized about the need for a succinct pastoral leadership transition plan at Sweet Hope. Notedly, the integrated study sessions revealed that the participants needed more instruction in areas related to the pastoral leadership transition process. As such, the application of the findings to the ministry of Sweet Hope will assist with developing a functional, purposeful, and relevant pastoral leadership transition process that the people are fully engaged in to maintain harmony within the ministry and build synergy that drives the ministry into the future under the succeeding pastoral leadership.

Developing a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan is the first step in applying the findings to the ministry of Sweet Hope. Assisting the plan, Biblical, Theological, and Historical instruction of pastoral leadership succession will

provide greater insight to members of the ministry which will guide them in their participation in the pastoral leadership succession process. The foundational information related to pastoral leadership succession informs the membership of their roles and responsibilities within the pastoral leadership succession process which in turn drives their motivation to be an active, integral, and knowledgeable part of the process. That higher level of participation and involvement becomes foundational for maintaining morale and building synergy thereby making the overall pastoral leadership succession process successful.

Further Study

The work related to pastoral leadership succession has not been exhausted in this project. The objective of this project simply sought a way to prepare Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland to do the process of pastoral leadership succession a little more succinctly. The more answers that were discovered revealed that there is more to be discovered.

A project related to the many biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession is valid for further study. I chose two biblical examples for this project but realized through the integrated study sessions that there was more work needed to help the people also know the other pastoral leadership succession examples in the Bible. I discovered that there are more biblical pastoral leadership successions than the two I highlighted in this project that the individual members do not consider to be examples of pastoral leadership succession. Both good and bad biblical examples of pastoral leadership transition processes provide a source of information that can inform and influence the pastoral

leadership succession process. For example, the Saul to David pastoral leadership succession process was an informative process albeit a rocky transition, but it still provides a lesson that will aid and abet any pastoral leadership transition.

The research suggests that a project related to models of discipleship for pastoral leadership succession is valid for further study. The discipling of the next pastoral leader by the current pastoral leader is one of the tenets I hope this project expresses as necessary. There are different models of discipleship that further study would reveal will assist with making the overall pastoral leadership succession process successful and synergistic.

A project related to a broadened or more exhaustive Christian education is valid for further study within the field of pastoral leadership succession. I use the term broadened or exhaustive Christian education to reflect a Christian education model that will teach the membership of the church more than “what thus saith the Lord” from the Bible. This project helped me to discover that people had Bible knowledge but little church administration knowledge. That lack of church administration knowledge revealed the participants’ limited knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. An exhaustive Christian education thrust would include such topics as the history of the church, biblical foundations for church ministry, models of pastoral leadership succession, leadership development, etc. Additional research in the varying areas of church administration will give the membership insights into the many

facets and aspects of ministry and better prepare them to participate in the pastoral leadership succession process.

Personal Goals

This project made the need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope and other church ministries more apparent. From this project, I realized the following personal goals:

1. I will establish a pastoral leadership succession plan for Sweet Hope.
2. I will share the discoveries in this project with other pastoral leaders.
3. I will develop a resource to guide other ministries in the pastoral leadership transition process.

Goal One: Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan for Sweet Hope

Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church has my heart. This is my twentieth year serving as the pastor. I love this church from the depths of my soul and desire nothing but the best for her. I have given my time, treasure, and talent to Sweet Hope and I have this deep desire to give Sweet Hope a succinct Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan that will govern how pastoral leadership is transitioned as my lasting legacy.

Serving the ministry of Sweet Hope for twenty years has invigorated my passion to leave this ministry functioning as holistically as it possibly can and I know that a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan will assist the church in being a well-balanced ministry. The pastoral leadership succession plan will build upon the foundations that God established in the Bible and throughout the history of the church. The pastoral leadership succession plan will be key to allowing the

membership to maintain spiritual accord and harmony through one of the challenging times in the life of the church. The pastoral leadership succession plan will drive the synergy within the church to positively spur the next ministry leader along his or her journey.

The Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan for Sweet Hope will be implemented according to the following steps:

1. Prayer for God's guidance.
2. Engagement of the membership in the process.
3. Instructing the membership about the Historical, Theological, and Biblical importance of the Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan.
4. Instructing the membership on their roles and responsibilities in the Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan.
5. Empowering and equipping the membership to perform their roles and responsibilities in the Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan.
6. Seeking potential candidates for discipling in the pastoral ministry.
7. Giving candidates their roles and responsibilities to acclimate them to the church's life, to gain the respect of the church's membership, and to flow in God's vision for the church.
8. Discipling, coaching, guiding, and mentoring candidates.
9. Increasing the level of pastoral responsibility of the candidates.
10. Turning over all leadership responsibilities to the succeeding pastor.
11. The senior pastor gracefully and completely relinquishes all pastoral responsibilities.

12. The senior pastor merges into his or her next ministry assignment.

Goal Two: Shared Discoveries

Having put in this labor to complete this project and making the discoveries I have made from this project; I am compelled to share the discoveries from this project with other ministry leaders. I went through three turbulent candidating processes at three different churches until I became the pastor of Sweet Hope and I have conversed with other pastors who have gone through what some have termed “ungodly candidating processes.” I know firsthand that there are still churches operating with antiquated pastoral leadership succession processes and plans. Within the ministry of Sweet Hope, I know that the antiquated and poorly run process left the church fractured, the people discouraged, and the office of the pastor malfunctioning without proper authority or support to perform the duties of the pastoral office.

