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A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry Contexts

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A MODEL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
IN URBAN MINISTRY CONTEXTS

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This thesis project, "A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry Contexts" and my work in the doctoral program at Bethel Theological Seminary and University have been accomplished in the context of my village—my family, the church parishioners that I serve and lead as pastor, the academic institutions where I teach, and my students.

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and inspiration to be my best and give my very best to the church and world. To God be

the glory.

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ABSTRACT

The context of this thesis project, "A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry Contexts," is the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry (BCCM) in Baltimore, Maryland. The BCCM was formed in July 2020 and is comprised of three urban United Methodist churches—Epworth Chapel UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial UMC.

This project aimed to investigate the need for a transformational leadership development model for persons (laity and clergy) serving in urban ministry contexts and to develop and enact a process for developing transformational leaders in the BCCM. It was proposed that up to 60 key leaders from the three churches would participate in various components of the leadership development process that was arrived at through this research, and that this model could be replicated and used in other urban ministry settings outside of the BCCM.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my ancestors and village. I stand on my ancestors' broad, strong, wise, and loving shoulders, and my village continues to be the wind beneath my wings.

INTRODUCTION

*Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the L*ORD *for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper (Jer. 29:7).*

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the L*ORD*, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future with hope (Jer. 29:11).*

I am a native of Washington, DC born at Freedman's Hospital at Howard University where my father was a college student at the time of my birth, while my mother was attending another college in the city at the time. I was raised and educated in Southeast Washington, DC in a section of the city known as Anacostia, and in my teen years, my family moved to the Riggs Park community in Northeast Washington, DC. My early years shaped me and inculcated in me a love for the city—the richness of its life, culture, and diversity. I attended college and seminary in urban settings in College Park, MD (the University of Maryland), Washington, DC (Wesley Theological Seminary), and Baltimore, MD (St. Mary's Seminary and University). For most of my years in ministry, I have served in urban contexts in Baltimore, MD, and Washington, DC.

I first remember becoming aware of the complexities of urban life as an elementary-school-age child in 1968 when, on April 4th of that year, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, TN. I witnessed my hometown, Washington, DC erupt in the flames of protest in response to King's assassination. I witnessed members of the Army National Guard move into my community for several days. Across the city, stores were looted, and buildings and homes were destroyed.

I remember being frightened by the rioting and the presence of Army National Guard troops as they traversed our neighborhood, just a few short blocks from our home.

But I also remember having a sense of safety and security with my family and community's ongoing protection and support. Family and community are everything to me. The lasting image from this experience in the aftermath of King's death has served as the impetus for my passion for the city and urban ministry, and a commitment to helping improve conditions for urban churches and communities over the course of my ministerial career as a pastor and teacher.

As a pastor, having served three churches in the greater Baltimore area, as a United Methodist district superintendent with administrative and missional leadership responsibilities with 88 Baltimore area churches (of the Baltimore-Harford and Baltimore Metropolitan United Methodist Districts), as a denominational executive resourcing urban congregations from Maine to West Virginia with the Multi-Ethnic Center for Ministry of the United Methodist Church (UMC), and as a teacher at three urban seminaries (Wesley Seminary in DC, St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH), I have had an opportunity to serve in several urban settings, and teach several academic courses in urban ministry, community engagement, and leadership for those serving in urban ministry settings. I have also designed and led several urban ministry convocations in Baltimore, and conducted numerous seminars, workshops, consultations, and webinars with churches, ministries, and nonprofit organizations in Baltimore, Washington, DC, and in other cities across the United States and the world.

My passion for leadership development and interest in the impact of effective, transformational leadership on organizational vitality, thriving, and growth dates back to my earlier formal education. Having earned a Master of Business Administration

(Management) degree from Troy State University (AL), and advanced credentialing in management and leadership as a Certified Manager through the Institute of Certified Professional Managers at James Madison University (VA), along with completing the University of Oxford's (UK) Executive Leadership Program, and the United State Army Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, GA, among other military schools and leadership programs and courses—I have developed an interest in devising approaches to developing transformational leaders in various organizational settings.

I am also a Certified Professional Leadership/Life Coach having completed training in Co-Active leadership coaching with the Coaches Training Institute, San Rafael, CA, and the Life Coaching Certification Program with the Life Coaching Institute, Costa Mesa, CA. Both of these programs are International Coach Federation (ICF) affiliated and approved. I have completed additional Advanced Leadership Coaching Strategies training at the Harvard University Extension School, Cambridge, MA. As a leadership/life coach and consultant, I have worked with over 125 religious and non-profit leaders and performed over 1250 hours of leadership/life coaching, with a focus on visioning, strategic planning, turnaround strategies, organizational change, multicultural change, and developing transformational leadership practices. I have experienced what I sense to be the transformational impact that leadership/life coaching can have on leaders and organizations, but have not had a means of qualitatively or quantitatively testing and measuring my assumptions and observations. The doctoral program at Bethel Seminary and University and this thesis project have provided the means to do so.

From 2004 to 2012, I served as the United Methodist district superintendent in Baltimore. One day in 2007, the bishop called me into his office. As my direct supervisor, the bishop's question to me was, simply, "*Tony, what are we (you) going to do about Baltimore?*" That year, there were 278 people murdered in Baltimore. Each of those was a person whose loved ones—parents, spouses, children, siblings, and friends were left to grieve their loss.

The corollaries to the spiking murder rate in Baltimore in 2007 were ongoing increases in poverty rates in east, west, and south Baltimore, underachievement in most public schools, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and high rates of drug and alcohol addiction. And the corollaries to these community challenges were ongoing signs of decline in many United Methodist churches across Baltimore as evidenced by a decline in worship attendance, membership, community engagement, financial stability, and the closure of several United Methodist congregations in Baltimore in the preceding ten years. And the bishop's question to me was a simple, but not so simple one— "*Tony, what are we (you) going to do about Baltimore?*"

As a result of the bishop's question to me, a strategic ministry plan for Baltimore emerged over the next several months, which was embedded with a promise. With God's leading, we named the plan "Hope for the City," an initiative designed to strengthen churches and communities across Baltimore. One of the interesting things about the "Hope for the City" strategic ministry plan was that many people thought it was unreasonable for us to claim that God had given us hope for Baltimore amid the apparently insurmountable challenges and apparent hopelessness that the city faced in 2007.

But, amidst this apparent hopelessness, we are assured that God never leaves us with a predicament with no promise and hope. Jeremiah realized this, and God gave him a word to encourage the people. In the nearly hopeless situation in which Israel found themselves about 2600 years ago, Jeremiah said, "*seek the peace of the city where you find yourselves*" (Jer. 29:7). Then Jeremiah concluded with another word from the Lord, "*For I know the plans I have for you… plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future with hope"* (Jer. 29:11).

For me, an ongoing question is what are the best approaches for training and developing leaders to serve in urban ministry settings, especially for lay and clergy persons who may not attend seminary. This question is raised against the backdrop of the excellent ministry that many leaders and churches are already doing in urban contexts like Baltimore, and considering existing leadership training. Another question concerns how to best apply learnings from biblical figures like Nehemiah and Paul who performed ministry in urban contexts. And how can existing research and scholarship in transformational leadership development be used for developing transformational leaders for effective service in urban ministry contexts?

This thesis project unites two of my academic and ministry interests and practices—transformational leadership and urban ministry. In Chapter One, the problem and context for this thesis project will be defined. Chapter Two will provide a biblical and theological basis for the research through a study of the lives and ministries of Nehemiah and Paul, and through an analysis of biblical and theological perspectives on the city and transformational leadership. Chapter Three will provide a review of cognate literature in the fields of urban studies, urban ministry, transformational leadership, and

leading change. Chapter Four will provide the scope of transformational leadership development in urban contexts and offer an overview of the research methodology and approach used for the study. Chapter Five will provide an overview of data treatment and analysis, along with the findings from the research. Chapter Six will provide an evaluation of the project, with recommendations and next steps. And Chapter Seven will provide personal reflections, personal insights from the research, and suggestions for future research.