I would commit malpractice if I did not share these discoveries with other ministry leaders to hopefully institute succinct pastoral leadership succession processes in other ministries. The COVID-19 pandemic has stressed and stretched numerous pastors to their limits and many of them are seeking relief from their assignments and considering retirement. The church at this time can ill-afford to go through a pastoral leadership transition without a plan because that would be equivalent to another pandemic. As such, it becomes evidentially important for me to share these discoveries with other churches and ministry leaders to assist them with their pastoral leadership transitions.

Goal Three: Resource Guide

A resource guide for pastoral leadership succession will be the most appropriate tool to develop for Sweet Hope and sharing that guide with other churches and ministries will be the most thoughtful and gracious thing I can do as a member of the Universal Church. Some pastors wonder how they can gracefully exit their ministries with dignity and not be assumed to be quitters. Some pastors are stuck in their ministries without any idea how to leave their assignment without causing damaging harm to the ministry's operations and disrupting the harmony and accord among the membership of the church. The resource guide will provide the answers.

The steps for the implementation of the Pastoral Leadership Succession Plan as outlined in Personal Goal #1 will be further expounded upon to give more succinct details to assist Sweet Hope and every other ministry that the plan is shared with transitioning the pastoral leadership in a manner that will maintain harmony and accord among the membership. The resource guide will be the tool that will assist Sweet Hope and other churches to build synergy within the ministry and provide a platform for the succeeding pastor to have success in ministry.

Although churches seemingly say they have a plan for how they want to transition their pastoral leadership, they ultimately would perform that task better with the assistance of a well-researched and succinct pastoral leadership succession plan. This project's Biblical Research suggests that the invaluable process of succinct pastoral leadership development and transition as biblically

outlined in this project becomes foundational for successful pastoral leadership transitions. The Theological Research of this project concurringly suggests that historical theological themes are proven to be foundational for successful pastoral leadership succession.

Concluding Thoughts

I hoped that this project would be the springboard I needed to develop a pastoral leadership succession plan for Sweet Hope. It has fulfilled those hopes in many different ways. The in-depth study for the project provided one level of fulfillment while sharing the information learned with the participants provided another level of fulfillment. Then, the responses of the participants to the project have elevated my desire to develop a pastoral leadership succession plan for not only Sweet Hope but also to develop a simple, concise, succinct resource for others to have such a plan as they go through the pastoral leadership transition process.

Within the project, I discovered additional information related to the pastoral leadership succession process that initially I did not consider. The Biblical, Theological, and Historical foundational information underscores the rationale for and increases my knowledge of the need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan. I further discovered from my experience the need for members of the church to increase their understanding of the pastoral leadership succession process because that increases their desire to participate in the pastoral leadership succession process and maintain harmony and accord within the ministry.

I found that my hypothesis was correct about the need for a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan and my findings in this experience revealed the people's desire to be integral parts of the pastoral leadership succession process. The people desire to build on the synergy of ministry. Therefore, it becomes necessary for me to embrace the experiences related to and the findings from the project to inform my next steps for developing a concise pastoral leadership succession resource. As a result of this project, the participants have spiritually matured in their knowledge of the administration of pastoral leadership succession; they have matured in their willingness to participate in their roles and responsibilities related to the pastoral leadership transition process; and, they have matured in their relationship with one another to maintain harmony and accordance which build synergy within the ministry.

This project proved to be beneficial for me and the Sweet Hope family. The office of the pastor is less of a mystery to the members and my openness during the project with the members gave them unseen insights that increased their desire to participate in the process.

The next step after this project is to develop a resource for pastoral leadership succession. This project is the start of the development of that new plan and its conclusion leads to the next step of the plan which will give everyone their roles and responsibilities and start seeking God for the right candidates to begin the discipleship process of the next pastoral leader. The members will have an opportunity to participate more as we implement the new pastoral leadership succession plan. The most significant fact of this project is that it is the

inaugural step for developing a pastoral leadership succession plan for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland, and any church that desires and needs such a resource for their pastoral leadership succession.

APPENDIX ONE

PROPOSAL

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A DISCOVERY OF A PASTORAL LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLAN
AND ITS BENEFITS FOR SWEET HOPE FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

A PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
TERRY GUILIO THORNTON

ASHLAND, OHIO
JANUARY 18, 2019

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project is to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland will ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession. The research question is: In what ways can a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore Maryland ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession?

Overview

The focus of this project is to change the methodology of selecting a pastor to succeed the current pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church. The target of this project is the leadership of Sweet Hope who decides to follow an antiquated model of pastoral leadership succession that is fraught with pitfalls. The goal is to inform the leadership of Sweet Hope of a pastoral leadership succession plan that makes the transition of leadership from one pastor to another more biblical and collegial.

This project is designed to inform and seek to change the pastoral leadership succession paradigm of Sweet Hope through an integrated study of biblical and Christian leadership succession models that are vastly different from the current pastoral leadership succession model of Sweet Hope. The integrated study presented to the leadership of Sweet Hope will be approximately six to eight weeks. The project intends to discover a pastoral leadership succession model for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church and provide information that can be a starting point for other ministries that are seeking a new approach to

pastoral leadership succession. The value of this project will be realized when Sweet Hope seeks a new pastor or when some other ministry utilizes the project's findings to assist their pastoral leadership succession process.

Foundations

As the pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, I came into this office wondering what I could do to make the process of selecting the next pastor more well-organized and beneficial for the congregation and the next pastor. There are several different models for transitioning the pastoral leadership position. Most of those models of transitioning pastoral leadership need some adjustments to make the process more professional and congenial. I will concentrate my efforts on discovering a pastoral leadership development and succession plan that will make the candidating process currently used by Sweet Hope, and many other autonomous churches, biblical, organized, and collegial.

This project seeks to discover a succinct and efficient pastoral leadership succession plan and why it is necessary and important to have such a plan. Several foundations sustain the development of this project for pastoral leadership development and succession. The Personal Foundation will highlight the impetus for my starting this project. The Biblical Foundation will offer biblical insights and support for this project. The Theological Foundation will reveal this project's Christological, Ecclesiological, Missiological, and Pneumatological elements. The Historical Foundation will discuss the Church's approach and rationale for pastoral leadership development and succession from the Reformation Period until now.

The Foundations within this proposal reveal my commitment to discovering a pastoral leadership development and succession plan, outline the biblical foundation for this project, reflect on the theological connections of this project, explain the historical influences that undergird this project, and discuss contemporary theologians' perspectives on the aspects and facets of a pastoral leadership development and succession plan.

Personal Foundation

On March 31, 2002, God privileged me to start my first Sunday as the pastor of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. However, the process of becoming the pastor of Sweet Hope or most Baptist churches is an antiquated, arduous task which in some circles is called the "candidating process." I went through three candidating processes for other churches that left me disenchanted. The candidating process is the application process that Sweet Hope along with many other Baptist churches uses to "select" or "find" their next pastor.

The candidating process is initiated by a church when it establishes a "pastor search committee," declaring that the position of pastor is vacant and that they are seeking applicants to send in their résumés or complete a written application for the position. The potential is there for a church to get upwards of 100 résumés or applications for the position of pastor. Then the church will go through some unsystematic and non-prayerful process of winnowing down that number to a manageable number. The process for most churches is unsystematic, disorganized, and sometimes chaotic. Some churches do not have

specified qualifications for a pastor. Persons can get their names pushed to the top of the list if they know someone on the search committee. Normally, there is no timetable set to complete the task of selecting a new pastor. And there are times when a person is not selected as pastor for the most frivolous reasons.

I once applied to a church and became one of the two finalists. After the church had gone through the process which had taken approximately one and a half years for the church to complete, I was informed that I was not selected to serve the church simply because the other candidate under consideration lived closer to the church. The effects of that process were devastating and bordered on the demonic.

I am motivated to engage in this project because I want to assist churches and the academy with providing a pastoral leadership succession paradigm that will enable Sweet Hope and other churches to have a biblically based and professional process for leadership transition and assist the academy with informing pastors and lay leaders of some just and ethical techniques for pastoral leadership succession. I hope that the discoveries of this project will eliminate any undue hardship and heartache with the process of becoming the pastor or leader of a ministry.

Biblical Foundation

The biblical foundations of this project are based on Numbers 27:12-23 and 1 Chronicles 28:1-21. These biblical narratives give enlightenment and substantiation for the implementation of a pastoral leadership succession plan. I will delve into these passages of Scripture to glean from them basic precepts that

support my thesis that strategic, succinct, and seamless succession and transition of pastoral leadership creates, cultivates, and encourages synthesis that sustains the divine revelation and leadership agenda and develops synergy for increased effectiveness that advances the ministry of the succeeding ministry leader.

1 Chronicles 28:1-21 gives insight into the importance of preparation for a succeeding leader. Within this passage of Scripture, some discoveries reveal some important steps that assist with leadership transition and succession. Verses 1-7 reveal the importance of explaining the necessity for leadership transition and succession. Verses 8-10 uncover the significance of the new leader and the people all of whom must obey and work in harmony with one another and God. Steven Tuell suggests that “quite probably, the Chronicler is addressing his own community here, and calling them to faithfulness. They knew all too well what faithlessness had ultimately cost Solomon’s descendants” (Tuell 2001, 107). Verses 11-21 disclose the contributions of David to Solomon’s success. Keck et. al. state that “although he could not build the Temple, David did everything he could to help Solomon achieve that goal” (Keck 1999, 462). Tuell continues to discuss the responsibility of the current leader to prepare and assist the next leader stating that the “parallel between David and Moses” continues

Just as the pattern (Hebrew *tabnith*) of the tabernacle had been revealed to Moses and preserved in the written Torah (Exod. 25:9, 40), so also the plan (also Hebrew *tabnith*) of the temple was revealed to David, and passed on by him in written form to Solomon (28:11, 12, 18, 19; see de Vries 1988, 626). (Tuell 2001, 108).

Northouse contends that providing a foundation and building the skills of the incoming leader is an approach that “provides a structure for leadership education and development programs that include creative problem solving, conflict resolution, listening, and teamwork” (Northouse 2016, 69). I suggest that David wanted Solomon to be as prepared as possible for every aspect and circumstance of leadership.

Numbers 27:12-23 supports the emphasis on God’s kingdom agenda and the importance of a concise ministry focus. As in the 1 Chronicles 28 pericope, Numbers 27 represents the importance of the current ministry leader to understand his or her role in preparing to transition the pastoral leadership responsibilities to the succeeding leader and his or her participation in preparing that person to be successful. Dennis T. Olson suggests that “God’s reminder of his fast-approaching death prompts Moses to ask God to appoint a new leader for this new generation of Israelites” (Olson 1996, 168). Keck et. al. state that the “succession of Moses’ charismatic spirit is initiated by his own request in vv. 15-17” (Keck 1998, 219). The ministry leader, just as Moses was, must be in alignment with and agreeable to the move of God to ensure a succinct ministry transition. God expected Moses to mentor Joshua and train him for leadership of the people through the time-honored tradition of discipleship and on-the-job training. Olson states “For a brief interim period, Joshua and Moses will lead the Israelites together...Joshua will then take over full leadership of Israel...but his leadership will be guided by the written book of the Torah of Moses (Josh. 1:7-8)” (Olson 1996, 169).