  The overarching purpose is to investigate the need for a model for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts and to arrive at a framework for a process/model for transformational leadership development for laity and clergy serving in urban ministry contexts.

CHAPTER ONE

The Problem and Its Context

Statement of the Problem

The problem this project will address is the need for transformational leadership development training for leaders (clergy and laity) serving in urban ministry contexts, specifically among the three churches that comprise the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry (Epworth Chapel UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial UMC) in Baltimore, MD. In response to this problem, the researcher will (a) explore biblical models of transformational leadership of Nehemiah and Paul, (b) review relevant literature on characteristics of urban ministry and transformational leadership, (c) conduct a qualitative case study on the three BCCM churches to determine training needs for developing transformational leaders, and (d) develop a framework for a transformational leadership development model for leaders (clergy and laity) serving in urban ministry contexts.

Definition of Terms

Anchor Church: In the United Methodist Church, is designated as the lead church in a cooperative ministry due to its relative congregational vitality.

Asset-mapping: A systematic investigative process through which a defined community's assets (resources and strengths) are identified for addressing a need or problem in the community.

Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry (BCCM): A cooperative ministry comprised of three churches—Epworth Chapel United Methodist Church, Sharp Street

Memorial United Methodist Church, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial United Methodist Church—in Baltimore, MD. (See Appendix A)

Cooperative Ministry: A form of ministry where several distinct local churches, ministries, or organizations collaborate with the sharing of people, places, and processes in the performance of ministries to capitalize on the strengths of each of the separate entities.

Discipleship: The process by which followers of Jesus become more like Jesus.

Leadership Coaching: A one-to-one or group process for leaders designed to develop more effective leaders and healthier organizations.

Leadership Development: A process including, but not limited to, encouraging character formation, theological training, and developing practical skills to bring out the full potential in people.

Local Church: An assembly of believers who gather to carry out God's mission and purposes in the areas of worship, discipleship, fellowship, mission and outreach, and evangelism.

Church Members: Persons who have identified themselves as belonging to a local church through a formal membership orientation process, and reception into the local church, and who thereby commit to serving and supporting the church with their time, talent, and money.

SMART Goals: Personal and organizational goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

SWOT Analysis: A planning process for assessing an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Transactional Leadership: A practice of leadership where the follower serves the leader.

Transformational Leadership: A process that changes and transforms people, and is seen when leaders' behaviors influence followers and inspires them to perform beyond their perceived abilities. As people are transformed, organizations are, by extension, transformed.[1]

United Methodist Church (UMC): A large mainline Christian protestant denomination with over seven million members in the United States, and over three million members in other nations.

Urban Ministry: A way of understanding God, based upon the dynamics of the city that involves a theological praxis that seeks to enhance the quality of life for all creation.[2]

Urbanization: Typically understood as the process of interlocking social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and spatial characteristics that reflect the environment and ethos of the city.[3]

Delimitations of the Problem

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[1] Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* 8th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2019)*,* 161.

[2] Ronald E. Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 8.

[3] Peters, 26.

The research will be limited to a study of the transformational leadership qualities found in two biblical figures—Nehemiah and Paul through a study of the Book of Nehemiah and the Pauline Epistles.

The research will be limited to a study of ministry in urban contexts.

The research will be limited to the study of churches in the Baltimore, MD area, specifically the churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry—Epworth Chapel UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial UMC.

The research will be limited to examining the leadership development of adults (+18) who are lay and clergy persons, and who are members or serve at one of the BCCM churches.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that the Bible and Christian theology are sources of wisdom and guidance for informing transformational leadership development in churches in contemporary contexts.

The second assumption is that persons in urban contexts have gifts that can be developed for congregational effectiveness, vitality, and growth.

The third assumption is that the local church is essential to God's plan and mission in developing transformational leaders.

The fourth assumption is that churches can implement strategies for identifying, nurturing, and developing transformational leadership.

The fifth assumption is that transformational leadership is a holistic and ongoing process.

Subproblems from Response

The first subproblem is to study the lives and ministries of Nehemiah and Paul to identify the qualities they possessed as transformational leaders.

The second subproblem is to determine what can be learned, adopted, and adapted from urban ministry and transformational leadership research from sectors outside the church through the study of relevant literature.

The third subproblem is to determine what can be learned, through the conduct of a qualitative case study on the three BCCM churches, to determine the training needs for developing transformational leaders in urban ministry contexts.

The fourth subproblem is to determine a framework for a transformational leadership development model for leaders (pastors and laity) serving in urban ministry contexts.

Setting of the Project

The setting of this project is the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry (BCCM) in Baltimore, MD. The BCCM was formed in July 2020 and is comprised of three urban United Methodist churches. The mission and purpose of the BCCM are to devise and implement approaches for cooperative ministry among three churches and their respective communities, with the expectation of maximizing personnel and property resources, as well as capitalizing on existing and future ministry/programmatic opportunities among the churches, to more fully impact the communities in which the churches exist.

The geographic boundaries of the BCCM encompass 18 square miles in the greater Baltimore area (Baltimore City and County). The senior pastor of Epworth

Chapel UMC is assigned as the supervising pastor for the BCCM and works with four pastors assigned to the BCCM churches, along with program and administrative staff, and laity teams. The supervising pastor's specific responsibilities with the BCCM are—leadership coaching of the pastoral team and key programmatic leadership, leadership development of leaders in each of the churches, and facilitating strategic planning and shared ministry development. The supervising pastor of the BCCM is the researcher for this thesis project.

The three churches which comprise the BCCM are Epworth Chapel UMC (located in the Lochearn community in northwest Baltimore County), Sharp Street Memorial UMC (located in the Upton community in west Baltimore City), and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial UMC (located in the Dickey Hill community in northwest Baltimore County). Epworth Chapel is designated as the anchor church for the BCCM because of its size (over 1200 members and 53 active ministries), relative strength, and overall ministry. The senior pastor of Epworth Chapel has served in this role since 2011, in addition to serving as supervising pastor of the BCCM since 2020.

Epworth Chapel UMC was founded in 1956 in the, then, upper-middle-class suburban Lochearn community. Today, it is an urban congregation with more than 1200 members. Over its 66-year history, Epworth Chapel has gone through several demographic transitions, and today is multicultural, multi-national church, with members who were born in at least 15 different nations—mostly in Africa and the Caribbean.

Over the past eleven years, the church has experienced renewed vitality as evidenced by significant growth in worship attendance (an average of over 325 persons per week) and membership (over 200 new professing members have joined the church

since 2011), expansion of program ministries (over 50 active ministries), facility improvements (including the retirement of a $1 million capital debt in 2020), engagement in two major strategic planning processes (*Epworth 2020 and EpworthDream 2030*), and organizational restructuring, with a focus on team-ministry. New ministries/programs that have been initiated at Epworth Chapel since 2011 include:

- It Takes a Village—an initiative to engage, connect, and partner with educational institutions in the community surrounding the church, including a bi-weekly tutoring program with Woodmoor Elementary School
- Fishes and Loaves—a comprehensive ministry aimed at eradicating hunger in the community
- Two new weekly Bible Study groups
- EpPrayer—a weekly telephone prayer ministry
- "Harvest"—a young adult praise, and worship team
- "Friday Nite Fire"—an alternative worship experience for younger persons
- The Dancing Disciples Adult Liturgical Dance Team
- The SOUL Cafe—a weekly gathering and community meal aimed at promoting fellowship for persons in the church and community
- The Youth Breakfast Club—a Saturday alternative ministry gathering for young people
- Enhanced multi-media and social media ministries.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2022, Epworth Chapel, through its Mission, Outreach, and Faith in Action Team (MOFAT) and emergency food distribution center, in partnership with the Maryland Food Bank, was able to distribute over 300,000 pounds of food to members of the church and the broader community. A recent ministry focus of Epworth Chapel has been on discipleship development, with an emphasis on six areas of discipleship for each church member—worship, prayer, Bible Study, service, giving, and friendship/fellowship. In 2020, Epworth Chapel completed a feasibility study to determine its strategic building and ministry needs and opportunities as the church moves into its next 66 years of ministry. A building project has begun and is projected to be a $4-5 million project. Identified opportunities for growth are in developing a sustainable model for identifying, nurturing, and developing transformational leadership and more fully connecting with the community.

Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church is a historic urban African-American congregation founded in 1787, making it the oldest African-American church in Baltimore. It has a social justice identity, strong lay leadership, and deep roots in Methodism and the Upton community of West Baltimore. Frederick Douglass was a member of Sharp Street Methodist Episcopal Church in the 19th century.[4] The church moved to its current location in the inner-city Upton community in 1889, and on July 21, 1982, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior.

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[4] Dorothy Daugherty, *The History of Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church* (Baltimore, MD: Sharp Street Memorial UMC, April 20, 2019), 3.

Sharp Street Memorial Church has a rich history of civil rights activism and spearheaded numerous efforts to advance education for African Americans in the 19th century, including serving as the founding location in 1867 of the Centenary Bible Institute, which eventually became Morgan State University, now one of the leading historically Black universities in America. The church currently has an average of 50 persons in worship. Lydia's House serves as a primary outreach ministry of Sharp Street Memorial, offering weekly meals, a clothing giveaway, and a blanket ministry for unhoused persons in the community. Sharp Street also has a strong partnership with Furman L. Templeton Academy, the neighborhood elementary school. Identified opportunities for growth and development are in the areas of evangelism and radical hospitality, reaching new and younger people, leadership development, and visioning and strategy development for sustainable growth.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial United Methodist Church is in a strategic location in northwest Baltimore, on the edge of Baltimore City and County in the Dickie Hill community. The church was founded as Hillsdale Methodist Episcopal Church in 1929 and was renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial United Methodist Church in 2004. It has several active community ministries, including a partnership with Dickie Hill Elementary School, and an on-site Child Development Center, and has recently completed facility upgrades to support summer youth programs. The church currently has an average worship attendance of 25 persons. Opportunities for development and growth are in leadership development, developing a strategic plan, and organizational restructuring to engage the community and grow the congregation more effectively.

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

The researcher was born, reared, and educated in Washington, DC. Growing up in the city played an important role in shaping whom the researcher has become, and the incumbent call and commitment to urban ministry and teaching in urban contexts through today. Much of the researcher's early faith development also occurred in Washington, DC in urban churches, including Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in southeast DC, Metropolitan Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in northwest DC, and Christ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in northeast DC, along with Rose Chapel Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA.

It was in these urban religious contexts that the researcher came to realize that ministry in urban contexts entails the integration of theology and sociology, given the dynamic nature of urban life. The researcher now realizes that formation and modeling for leadership in the church and community occurred through observation of the pastors and many of the laypersons (lay speakers, committee chairs, Christian educators, deacons, and missionaries) in these urban ministry settings.

Attending college (the University of Maryland and Troy University, AL) and seminary (Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC, and St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore) in urban settings has also informed the researcher's ongoing commitments to living, leading, working, and seeking to impact life in urban contexts.

Since 1992, the researcher has served in ministry in the greater Baltimore, MD area as a United Methodist senior pastor of three congregations (Ames UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Epworth Chapel UMC), supervising pastor of a cooperative ministry—made up of three churches (the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry) and denominational executive (district superintendent of the Baltimore-Harford and

Baltimore Metropolitan Districts). Additionally, since 1998, the researcher has taught

theology, including urban theology and ministry, in four urban institutions—Goucher

College, Baltimore, St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, Wesley Theological

Seminary, Washington, DC, and United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH.

As a researcher, teacher, and leadership consultant/coach with churches and

leaders in various parts of the United States and the world—from New York to

Birmingham and Montgomery, AL, and from Barbados and Bermuda to Zimbabwe—an

overarching key observation that informs this thesis project is the need for comprehensive

models for developing clergy and laypersons to more faithfully and effectively lead in

urban ministry settings given the unique needs and opportunities that present themselves

in these contexts.

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

The researcher was appointed as senior pastor of Epworth Chapel in 2011, and as

supervising pastor of the BCCM in 2020. At various points and to varying degrees over

the past 20 years, each of the BCCM churches and their surrounding communities has

gone through demographic transitions from several perspectives—economically, racially-

ethnically, and in terms of age—among others. During this time, each of the three BCCM

churches has experienced some degree of decline in worship attendance, membership,

finances, and community engagement.

With identified needs to revitalize the BCCM churches, and strategically position

them to effectively engage the needs of their broader communities in the future, there

needs to be a concerted effort across the churches to strengthen processes directed at

identifying, nurturing, and developing transformational leaders to serve in each of the

existing and future ministries of the churches. This thesis project is designed to address the ongoing needs and opportunities for well-developed transformational leadership in the churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry.

The Importance of the Project to the Church at Large

From 2004-12, the researcher served as the United Methodist district superintendent for the Baltimore Metropolitan area (the Baltimore-Harford and Baltimore Metropolitan Districts). This role involved providing strategic, missional, and administrative leadership with 88 pastors and urban churches of various sizes, in the various communities in the greater Baltimore area. In this role, the researcher was also responsible for leading a project team in developing and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan aimed at strengthening churches and communities in Baltimore.

The strategic ministry plan that emerged and was implemented in 2008 was entitled "Hope for the City," a ten-point ministry plan that was to include the "Hope Academy," which was to be designed to train and develop urban lay and clergy leaders across the Baltimore region, and was expected to be a model that could be replicated in urban ministry contexts where United Methodist churches exist across the United States, and perhaps in other nations. Although several of the components of the Hope Academy were implemented, including an annual Baltimore Urban Ministry Convocation, leadership coaching for pastors, and training in community organizing for pastors and laity—a comprehensive and sustainable model for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban contexts was never developed. It is intended that the model for transformational leadership development arrived at through this thesis

project could be useful in local and judicatory urban contexts across the United Methodist Church, and perhaps in other denominations.

The Importance of the Research to the Academic Community

There is an observable lack of literature about the application of transformational leadership in urban contexts, and there is a lack of a transformational leadership model for urban ministry leaders. It is intended that the model for transformational leadership development arrived at through this project could be used in seminary practical theology courses and programs in Urban Ministry.

The Research Methodology

This project will be qualitative in nature. The main research method employed will be a case study involving the three BCCM churches (Epworth Chapel UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial UMC). John Creswell defines case study research as that which involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context).[5] The primary data collection tools used in this project will be one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

One-on-one interviews will be conducted with 16 leaders (12 laypersons and 4 clergypersons) who are a part of the BCCM Parish Action Team. As the members of this team lead in steering the collective work of the BCCM, they will likely be able to provide critical insight into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)

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[5] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 73.

incumbent in the overall leadership climate within the three BCCM churches, and give direction as to what a transformational leadership development model that emerges from this project should entail.

Two focus groups will be conducted with leaders in the BCCM churches who are not members of the Parish Action Team. The focus groups will be designed to discuss and give insight into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the current leadership climate in the BCCM churches and help determine steps for developing a comprehensive, sustainable, scalable, and replicable transformational leadership development model that could be used in the three BCCM churches, and with other urban churches and leaders.

Finally, site visits will be conducted with three additional urban churches in Baltimore that have similar general characteristics (size and community type) as the three BCCM churches. Site visits will involve observation and conversation with clergy and laity, and studying available online information regarding these congregations, including their websites. The objective of the three site visits is to compare their ministries with the three BCCM churches and glean insights into best practices that could help develop the transformational leadership development model that emerges from this project.

CHAPTER TWO

Biblical and Theological Basis

Introduction

Several biblical figures and their leadership shed light on the dynamics of transformational Christian leadership in the 21st century. Two of these figures are Nehemiah who led in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, and Paul who led in missional ministry and church planting during the early church era. In this chapter, the leadership of Nehemiah and Paul will be analyzed, through a study of the Book of Nehemiah and the Pauline Epistles, to glean insights into transformational leadership and ministry in urban contexts in the 21st century. Additionally, biblical-theological perspectives of urban ministry and transformational leadership will be investigated.