These passages of Scripture offer nuggets of spiritual truths for pastoral leadership development and succession. The information garnered from these passages will assist with the discovery of foundational information that will guide any ministry seeking to have a smooth transition of pastoral leadership without disrupting the harmony and flow of ministry.

Theological Foundation

The theological foundations of this project are Christology, Missiology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology. Pastoral leadership succession decisions should be grounded in theological perspectives that are historical and can govern and guide the decisions concerning pastoral leadership succession based on time-honored theological information rather than perspectives that are not Christocentric. The information discovered will assist with a collegial leadership transition that maintains harmony among the membership and lays the groundwork for future ministry success.

Christology is the primary theological foundation and perspective that informs most subject matters related to the Church. The works, teachings, and ministry of Jesus Christ reveal that discipleship is directly related to the leadership development and succession process. Jesus spent intense time with his disciples to establish a pattern for living and to reveal to them how to carry on his work, particularly as leaders of the church. Discipleship is an intense course of training, preparation, and exposure to ministry practices to prepare people to be qualified representatives of Jesus.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer proffers that we are shown “through the Scriptures that the following of Christ is not the achievement or merit of a select few, but the divine command to all Christians without distinction” (Bonhoeffer 1995, 47).

Donald Senior supports Bonhoeffer asserting that “inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities...are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and Priscilla and Aquila” (Senior 2016, 40).

Ecclesiology is another theological theme that covers the field of pastoral leadership succession. Ecclesiology covers themes related to the Church and sub-themes such as its polity, leadership, discipline, and role in salvation. The purpose of the church reaches deep into the life of humanity thereby dictating that its leadership remains knowledgeable, reliable, and uninterrupted. Senior contends that “the fundamental responsibility of New Testament leaders is to foster the common good of the community...Jesus the healer and teacher was committed to the restoration and well-being of God’s people...many others were directed to building up the Body of Christ” (Senior 2016, 40).

The theological perspective of Missiology is necessarily important to fully know the dynamics of pastoral leadership succession. The Christian Church has a specific mission, mandate, and message that are uncovered in theological reflection in the field of Missiology. In regards to pastoral leadership succession, an understanding of the *Missio Dei* and the Missiology of the church will assist in discovering a succession plan or paradigm that is in alignment with the will and movement of God. Lincoln and Mamiya assert that “In each city, there were a few

leading churches and preachers who took a prophetic stance in attempting to meet the great needs of the migrants by using their church's resources to provide help with food, shelter, clothing, and employment" (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 121).

Accordingly, the work of the Holy Spirit impacts the direction of God's people and the church. The Holy Spirit is visible in all aspects of the church including the church's pastoral leadership and succession. Pneumatology is another theological theme that has a bearing on any pastoral leadership succession conversation. The overriding pneumatological impact of the Holy Spirit in the leadership development and succession process is to make God known. Kelly and Nelson suggest that "God is made known through the enlightening inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (Kelly and Nelson 2003, 55).

Discovering a framework and plan for pastoral leadership succession at the least must take into consideration the implications that Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and Pneumatology have upon this area of study. The understanding that we have about the impact that these fields of theologies have on pastoral leadership succession determines how a succession model is developed and implemented.

Historical Foundation

The Historical Foundation will explore the Church's evolution and progression of pastoral leadership development and succession from the Reformation Period until the present day. The Reformation Era of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shaped the independent, self-governing thought of

many Protestant churches. Cwiekowski suggests that “the period in many ways set parameters that would last until the mid-twentieth century” (Cwiekowski 2018, 235). Martin Luther, an early Reform theologian, “argued for the basic equality of all Christians: “All [are] consecrated priests through baptism” and would later reject the papacy” (Cwiekowski 2018, 242). This theological rationale of Luther is one of the underlying thoughts that sought to dismantle the hierarchy of the papacy for Protestant churches and opened the door to local churches’ self-governance.

Fitts discussing the European background of Black Baptists suggests that the church has an autonomous lineage. He states that “the churches in those early times were entirely independent, none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction; but each one governed by its own rules and laws” (Fitts 1985, 20). Accordingly, Luther persisted that the Church had one head, who is Christ, in heaven and on earth whom the church must actively seek and serve. MacCulloch lists the 94th and 95th theses of Luther as “Christians should be exhorted to seek earnestly to follow Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, hells. And let them thus be more confident of entering heaven through many tribulations rather than through a false assurance of peace” (MacCulloch 2005, 124).

The autonomous/independent African-American churches in America have a rich history, yet they are still evolving. Some, ascribing to the Catholicity of the church, take their foundations and fundamentals from different denominations, even Catholicism, to form and shape their independent manner of operating as an autonomous church. Cwiekowski uses Nicholas of Cusa’s

definition to define Catholicity as “universality “through [out] the entire world” and “from the beginning of the world to its end” (Cwiekowski 2018, 236).

When discussing the establishment of the Free Negro Church and the governance of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Catholicity of the church is apparent and Frazier states that “a book of disciplines was adopted [by the AME Church] which embodied the same articles of religion and rules as the Wesleyans” (Frazier and Lincoln 1974, 33). Although Sweet Hope is a part of the Free Will Baptist Denomination and has its denominational book of disciplines, research of other Free Will Baptist Churches reveals different approaches for pastoral leadership transitions. Lincoln and Mamiya, when discussing Baptist churches’ national, state, and local affiliations, highlight the further independence of autonomous protestant churches stating that “the motive for coming together in these associations and conventions is fellowship and mutual support; no “book of discipline” or any other denominational authority makes participation obligatory” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 41). Very few of these churches and leaders are seeking hierarchal oversight.

Independence in governance makes a pastoral leadership development and succession plan necessary for Sweet Hope and other autonomous churches. Lincoln and Mamiya continue stating that “characteristically, the preferences of the local pastor determine largely whether there will be any external affiliation or activities and how they will be expressed” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1994, 41). The challenge of this project is to birth a succession plan from the history of the Church, present a paradigm of pastoral leadership development and succession

that maintains the integrity of autonomous churches, and provide a succession plan that makes the transition of pastoral leadership from one pastor to another more homogeneous, biblical and collegial.

Contemporary Foundation

Some of the contemporary thoughts concerning pastoral leadership development and succession address the aspects associated with the rationale, systems, and methodologies of pastoral leadership development and succession. These thoughts contribute to designing a model of leadership succession that is beneficial for and generative to the ministry of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church and the succeeding pastor.

The simplest definition of leadership is birthed out of the foundational principles of leadership in the early church. In the early church, leadership brought people together from varying life experiences and influenced them to fulfill the Missio Dei. Rosenbach and Taylor state that leadership is

The process of the leader and followers engaging in reciprocal influence to achieve a shared purpose. Leadership is all about getting people to work together to make things happen that might not otherwise occur or to prevent things from happening that would ordinarily take place. (Rosenbach and Taylor 2006, 1)

The current leader and the succeeding leader have an important role in making the overall leadership succession process succinct and beneficial. De Pree lends support to the importance of pastoral leadership succession and the role that each person has stating that “the art of leadership requires us to think about the leader-as-steward in terms of relationships: of assets and legacy, of momentum and effectiveness, of civility and values” (De Pree 1989, 10). The

ultimate goal of pastoral leadership succession is to craft a plan that is strategic, succinct, and seamless which encourages ministry synthesis and effectiveness.

Ethical leaders are the representatives of Christ and attract followers with the light of Christ that shines forth through their actions. Fluker understands that new/emerging leaders must be self-aware and argues that “spirituality, ethics, and leadership are linked” to the developmental model that is necessary to shape “a new generation of leaders who are spiritually disciplined, morally anchored, and socially engaged” (Fluker 2009, 11). Patsavos asserts that “as a shepherd of Christ’s Church...the morally blameless life of aspirants to the clergy has been reiterated so emphatically by all the Church’s fathers and teachers that sometimes their statements might be thought exaggerated” (Patsavos 2007, 31). Ethical leaders craft visions that are easily received by their followers.

Contemporary thought emphasizes that there must be ethical consistency, passion for the vision of God, and the constant guidance in every aspect of the pastoral leader’s life and ministry. Pue contends that “sometimes our first attempt at expressing vision creates a blurry image that is not clearly seen—nor understood—by others, including the leader. But wise leaders learn to gather around them trusted mentors who, under God’s guidance, help to sharpen the vision” (Pue 2005, 80). The leader’s primary responsibility is to penetrate the followers’ hearts with God’s vision. The leader is responsible for continually exposing followers to the vision. That process is arduous and laborious making it a necessity to have mentors who are a part of the current leader and the incoming leaders’ lives and ministry.

This sampling of contemporary thoughts concerning pastoral leadership development and succession offers a simple definition of leadership, discusses what are some of the responsibilities of leadership, and some aspects related to leadership succession.

Context

The context of this project is the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. This project is a discovery of pastoral leadership development and succession planning that will assist with the transition of the pastoral leadership position to affect a smooth transition to a new pastor and continued effectiveness of the ministries of the church for the benefit of the people whom the church serves.

Sweet Hope has gone through two pastoral leadership changes in the last thirty years that were not as successful as hoped and they disrupted the flow and effectiveness of the ministries and the harmony within the congregation. The first pastoral change followed the course of passing the church on to the next associate minister of the church who was the most senior or possibly capable minister available at the time the pastor was transitioning out. The second pastoral change followed the candidating process and the selection of the next pastor was done by a vote of the congregation. Both of the processes did not aid the continued effectiveness of the church.

It is first and foremost the contention of this project that all of the members of Sweet Hope have a passion for Christ and a sincere desire to see God's kingdom agenda advanced for the glory of God. The discoveries of this project

do not take away the heart and sincerity that the people of Sweet Hope have for the cause of Christ. This project intends to provide the church with information to assist with the next pastoral transition so that it may be a seamless transition that keeps the members of the church harmoniously working together with one another and the new pastoral leader of the church.

To that end, this project will honor the contributions each person makes to the pastoral leadership transition process, highlight the significance of each person to the pastoral leadership transition process, inform the necessity for the pastoral leadership process, and strive to make the pastoral leadership succession process benevolent and beneficial to the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church family.

Definition of Terms

Leadership – the process of mobilizing, engaging, and directing individuals to accomplish specific tasks and goals. Northouse defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse 2016, 6).