Nehemiah and Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem

The case of Nehemiah is a study of how leadership, teamwork, and collaboration can result in accomplishing challenging organizational tasks and provides insight into transformational leadership and ministry in urban contexts in the 21st century. The book of Nehemiah forms a unity with the preceding book of Ezra. Most scholars believe that it is likely that Ezra-Nehemiah was compiled as one book by Ezra, Nehemiah, or someone else using the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah along with other sources.[6] As a sequel to the book of Ezra, the book of Nehemiah reports the third return to Jerusalem in 445 BCE.

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[6] Mervin Breneman, *An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther,* The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publisher, 1993), 37.

According to Mervin Breneman, Ezra stresses the religious restoration of the remnant when writing about the erection of the altar, the building of the temple, and reading and keeping the Law (the Torah).[7] The book of Ezra indicates that the Law was not read to bring a reform; that was already begun earlier by Ezra's prayer and confession. Rather, the Law was read as part of the liturgical celebration by the revived community.[8]

After Nehemiah heard of the plight of his people in Jerusalem and that the city was in ruins without a wall of defense against their enemies, he asked the Persian king's permission to go to Jerusalem to see what could be done. This was granted and Nehemiah was sent out as the governor of Judah with all the privileges pertaining to the post of governor of a province in the satrapy of Trans-Euphrates.[9] Herbert Marbury points out that the king dispatched Nehemiah with imprimatur to function as governor of the province. Meanwhile, the narrator informs the reader that Nehemiah holds deep loyalties to the Jerusalem collective. Nehemiah's concern for the sorry condition of the infrastructure of Jerusalem prompts him to leave the Persian court and initiate the rebuilding of the wall (Neh. 1:1-6).[10]

That Nehemiah was sent by the King of Persia with proper license, protection, and provision indicates the favorable timing of his and the people's return to Jerusalem to

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[7] Breneman, 43-44.

[8] Breneman, 44.

[9] F. Charles Fensham, "Nehemiah," *The Oxford Companion to the Bible,* eds. Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 553.

[10] Herbert Marbury, "Ezra and Nehemiah," *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora,* ed. Hugh R. Page, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 280.

undertake the rebuilding of the city's walls (Neh. 2:7-9). According to his statement, Nehemiah traveled twice from Shushan to Jerusalem. The first journey took place in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I., King of Persia, and lasted until the king's 32nd year (Neh. 2:1; 5:14; 13:6). After this, Nehemiah undertook a second journey to Jerusalem (Neh. 13:6-7). King Artaxerxes reigned from 464 to 424 BCE, so, Nehemiah's first stay lasted from 445 to 433 BCE and the second stay probably followed soon after. The book of Nehemiah can therefore have been composed up to around 400 BCE.[11]

During the period of Israel's exile, Nehemiah was to lead God's people through an extremely difficult construction project, during which they rebuilt Jerusalem's walls. An important observation is that the city's walls were rebuilt in 52 days, while the oppression and destruction of the city had gone on for 141 years (Neh. 6:15).[12] The reconstruction of the walls remains a remarkable achievement, especially in light of the dispatch with which the project was carried out in a mere 52 days.[13] Devising and enacting a plan such as one to rebuild Jerusalem's walls required not only time but also leadership and having the right people in place in the right positions (the right team) to accomplish the mission.

Since Nehemiah led in the city of Jerusalem, it can be argued that his ministry was a model for urban ministry. Mark Gornik proposes that Jerusalem was an urban

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[11] Fensham, 553.

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from *The Holy Bible*, New International Version, (Colorado Springs, CO: International Bible Society, 1984).

[13] Mark Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah,* Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 89.

community that was in serious distress and various principles of leadership and

community development were in play to rebuild the walls and rebuild lives.[14] For several

years, Gornik served as the founding pastor of New Song Presbyterian Church in the

inner city Sandtown-Winchester community in Baltimore, MD. Since its founding in

1987, New Song Church has been involved in community revitalization and urban

renewal like that undertaken by Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem. Gornik offers a

depiction of what was going on in Jerusalem in Nehemiah's days:

> "Let's get to work" the people proclaim in unison. An urban community is in serious distress—its population is depleted, its economic life depressed, and its buildings reduced to rubble. The trials of daily life are intense, and the struggle to keep hope is difficult. Amidst this reality, a small group of people, recognizing the spiritual and economic dimensions of their plight, organize themselves to rebuild their city and communal life. To reach this goal, they pool their skills, marshal resources, both public and private, hold back opposing forces, watch over their labors, pray without ceasing, and resolve internal conflicts. Others said it could not be done, but as they overcome the many obstacles that face them, a new urban community rises up on the old foundation.[15]

The Nehemiah story points to the importance of transformational leaders having

the ability to organize people and resources. While Nehemiah was the leader who first

articulated the vision to rebuild, the people confirmed the vision and committed

themselves to the task. Many people's gifts through many circumstances were necessary

to achieve the vision of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. Accomplishing the vision was not

easy. Divisions and hard feelings, combined with outside opposition and oppression

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[14] Mark Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 128-162.

[15] Gornik, 128.

made faithfulness very difficult. Yet, Nehemiah and the people persevered and moved toward completing the task.

Observations found in Nehemiah's leadership in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls provide insight into the nature of transformational leadership. These observations include Nehemiah's reliance on and employment of (1) prayer and research (Neh. 2:12-13); (2) meetings, strategizing, and team-building (Neh. 2:17-18); (3) collaborative action and teamwork (Neh. 3:1-32); (4) facing opposition (Neh. 4:7-12); (5) reorganizing and re-strategizing (Neh. 4:13-15); and (6) persistence, resilience, and resourcefulness (Neh. 4: 21-23).

The first observation about Nehemiah's leadership is that there was a *reliance on prayer and research.* After he arrived in Jerusalem, he conducted a secret inspection of the city's walls and researched what had occurred in Jerusalem. It seems that he tried to hide his intentions from the people so the news of his plans would not reach the neighboring enemies. After the inspection, Nehemiah decided to organize the people and rebuild the walls.[16]

John Perkins points out that Nehemiah prayed before he acted. It was not until four months after he heard about Jerusalem's condition that Nehemiah presented an action plan to the king. During these four months, Nehemiah prayed and fasted on behalf of the people.[17]

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[16] Fensham, 554.

[17] John Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Together and Doing it Right* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 66.

The rebuilding project began with examining Jerusalem's walls. Such careful

examination and research were critical for understanding the task that was before them

before any other work began. And such examination and research were also important for

understanding what people and other resources would be needed to accomplish the task.

According to Perkins, the foundation of all that was to follow for Nehemiah and

the people was laid during the time of prayer. Prayer equips people for appropriate

action.[18] References to Nehemiah's reliance on prayer can be found throughout the book

including in Neh. 1:5-11; 2:4-5; 4:4-5; 4:9; 5:19; 6:9; 6:14; 13:14. In Neh. 2:12-13, he

stated:

> I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God
> had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except
> the one I was riding on. By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the
> Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had
> been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire.

Joseph Daniels asserts that as was the case with Nehemiah, leaders today must

respond to the pockets of their churches and communities that are in ruin. Daniels writes

of the necessity of bathing the church and community, or that which has caused

heartbreak, in prayer.[19] Daniels further asserts that congregations will be known for either

mending the hearts of marginalized persons in the community or as a Christian social

club that gathers for an hour or two every Sunday morning. According to Daniels,

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[18] Perkins, 66.

[19] Joseph Daniels, *Walking with Nehemiah: Your Community is Your Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 14.

Nehemiah's ministry and leadership in Jerusalem lead to reflection on ways in which urban churches and leaders can more effectively engage with their communities and help in leading to rebuilding where necessary.[20]

God has always called leaders. Leaders must hear God's calling to lead and respond to that call. Through prayer, Nehemiah understood his leadership as a calling from God (Neh. 2:12b). He listened and came to see the need. He constantly asked God to provide a vision for him and the people, as he understood that a true vision must come from God. It must be God-inspired and God-revealed. Through prayer, Nehemiah also came to know that the vision was "what God has put into my heart" (Neh. 2:12). His and the people's vision emerged amid the devastating situation—the destruction of Jerusalem's walls.