Pastoral leadership succession – the process of developing the next pastoral leader for a smooth transition of pastoral leadership and ensuring the continued synergistic flow of spiritual energy among the pastor and the people to allow the ministry of the church to effectively fulfill the mission and mandate of Jesus Christ. Chand concurs stating that “a good succession plan ensures that your wisdom and knowledge transcend the current generation” (Chand 2008, 7).

Project Goals

The purpose of this project is to discover the extent to which a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland will ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession. The research question is: In what ways can a pastoral leadership succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore Maryland ensure efficient pastoral leadership succession?

1. To discover the extent to which there is a need for succinct pastoral leadership successions.
2. To discover the extent to which theological foundations are considered for pastoral leadership succession.
3. To discover the extent to which biblical examples are used for pastoral leadership succession.
4. To discover the extent to which historical development is considered for pastoral leadership succession.
5. To discover the extent to which a paradigmatic structure benefits the pastoral leadership succession process.
6. To discover the extent to which procedures are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process.
7. To discover the extent to which participants know their responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process.

Design, Procedure, and Assessment

The purpose of this project is to discover a pastoral leadership development and succession plan for the congregation of the Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland that will facilitate future pastoral leadership successions. These discoveries will meet the project goals of understanding the value of pastoral leadership succession planning, presenting the theological impetus for pastoral leadership succession planning, and offering biblical examples and principles of pastoral leadership succession planning. Additionally, these discoveries will become the foundation for pastoral leadership development and succession planning.

The procedure of this project will be to study historical and contemporary models of pastoral leadership succession. Then the project will compile the information and have the information evaluated by pastors and ministry leaders for the thoroughness of the compiled information. The discoveries will be evaluated for their accuracy and truth concerning pastoral leadership succession and the potential of the information to be systematized for developing a pastoral leadership development and succession plan.

The assessment of the discoveries concerning pastoral leadership succession will include a survey given to pastors and ministry leaders. Their assessment will also include a quantitative and qualitative survey developed from the project goals. The survey will use a 5-point Likert Scale to measure the discoveries' biblical, theological, and practical appropriateness. There will also be

seven open-ended questions to offer further clarification of respondents' assessment of the discoveries.

Personal Goals

I am utilizing the D.Min. process for several reasons to enhance my efficacy in ministry. Of course, the main reason is to develop a better understanding of the pastoral leadership development and succession process. I am also expecting from this process some personal enhancement that will help me to more thoroughly and capably serve the people of Sweet Hope. The accomplishment of my personal goals listed below will help me to become more balanced in my personal life which will in turn affect my pastoral capabilities. My personal goals are:

1. I will be consistent with practicing my Sabbath by abstaining from activities that interfere with my Sabbath.
2. I will practice self-care by giving prioritized proportionate attention to family, ministry, and self.
3. I will nurture my relationships with my spiritual father in ministry by committing time to him.

Field Consultant

My Field Consultant is Dr. C. Anthony Hunt. He is the pastor of the Epworth United Methodist Church in Woodlawn, Maryland. He is also a cohort leader and professor at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Hunt has already been very helpful by making himself accessible for questions and by referring me to information that helped me with previous classes and the subject matter of my project. I believe his passion for educating Christian scholars will benefit me as I move forward in the doctoral process.

References

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1995. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Chand, Samuel R., 2008. *Planning Your Succession: Preparing for Your Future*. Highland Park: Mall Publishing.
- Cwiekowski, Frederick J. 2018. *The Church: Theology In History*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- De Pree, Max. 1989. *Leadership is an Art*. New York: Doubleday.
- Fitts, Leroy. 1985. *A History of Black Baptists*. Nashville: Broadman Press.
- Fluker, Walter Earl. 2009. *Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Frazier, E. Franklin and C. Eric Lincoln. 1974. *The Negro Church in America/The Black Church Since Frazier*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Keck, Leander E. ed. 1998. *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes*. Volume II. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- _____. 1999. *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes*. Volume III. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Kelly, Geoffrey B. and F. Burton Nelson. 2003. *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya. 1994. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. 2005. *The Reformation: A History*. New York: Penguin Random House.
- Northouse, Peter G. 2016. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Olson, Dennis T. 1996. *Numbers: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Nashville: John Knox Press.
- Patsavos, Lewis J. 2007. *A Noble Task: Entry into the Clergy in the First Five Centuries*. Trans. Norman Russell. Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press.

- Pue, Carson. 2005. *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Rosenbach, William E. and Robert L. Taylor. 2006. *Contemporary Issues in Leadership*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Senior, Donald. 2016. *The Gift of Administration: New Testament Foundations for the Vocation of Administrative Service*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- Tuell, Steven S. 2001. *First and Second Chronicles: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Nashville: John Knox Press.

APPENDIX TWO
ASSESSMENT TOOL

Survey

Please provide the following personal information:

How long have you been a member of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church?

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5-15 years
- ☐ 16-25 years
- ☐ 26 or more years

Gender

- ☐ F
- ☐ M

Education

- ☐ High School Graduate
- ☐ College Graduate
- ☐ Professional or Trade School
- ☐ Postgraduate

Other _____

Which BEST describes your status within the congregation of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church?

- ☐ Member of the Official Board
- ☐ Officer of a ministry or auxiliary
- ☐ Member of a ministry or auxiliary
- ☐ Regular attending member
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Other _____

Have you ever served on a pastoral search committee?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please circle the number that pertains to your level of agreement on the statement.

See scale below.