The second observation about Nehemiah's leadership is *the importance of meetings, strategizing, and team-building*. He was strategic and highly organized. Edwin Yamauchi points out that the "list" contained in Neh. 4 names some "forty-one parties" and "forty-two sections" which were focal points of the repairs.[21] Devising and enacting a plan such as one to rebuild Jerusalem's walls required not only time, but leadership, organization, and having the right people and resources in place in the right positions to accomplish the mission. Neh. 2:17-18 points to Nehemiah's reliance on meetings, strategizing, and team-building:

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[20] Daniels, 14.

[21] Edwin Yamauchi, "Nehemiah," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume 4.* ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 692.

> Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So, they began this good work.

John Perkins asserts that it is evident in Nehemiah's model of leadership that he led the people of Israel to rebuild Jerusalem's walls with a strategic and methodical process. Perkins suggests that the people of Israel rebuilt Jerusalem's walls because Nehemiah "prayed before he acted, sensed God's timing, counted all potential costs, and did all of his homework."[22] Nehemiah's actions were not impulsive but were a consequence of critical contemplation. His actions inform an approach to leadership and community engagement/organizing in urban ministry contexts for the transformation of people and communities. As ministry leaders pray and assess their communities, they must then develop and implement an action plan for rebuilding.

After hearing from God, Nehemiah listened to the people, as together they set the course for how they would go about rebuilding the walls. He showed care for their situation and sought the people's input, buy-in, and ownership in establishing plans. He identified with the people, and where they had gifts to help accomplish the rebuilding project. He thought in terms of "we" and "us" (Neh. 2:17-18), and he came to understand and identify with "the trouble we are in" (Neh. 2:17).

Perkins asserts that Nehemiah was an exemplary community developer, as evidenced by his ability to organize people and resources to help rebuild Jerusalem's

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[22] Perkins, 66.

walls.[23] Nehemiah used his discernment for God's timing, counted and calculated the risks/costs, prepared, recognized God's sovereignty, connected with the people, tested his ideas, sought God's direction, cooperated with the direction, and refused to get distracted.[24] He knew that he would not be able to accomplish the rebuilding process alone and that it would require proper planning and organizing before they could begin the work that was before them.

The third observation about Nehemiah's leadership is that *it involved collaborative action.* Raymond Brown pointed out that Nehemiah's leadership demonstrated incarnational priorities like "unity," "individuality," and "unselfishness" in the Israelites taking on their work.[25] Neh. 3:1 points to the collaborative approach that he employed with other ministry leaders in Jerusalem, "Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel.

This points to the high priest's dedication to the rebuilding project and it shows its religious significance. The walls were regarded as an extension of God's house. The rebuilding was a cooperative effort. People from all professions and trades helped,

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[23] Perkins, 64.

[24] Perkins, 66-70.

[25] Raymond Brown, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Nehemiah* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 64-67.

coming from many villages and outlying areas of Judah.[26] Within the unity of purpose, there is room for diversity. The variety of builders working side-by-side is striking. Sometimes they are identified by family, other times by profession or place of residence. In general terms, one could say the broad spectrum of the fledgling community was well-represented… so that all took part in the common task before them.[27]

As Nehemiah gained the people's trust, he was able to build a team that could collaboratively bring the vision to reality. People shared responsibility for accomplishing the goals leading to fulfilling the vision that had been given. No one person could have accomplished this vision of rebuilding alone; there needed to be a team and teamwork. Nehemiah began with a few, then he expanded the team to include virtually everyone. The people committed themselves to the "common work for the common good" (Neh. 2:18b). The talents of the people were named and used (Neh. 3). Different people worked on different sections of the walls, thus modeling the division of labor. People were assigned to work closest to their homes. But even God's people get tired. They felt the task was taking too much time and was too difficult. Internal disputes began to surface. But Nehemiah was able to find ways to alleviate their concerns and helped the people stay focused on the vision.

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[26] Breneman, 187.

[27] Throntveit, 77-78.

The fourth observation of Nehemiah's leadership is that *there was a willingness and ability to face opposition.* Neh. 4:7-9 provides a characterization of the opposition that Nehemiah and the people faced:

> But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

Mark Throntveit points out that the account of the opposition that Nehemiah and the people faced (Neh. 4:7-9) is preceded in Nehemiah 4:6 with a testament to the perseverance of the Israelites: "So we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height; for the people had a mind to work."[28] According to Throntveit, Neh. 4:7-9 ff. outlines a basic pattern of the methods that the Israelites used to resist opposition: (1) The enemies band together intending "to fight against Israel" (4:7-8). (2) The people call upon God for help before arming themselves (4:9). (3) The Lord frustrates the intentions of the enemies, whose courage fails them (4:15). (4) Trumpets are employed in battle summons (4:18-19).[29]

As they rebuilt the walls, they were ridiculed, mocked, and plotted against. Their enemies did everything possible to discourage them, and threatened to tell untrue stories about Nehemiah. Against this resistance and opposition, Nehemiah and the people heard but persisted in their rebuilding efforts. They knew they were "doing great work" (Neh.

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[28] Throntveit, 79.

[29] Throntveit, 79.

6:3), and could not come down from the wall to deal with the distractions of their adversaries. Effective leaders and their teams are resilient and persistent and persevere when adversity comes.

Insults and criticism can sting and can be distracting and discouraging while trying to accomplish a mission and realize a vision. Nehemiah had critics as he led a team to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Amid criticism, he prayed "Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their heads" (Neh. 4:4). What leaders can do amidst criticism is take time to step back, evaluate the good and bad in the criticism that might come, continue to pray, trust God, and then persistently continue with the work that has been put before them.

The fifth observation that can be made from Nehemiah's leadership in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls is that there was the ability *to reorganize and re-strategize.* In Neh. 4:13-15, he states:

> Therefore, I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears, and bows. After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our work.

Nehemiah led in taking definitive action. He had to sacrifice some labor from building the wall, but the precaution was necessary. Grouping them by family would strengthen the motivation to fight (Neh. 4:14).[30] In the face of danger, Nehemiah set up certain defense measures for the workers. He set armed groups in open places under the

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[30] Breneman, 197-198.

cover of the wall where they could maneuver more freely if attacked. Armed men also took their places among the workers.[31]

It is easy for people to forget the purpose behind God's vision even as they work to fulfill it. God's vision for Nehemiah and the people was to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, but the walls were not the most important part of the vision. The rebuilding of the walls was a means to realizing God's larger purpose. What Nehemiah and the people's work was really about was reclaiming their identity as people of faith. What was at stake was not just rebuilding physical walls, but also, rebuilding people's lives and relationships with God (Neh. 8; 12:27). Nehemiah had to ensure that the people were reminded of their faithful past. Because their rebuilding task was tied to a greater purpose, they put their hearts into their work and were able to complete the task in 52 days (Neh. 6:15-16).

The sixth and final observation about Nehemiah's leadership is that *it involved persistence, resilience, and resourcefulness.* John Perkins states that "Nehemiah was a businessman, an administrator, not a prophet or a priest. He was a community developer, and with his leadership, his people rebuilt Jerusalem's walls."[32]

Perkins highlights prayer, wisdom, deep listening, and critical observation in how Nehemiah assessed the community's needs. Perkins then names planning, community organizing, mobilizing, and executing as keys to Nehemiah and the people accomplishing common goals. Here is a reminder of the necessity of having a clear sense of motivation,

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[31] Charles Fritsch, "The Book of Nehemiah," *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary of the Bible*, ed. Charles Layman (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 229.

[32] Perkins, 66-70.

determination, and endurance. Nehemiah spoke of the persistence, resilience, and resourcefulness that he and the people of Israel possessed in Neh. 4:21-23:

> So, we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. At that time, I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and as workers by day." Neither I, nor my brothers, nor my men, nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water.

The men and their helpers were asked to serve as guards at night and worked during the day. Any vision that God gives takes persistence, resilience, and perseverance to be fulfilled. It has been intimated that a vision that is of God is too big for humans to accomplish alone. This means that God's vision requires the persistent presence of God, the persistent presence of teamwork, and the resilience and resourcefulness to adjust along the way.

With Nehemiah and the people of Israel working through the dynamics of conflict, opposition, and discord—their unity of purpose and collaboration needed to be consistent and persistent, and these seem to be key in any leadership context in the movement toward transformation.

In summary, Nehemiah demonstrated several transformational qualities important for effective leadership in Jerusalem—his urban context—that could apply to transformational leadership in urban contexts today. Like Nehemiah, leaders today are responsible for helping rebuild the broken walls of their communities. Leaders and churches in urban contexts today are called to bring healing, wholeness, and hope to their communities through the power of Jesus Christ. This is an intentional work that requires sincerity, sacrifice, investment, compassion, conviction, courage, and commitment.

Paul as a Model of Urban Transformational Leadership

Like Nehemiah, Paul was called to minister and lead in several of the urban contexts of his day such as Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Colossae. According to C. Michelle Venable-Ridley, Paul, a first-century non-Palestinian Jew, was born in the city of Tarsus, a naval installation in the Roman Empire around 5-15 CE. Born to a family of impressive Jewish heritage, he was named after the tribe's most illustrious member, King Saul.[33] Paul was "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee" (Philippians 3:5).

The exact date of Paul's birth is uncertain. However, he is referred to as a young man (*neanios*) at the stoning of Stephen (the death of Stephen cannot have been much before 31 CE; Acts 7:58), and Paul calls himself an old man (*presbytes*) in Philemon 9, around 52-54 CE. Correlating these points of reference with his meeting with Gallio (50-52 CE) in Corinth and his martyrdom under Nero (54-68 CE), his birth can be estimated at around 5-15 CE.[34]

In many ways, Paul's life and experiences transcended culture. He was a Jewish Pharisee, an early oppressor of the Christian movement, who would be touched by Jesus and become a Christian convert. He was a Jewish Roman citizen, a Judeo-Christian, a born-again Christian, a lawyer, a theologian, a philosopher, a missionary, church planter,

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[33] C. Michelle Venable-Ridley, "Paul and the African-American Community," *Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspectives on Hope, Salvation, and Transformation,* ed. Emilie M. Townes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 214.

[34] Venable-Ridley, 214.

and a pastor. Self-identified as an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13), Paul preached to

Jews and Gentiles, the richer and the poorer.

N.T. Wright asserts that a great deal can be learned from who Paul was, and his

experiences as an apostle, theologian, church planter, and leader in the early church can

help in understanding church leadership today.[35] For Paul, there was no question about

the starting point. It was always Jesus: Jesus the shocking fulfillment of Israel's hopes;

Jesus the genuinely human being, the true "image"; Jesus the embodiment of Israel's

God—so that, without leaving Jewish monotheism, one would worship and invoke Jesus

as Lord *within*, not alongside, the service of the living and true God.[36]

Paul was an example of a leader transformed by Christ who went forth to engage

in transformational leadership. Ursula King asserts that Paul's transformation began with

his conversion experience with Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19). According

to King, Paul's experience on the Damascus Road changed him from an enemy into an

ardent supporter of the early Christians, and made him into one of the strongest witnesses

to the power of the spirit of Christ, "in whom we live, move and have our being" (Acts

17:28).[37]

Michael Gorman points out that both Acts and Paul's letters describe Paul's

unexpected and unmerited encounter with the resurrected Jesus, sometime in the mid-

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[35] N.T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: Harper, 2018), 399-432.

[36] Wright, 400.

[37] Ursula King, *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages* (Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Spring, 2001), 13.

thirties of the first century (1 Cor. 15:9-10). Although Acts gives more details, Paul

supplies the essentials, saying that the resurrected Jesus appeared to him as he had

previously done to others, apparently one of the chief criteria of apostleship (1 Cor. 9:1;

15:8). This was divine revelation, and *apokalypsis* (Galatians 1:15-16), the defining

moment of Paul's life.[38]

His conversion experience is described three times in the Book of Acts (Acts 9,

22, and 26). Scholars assume that Luke wrote Acts around 85 CE, about twenty years

after Paul's ministry. Paul's account, in his letter to the Galatians, was: "The Gospel

which I preach… came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Acts 1:11-12). Paul

described himself as "a man in Christ," affirming a deep union with the Divine which

does not negate his own identity but enables him to live within the divine nature itself: "I

live, now not I; but Christ lives within me" (Gal. 2:20). He also sang the praises of active

love, of charity, inspired by the fire of divine love, and outlines a vision of the cosmic

Christ, the Christ who "is all and is in all" (Col. 3:11).[39]

Not only was Paul's way of thinking transformed by his mystical experience, but

so too, was his way of being in the world. Suddenly the persecutor—and possibly

murderer—of Christians is Christ's "chosen vessel," sent "to carry my name before the

Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15).[40]

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[38] Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Paul* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008), 14.

[39] King, 13.

[40] King, 13.

Brad Braxton asserts that Paul's encounter with Christ compelled Paul to reevaluate every aspect of his identity. Before this encounter, Paul's Pharisaic heritage had been his stance and pride.[41] His experience with Christ compelled him to rethink certain aspects of his Pharisaic heritage. However, he never relinquished his Jewish heritage. Daniel Boyarin insists that Paul lived and died convinced that he was a Jew living out Judaism.[42]

According to Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, after his conversion, Paul's identity became an identity "in Christ." He saw Judaism anew in the light of Jesus.[43] Borg and Crossan assert that Paul's transformation involved an "identity transplant"—his old identity was replaced by a new identity "in Christ." We have in mind an analogy to modern medicine's heart transplant, in which an old heart is replaced by a new heart. In Paul's case, his spirit—the old Paul—had been replaced by the Spirit of Christ.[44]

Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Spirit, in 1 Cor. 12–14 is an extension of his identity transplant "in Christ." Here Borg and Crossan reflect on the implications of Paul's thoughts on love, "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13). The love of which Paul spoke is a spiritual gift,

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[41] Brad Braxton, *Preaching Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 47.

[42] Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1994), 2.

[43] Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 26.

[44] Borg and Crossan, 26.

not simply an act of will, not something we decide to do, not simply good advice for couples and others. Rather, as a spiritual gift, love is the most important result (and evidence) of a Spirit transplant. As the primary fruit of the Spirit, it is also the criterion by which the other gifts are evaluated.[45]

Harvey Egan asserts that Paul gave himself fully to the love of God in Christ and believed others could do likewise.[46] From the very depths of his being, Paul experienced and surrendered to the love of God in Christ. For him, the Lord was the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). Pauline mysticism is emphatically Christ-directed; "to live," for Paul, "is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). For Paul, it was almost self-evident that because of Christ and his Spirit, all Christians had access to an experience of God in their lives. Although Paul spoke of the "mature" in faith (1 Cor. 2:6) and the "spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:15), he expected the mature faith of all Christians. The Holy Spirit granted all Christians a "surpassing knowledge" (Eph. 3:19), the "fullness of knowledge" (Eph. 1:17), and in this way proved to us that we are "[children] of God" (Rom. 8:14) who can also call God, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). Christ's Spirit would pray in us "with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26).[47]

Linked intimately to a loving knowledge of the crucified and risen Christ is a "secret and hidden wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 2:7), a peace beyond all understanding

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[45] Borg and Crossan, 138.

[46] Harvey D. Egan, *Christian Mysticism: The Future of a Tradition* (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1984), 26–27.

[47] Egan, 26–27.