5 -- Strongly Agree

4 -- Slightly Agree

3 -- Neutral

2 -- Slightly Disagree

1 -- Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is a reliable transitional procedure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is consistent with biblical principles. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Biblical examples of pastoral leadership succession influence the current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is consistent with historical pastoral leadership succession processes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process benefits the congregation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The procedure of developing the next pastoral leader is the most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I know my responsibilities in the pastoral leadership succession process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. The biblical example of mentoring the next pastoral leader is the process used by Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please circle the number that pertains to your level of agreement on the statement.

See scale below.

5 -- Strongly Agree

4 -- Slightly Agree

3 -- Neutral

2 -- Slightly Disagree

1 -- Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church considers the biblical mission of the church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church creates a positive morale among the church membership. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I know my responsibilities are necessary for the pastoral leadership succession process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. The procedure of following a pastoral leadership succession plan is the most beneficial pastoral leadership succession process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process follows specific steps for a positive outcome. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church is consistent with the pastoral leadership succession processes of the last three pastoral leadership transitions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I know my designated role in the pastoral leadership succession process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. The procedure of succeeding pastoral leadership from one family member to the next family member is the most beneficial pastoral leadership succession process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please circle the number that pertains to your level of agreement on the statement.

See scale below.

5 -- Strongly Agree

4 -- Slightly Agree

3 -- Neutral

2 -- Slightly Disagree

1 -- Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. The current structure of the pastoral leadership succession process strengthens the bonds of unity among the members of the church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church relies on the historical process used in previous transitions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. The biblical example of succeeding pastoral leadership as God directs is the process used by Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. The current pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church reflects the Holy Spirit's influence on the transition process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. The current pastoral leadership succession process for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church helps to maintain the smooth operation of the church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22. What do you consider to be your responsibilities to the pastoral leadership succession process (list at least two)?
23. Which procedures do you think are most beneficial to the pastoral leadership succession process at Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church? Why?
24. How do you think a structured pastoral leadership succession process will benefit Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church?
25. What historical trends have you observed in the pastoral leadership succession process of Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church (list at least two)?
26. List one or two reasons why a succinct pastoral leadership succession plan is needed for Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church. Explain.
27. How are biblical foundations considered for pastoral leadership succession at Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church? Explain.
28. What biblical examples influence pastoral leadership succession at Sweet Hope Free Will Baptist Church (list at least two)?

References

- Adamo, David Tuesday. 2006. *Biblical Interpretation in African Perspective*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- African Methodist Episcopal Church. 2012. *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*. Nashville: AMEC Publishing House.
- American Baptist Churches USA. 2023. *10 Facts You Should Know About American Baptists*. <https://www.abc-usa.org/10facts/> (accessed October 2, 2023).
- _____. 2017. *When Your Pastor Departs, Transition Ministries Holds the Key to a Bright Future*. <https://www.abc-usa.org/2017/03/when-your-pastor-departs-transition-ministries-holds-the-key-to-a-bright-future/> (accessed October 6, 2023).
- Anyabwile, Thabiti M. 2007. *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Banks, Adelle M. 2014. All Pastors Are Interim Pastors. *Sojourners*. <https://sojo.net/articles/all-pastors-are-interim-pastors> (accessed January 31, 2023).
- Barna. 2019. Planned Pastoral Transitions Lead to Better Outcomes. *Barna Group*. <https://www.barna.com/research/pastoral-transitions> (accessed January 31, 2023).
- Bass, Dorothy C. and Craig Dykstra. 2008. *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans.
- Bellinger, W.H. Jr. 2001. *Leviticus Numbers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Boyer, Stuart W. 2019. *Biblical Leadership Development: Principles for Developing Organizational Leaders at Every Level*. Indianapolis: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Brown, Vicki. 2015. Churches Have Several Models for Choosing a New Pastor. *Word & Way*. <https://wordandway.org/2015/03/25/churches-have-several-models-for-choosing-a-new-pastor> (accessed September 25, 2023).
- Briggs, Richard S. 2018. *Theological Hermeneutics and the Book of Numbers as Christian Scripture*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press.

- Brockman, David R. and Ruben L.F. Habito, eds. 2010. *The Gospel Among Religions: Christian Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith World*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Carmichael, Calum. 2012. *The Book of Numbers*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Chand, Samuel R. and Dale C. Bronner. 2008. *Planning Your Succession*. Highland Park: Mall Publishing.
- Clarke, Andrew D. 2008. *A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership*. New York: T&T Clark Publishing.
- Coles, Robert. 1998. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Cone, James H. 2011. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Courau, Thierry-Marie, Stefanie Knauss and Enrico Galavotti, ed. 2018. *The Church of the Future*. London: SCM Press.
- Cwiekowski, Frederick J. 2018. *The Church: Theology in History*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- De Pree, Max. 1989. *Leadership is an Art*. New York: Doubleday.
- Dilday, Robert. 2009. Looking for leaders: Training the next generation of ministers requires new models. *Word and Way*.
<https://wordandway.org/2009/07/27/looking-for-leaders-training-the-next-generation-of-ministers-requires-new-models/> (accessed October 17, 2023).
- Dirksen, Peter B. 2005. *1 Chronicles: Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Leuven-Dudley: Peeters Publishers.
- Dockery, David S., ed. 2011. *Christian Leadership Essentials: A Handbook for Managing Christian Organizations*. Nashville: B&H Publishing.
- Dvorak, Katherine L. 1991. *An African-American Exodus*. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing.
- Eims, LeRoy. 1978. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. 1997. *Constitutions Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.pdf*.
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Constitutions_Bylaws_and_Continuing_Resolutions_of_the_ELCA.pdf?_ga=2.202764503.793280261.1696259303-289533777.1696098243 (accessed September 29, 2023).
- _____. 2023. *Rostered Ministers of the ELCA*.
<https://elca.org/About/Leadership/Rostered> (accessed September 29, 2023).
- Fitts, Leroy. 1985. *A History of Black Baptists*. Nashville: Broadman Press.
- _____. 2016. *A History of the African American Church*. North Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Fluker, Walter Earl. 2009. *Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Frazier, E. Franklin and C. Eric Lincoln. 1974. *The Negro Church in America/The Black Church Since Frazier*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Gelder, Craig Van and Dwight J. Zscheile. 2018. *Participating In God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Gollwitzer, Helmut. 1994. *Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Gunton, Colin E. and Daniel W. Hardy. 2019. *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*. Edinburgh: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark.
- Harris, James Henry. 2002. *The Courage to Lead: Leadership in the African American Urban Church*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Harvey, Paul. 2011. *Through the Storm, Through the Night*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Hunt, C. Anthony. 2023. Interview by Terry G. Thornton. Baltimore. September 30.
- Jarick, John. 2007. *1 Chronicles*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. 2007. *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Johnson, Keith L. 2015. *Theology as Discipleship*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Jonker, Louis C. 2013. *1 & 2 Chronicles*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Keck, Leander E. ed. 1998. *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes*. Volume II. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

_____. 1999. *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes*. Volume III. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

_____. 1995. *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes*. Volume IX. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Kelly, Geoffrey B. and F. Burton Nelson. 2003. *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Kerr, Nathan R. 2009. *Christ, History and Apocalyptic: The Politics of Christian Mission*. Eugene: Cascade Publishing.

Kooi, Cornelis van der and Gijsbert van den Brink. 2017. *Christian Dogmatics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya. 1994. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lovelace, Jr. Parnell M. 2014. *Planning and Implementing Successful Pastoral Succession*.
<https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1222&context=gcrj> (accessed September 30, 2023).

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. 2005. *The Reformation: A History*. New York: Penguin Random House.

Mays, James L. 1982. *Leviticus and Numbers: The Layman's Bible Commentary*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

McKenna, David L. 2014. *The Succession Principle: How Leaders Make Leaders*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s8993911&db=nlebk&AN=942970&site=ehost-live.

McKinney, Lora-Ellen. 2004. *View From The Pew: What Preachers Can Learn From Church Members*. Valley Forge: Judson Press.

- McKim, Donald K. 1996. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster Press.
- Milgrom, Jacob. 2004. *Leviticus*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Miller, William Thomas. 2013. *A Compact Study of Numbers*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Modine, Mitchel. 2014. *1 & 2 Chronicles: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press.
- Mohler, Albert. 2012. *The Conviction to Lead*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. 1997. *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*. Minneapolis: First Fortress Press.
- Mundinger, Marsha. n.d. *Project Wittenberg An Open Letter to The Christian Nobility by Martin Luther (1483-1546) I. The Three Walls of the Romanists*
<https://christian.net/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/web/nblty-03.html>
- Mullins, Tom. 2015. *Passing the Leadership Baton*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing.
- Nelsen, Hart M., Raytha L. Yokley and Anne K. Nelsen. 1971. *The Black Church in America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Northouse, Peter G. 2016. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. 7th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- O'Collins, Gerald. 2015. *Christology: Origins, Developments, Debates*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Okesson, Gregg. 2020. *A Public Missiology: How Local Churches Witness to a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Olson, Dennis T. 1996. *Numbers: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Nashville: John Knox Press.
- Ott, Craig and Gene Wilson. 2011. *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Patsavos, Lewis J. 2007. *A Noble Task: Entry into the Clergy in the First Five Centuries*. Trans. Norman Russell. Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press.

- Pelt, Michael R. 1996. *A History of Original Free Will Baptist*. Mount Olive, North Carolina: Mount Olive College Press.
- Placher, William C. 2001. *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith*. Louisville: John Knox Press.
- Plummer, Robert L., and John Mark Terry. 2012. *Paul's Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Pue, Carson. 2005. *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Rausch, Thomas P. 2005. *Towards A Truly Catholic Church: An Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- Rosenbach, William E. and Robert L. Taylor. 2006. *Contemporary Issues in Leadership*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Sakenfeld, Katherine Doob. 1995. *Numbers: Journeying with God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Senior, Donald. 2016. *The Gift of Administration: New Testament Foundations for the Vocation of Administrative Service*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- Sprinkle, Joe M. 2015. *Leviticus and Numbers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Stubbs, David L. 2009. *Numbers*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. 2015. *The Thiselton Companion to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- _____. 2015. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Tuell, Steven S. 2001. *First and Second Chronicles: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Nashville: John Knox Press.
- United Methodist Church. 2012. *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House.
- Vanderbloemen, William and Warren Bird. 2014. *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Walker, Andrew G. and Robin A. Parry. 2014. *Deep Church Rising: The Third Schism and the Recovery of Christian Orthodoxy*. Eugene: Cascade Books.

Weese, Carolyn and J. Russell Crabtree. 2004. *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Transition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

White, Quinten. 2023. Interview by Terry G. Thornton. Baltimore. October 11.

Williams, Rowan. 2010. *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Louisville: John Knox Press.

Willimon, William H. 1988. *Acts: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Nashville: John Knox Press.

Wirzba, Norman. 2015. *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Woodward, JR. 2012. *Creating A Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.