(Philippians 4:7), and a supreme consolation (2 Cor. 1:5). Those living in Christ's Spirit experience a richer way of life (Eph. 1:8–9) filled with the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22) that enables them to bear each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2). As Paul said: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the [human] heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9–10). Time and again, Paul spoke of being "in Christ." For him, moreover, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).[48]

A key theological construct that is at work as it regards transformational leadership and Paul's life and ministry is the term, transformation. Transformation can be seen through changed thinking, attitudes, behaviors, and habits among leaders and those being led. It implies a move from what is (actual) to a preferred state (aspirational)—that is, God's preferred future for our lives. Paul's encouragement in Rom. 12:1-2 comes to mind:

> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, given God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—God's good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Craig Hill asserts that in Rom. 12:2b, there is evidence that the new, eschatological righteousness overmasters humanity's ancient, fallen nature: believers experience a "renewal of their minds" so that they may discern what is the will of God—

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[48] Egan, 26–27.

what is good, acceptable, and perfect.[49] For Paul, it is no less than a return, a "conforming" to the original order, the re-creation of human minds not subjected to futility (Rom. 8:20). Paul does not expect his readers to obtain such an exalted capability on their own. Rather, he believes that as possessors of the Spirit, they are already equipped to live lives "holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1).[50]

Ursula King asserts that while the Gospels describe Christ's life, death, and resurrection, the Pauline Epistles bear witness to an intense and profoundly transforming faith, rooted both in powerful personal experience and in the community of the early disciples, which later became the Christian Church.[51]

Paul made a clear distinction between conformity and transformation. To conform to the world means essentially to move away from the ways of God. It means to stay mired in the fallenness and brokenness in our societal midst. But to be transformed means to experience the re-molding of the broken realities that are in and around us. Paul said, "don't be conformed to (don't try to be like) the world, but be transformed (be changed) by the renewing (the changing) of your minds" (Rom. 12:2). Eugene Peterson's rendering of this verse in *The Message* translation of the Bible is helpful: "Do not be so well-

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[49] Craig C. Hill, "Romans," *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, eds. John Bartman and John Muddiman (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1104.

[50] Hill, 1104.

[51] King, 13.

adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."[52]

Thomas Hoyt asserted that Paul called for the transformation of the mind because he knew that actions are generated by attitudes. The transformation that Paul alludes to is not a one-time event but a constant struggle. The Christian agenda is not to be determined by current secular standards. The Christian's standards are determined by the coming new age as sustained by the Holy Spirit.[53]

According to Lisa Bowens, Paul, in Rom.12:1-2, reminds his audience that the ethical principles of Christianity are important to follow, and one cannot be a Christian in name only but a Christian lifestyle must follow that name. Just as Paul presented these ethical principles in his day, even though they were not popular, so, too, must believers today.[54]

Paul's story points to the importance of Christian leaders possessing qualities of being transformed from within as a beginning point of leading in transforming those they lead. As a transformed, transformational leader, He demonstrated the importance of flexibility, fluidity, and resiliency in his leadership. In seeking to share the Gospel message in various contexts, he sought to be a "Greek to the Greeks, and a Jew to the

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[52] Eugene Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003), 2052.

[53] Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr., "Romans," *True to Our Native Lane: An African-American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 268.

[54] Lisa M. Bowens, *African-American Readings of Paul: Reception, Resistance and Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2020), 242.

Jewish" persons with whom he ministered. In 2 Cor. 12:7-9, he talked of being given a

"thorn" in his flesh:

> Therefore, to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my
> flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to
> take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my
> power is made perfect in weakness."

There is no clear evidence of what or who the "thorn" was, but it can be surmised

that the imagery of a thorn in Paul's flesh pertained to real and persistent pain and

pernicious difficulties that he faced. At other points in scripture, Paul talked about being

"hard-pressed on every side but not in despair… being persecuted but not in distress" (2

Cor. 4:8-9). He was acquainted with living through difficult, painful times. Amid these

stated realities, Paul summed them up by saying that "we are more than conquerors

through Christ who loves us" (Rom. 8:37).

Here is a reminder of the need for transformational qualities among today's

leaders, as was the case with Paul—qualities of flexibility, fluidity, and resiliency that

will result in the persons with whom leaders serve and lead being empowered toward

greater avenues of Christian discipleship and witness. As a leader, Paul sought to lead by

example. E. P. Sanders in *Paul: A Very Short Introduction*, asserts that just as Paul saw

himself as exemplifying the correct behavior, he also saw himself as a model of

exertion.[55] He wrote to the church at Thessalonica, "You remember, brothers, our toils

and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to

you the Gospel of God" (1 Thes. 2:9).

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[55] Ed Parrish Sanders, *Paul: Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), 119.

According to Michael Gorman, Paul's goal as an evangelist and pastor was to call others to the same Jesus and thus the same experience of God (as was his). He did and still does, through his preaching, example, and letter-writing.[56] Effort characterized not only Paul's manual labor to support himself (1 Cor. 4:12), but also his activity as an apostle: he worked harder than any of the other apostles (1 Cor. 15:10), and he dreaded the thought that he might have labored in vain (1 Thes. 3). He had special respect for other leaders of the new movement who worked hard (1 Thes. 5:12). Paul fully espoused and observed a "work ethic" as long as the goal was the right one.[57]

A key point of theological inquiry and reflection, as it regards developing transformational leadership, is identifying what God's work in individuals might entail and look like as transformation occurs. The life and ministry of Paul exemplify what virtue could look like in leaders.

Mark McCloskey and Jim Louwsma assert that there is a strong theoretical basis for including virtue as the first step to effective transformational leadership.[58] Transformational leadership is an inherently moral undertaking focused on securing what both leaders and followers agree is good and right.[59] According to McCloskey and Louwsma, the question becomes, "What standards or virtues are non-negotiable in the character of the transformational leader?" The Greeks, most notably Plato and Aristotle,

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[56] Gorman, 20.

[57] Sanders, 119.

[58] Mark McCloskey and Jim Louwsma, *The Art of Virtue-based Transformational Leadership: Building Strong Businesses, Organizations, and Families* (Bloomington, MN: Wordsmith, 2014), 45.

[59] McCloskey and Louwsma, 45.

created much of our vocabulary of virtue. They embraced prudence (practical wisdom and humility), justice (fairness), fortitude (courage), and temperance (moderation) as the moral glue that holds communities together.[60]

These cardinal virtues are means by which God's transformational work can be accomplished. The principles that underly the cardinal virtues were first explicated by Plato in *Republic*, Book IV, and later expounded upon by theologians like Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas as cardinal virtues eventually became theological virtues in Christian contexts.

Ambrose (330–397 CE) is believed to have been the first person to use the term "cardinal virtues." He stated, "And we know that there are four cardinal virtues—temperance, justice, prudence, fortitude."[61] These four virtues were also eventually arrived at in traditional Christian theology: (1) Prudence (or Wisdom)—the capacity to discern appropriate courses of action in particular life situations; (2) Courage—the ability to confront fear, uncertainty, and intimidation. In light of this, Augustine stated that "Hope has two beautiful twin daughters—Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to change them"; (3) Temperance (Restraint)—the capacity to exercise self-control and moderation, and (4) Justice (Rightness)—the insistence on fairness toward all people.

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[60] McCloskey and Louwsma, 46.

[61] St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, *Commentary of St. Ambrose on the Gospel according to St. Luke.* (Dublin, Ireland: Halcyon Press, 2001), 62.

Regarding the four cardinal virtues, Augustine articulated them within the context of love:

> For these four virtues (would that all felt their influence in their minds as they have their names in their mouths!), I should have no hesitation in defining them: that temperance is love giving itself entirely to that which is loved; fortitude is love readily bearing all things for the sake of the loved object; justice is love serving only the loved object, and therefore ruling rightly; prudence is love distinguishing with sagacity between what hinders it and what helps it.[62]

In Christian traditions, three additional virtues were added to the four cardinal virtues. These three are often referred to as theological virtues—faith, hope, and love. These three are named by Paul in 1 Cor. 13:13, "And now these three remain—faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."

These seven virtues—temperance, justice, prudence, fortitude, faith, hope, and love—comprise what has come to traditionally be known as Christian virtues.

Daniel Harrington and James Keenan assert that these seven Christian virtues can be found in who Paul was, his teachings, and by extension, the ways he led. These virtues are particularly insightful for understanding Paul as a transformational leader. Harrington and Keenan argue for seven "new virtues" to replace the "cardinal virtues" arrived at in the early church.[63] The "new virtues" that they assert can be found in Paul's life, ministry, and writing are "be humble, be hospitable, be merciful, be faithful, reconcile, be vigilant, and be reliable".[64]

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[62] St. Augustine of Hippo, *De morribus eccl*.: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 4, ed. Phillip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1987), 15-16.

[63] Daniel Harrington and James Keenan*, Paul and Virtue Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 125–126.

[64] Harrington and Keenan*,* 125–126.

In summary, there is a necessary movement, a renewing, and a shift in mindset that is implied in the transformational process as exemplified by Paul. His life and ministry serve as the epitome and model for what transformation looks like. He was practical and systematic, pastoral, and prophetic, always seeking to live a transformed life and lead in the transformation of others. Like Paul, transformational religious leaders today must be pastoral and theological, love everybody while listening to them and leading them, and stay true to the Gospel while relating (not conforming) to a fast-changing world. The transformational leader's life must be one of changing, growing, improvising, and adapting as they seek to be God's transformed agents of helping to transform lives, communities, and the world.

Biblical-Theological Perspectives on the City and Transformational Leadership

Biblical-Theological Perspectives on the City

Benjamin Tonna asserts that almost in line with contemporary urbanization, the Scriptures begin in a garden and end in a city. To better understand the role of the city in God's plan, one has the biblical vision of the New Jerusalem—the renewed city—in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 21:2).[65] This vision seems to indicate the direction in which the progressive activation of God's plan of salvation moves and points out the stages needed for its development. In this light, the reality of the contemporary city takes on another aspect, opening itself to new horizons and—ultimately—salvation.[66]

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[65] Benjamin Tonna, *Gospel for the Cities: A Socio-Theology of Urban Ministry,* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 121.

[66] Tonna, 121.

God's saving work has been and continues to be needed in cities. Phillip Reed asserts that if the church is going to adequately address the needs of the community, then it will need to recover the biblical concept of salvation. In the Old Testament, salvation meant primarily deliverance from one's enemies or danger.[67] Salvation was often a community event. The major event in the life of Israel, which contained God's salvation for God's people, was the deliverance of the people from Egypt. In the New Testament, the concept of salvation took on a wider meaning, which included first and foremost the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, but which also included the concepts of salvation from poverty and destruction included in the Old Testament.[68]

Tonna believes that as a symbol of God's sacred place and God's divine activity, the early cities' basic weakness (as exemplified by Babylon) seems to have been its incapacity to maintain communication among people—leading to detachment, alienation, and isolation. This incapacity is related to several inherent human needs—(1) the need for community—our inherent need to move toward "common unity"; (2) the need to establish justice and order in the land; (3) the need for communion, the search for the sacred in the city, and ways to sacramentally and symbolically bring forth a sense of the unity of persons amidst the human diversity that encompasses the city; and (4) the need for solidarity and the development of a means of redefining the structures of life.[69] Tonna

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[67] Phillip Reed, "Toward a Theology of Christian Community Development," *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Right and Doing it Together*, ed. John Perkins (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 38.

[68] Reed, 38.

[69] Tonna, 128-130.

suggests that God responds to these human needs with a new creative act, the act of salvation. This is the hope of the city. Salvation is thus to be viewed as an individual and communal prospect.[70]

According to Robert Carle and Louis DeCaro, cities have existed for over 10,000 years as a form of social organization. In biblical times, Jericho grew from a village to a city of about 3000 in 7000 BCE. In 3500-4000 BCE, the first large cities (25,000 people) were established in Mesopotamia. The word "city" appears 1090 times in the Old Testament and over 160 times in the New Testament. At least 133 different cities are noted by name in the Bible.[71]

Cities as God's sacred places where large populations of God's people resided were the places where the earliest civilized cultures gathered and developed. These are the places where the earliest codified laws have been found. It was in these first cities that agrarian economies, governments and administration, and science began to develop. In these lands, the roots of Judeo-Christian thought and culture can also be found.[72] Cities have also been places where diversity among people converges—socially, economically, politically, racially, and religiously. The word that Jesus used in the marching orders for his church is the Greek word *ethnos*, from which the word "ethnic" is derived.

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[70] Tonna, 130-132.

[71] Robert D. Carle and Louis A. DeCaro, Jr., eds. *Signs of Hope in the City: Ministries of Community Renewal* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 5.

[72] Tonna, 121.

According to Phillip Reed, it is important to understand the message of salvation for the inner city with the call that Jesus has given to his church in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). "Then Jesus came to them and said:

> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.[73]

The Scriptures contain dozens of references to urban characters who put flesh, bones, and life on urban ministry models. Thirteen chapters of Genesis, for example, focus on an economic developer named Joseph, who developed, for a pagan pharaoh, two seven-year plans, one for budget deficits and one for budget surpluses. Nehemiah, the general contractor and two-term governor of Jerusalem made many deals with state officials to rebuild the walls of his ruined city.[74]

Ray Bakke and Jim Hart assert that Paul's work in the early church was entirely urban, centered in Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Jerusalem, and Rome.[75] The Gospel was spread from city to city as Paul and others preached and the message spread to Asia, Africa, and Europe. Many of Paul's epistles are addressed to cities—including Rome, Corinth, Thessalonica, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossi. He wrote these letters to persons in cities within the context of the real theological, ethical, economic, and socio-

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[73] Reed, 38-39.

[74] Carle and DeCaro, 5.

[75] Ray Bakke and Jim Hart, *The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 80.

political issues they were facing in trying to live out their new faith in Christ in urban

contexts. In the context of his ministry, Paul addressed issues such as marriage, divorce,

poverty, sharing of resources, unemployment, economic development, health concerns,

the need to work cooperatively and distribute resources, and many others similar to those

faced by persons and churches in cities today.

Because many of God's people have historically resided in urban areas, this is the

place where God's activity and saving grace can often be seen in its most profound,

pronounced, and powerful ways. The New City is presented as the definitive context for

the reconciliation of humanity with God. It becomes the ultimate point of the impulse that

has long moved humanity, now that God, in Christ, is already definitively present among

human beings and accepted by them. Jerusalem is thus the completion of the history of

the city. In the Book of Revelation, there is another city, Babylon, and John is doubtless

thinking also of Bethel, a symbol of the creative powers of humanity.[76]

Babylon, like present-day cities, had its strengths and weaknesses. Ronald Peters

asserts that the image of Babylon as the "Bad City" has, in large measure, become the

paradigm for understanding contemporary cities in general. According to Peters, it is a

paradigm of moral dysfunction, injustice, violence, and oppression—where people are in

the city because they have been displaced from where they want to be (Jerusalem). The

potential of the "Good City" embodies relationship-building as a part of its ministry.

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[76] Tonna, 132.

Urban ministers then become the embodiment of reconciliation, compassion, and justice.[77]

According to Bryan Stone and Claire Wolfteich, for many Christians, the city is one of the last places that comes to mind when thinking about where God can be encountered and where spiritual renewal can be found.[78] But though the city is a place of distraction, busyness, and frenzied activity and though it is often imagined in Scripture as a place of unrest, idolatry, and wickedness, it is also the holy habitation of God; as the psalmist says, "God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns" (Psalm 46:5).[79]

Indeed, from biblical antiquity, God has been and continues to be present in cities among the people and processes that exist in urban areas. And the promise for cities into the future is that the prophet Jeremiah's words are still pertinent as the Lord said in Jer. 29:11, *"For I know the plans I have for you… plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future with hope."*

Biblical-Theological Perspectives on Transformational Leadership

In "Decentralization and the Shared Leadership of the New Testament," Justin Irving asserts that "the worldview of New Testament Christians led to a theologically

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[77] Peters, 16.

[78] Bryan Stone and Claire Wolfteich, *Sabbath in the City: Sustaining Pastoral Excellence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 77.

[79] Stone and Wolfteich, 78.

informed practice of leadership that was distinctively decentralized or shared."[80]

According to Irving, even in cases of individual leaders like Timothy and Titus, their

roles in Ephesus and Crete accordingly were in collaboration with Paul and sending

churches, and were meant as transitional roles in which plural forms of leadership would

be established. Paul's words to Titus confirm this; "For this reason, I let you in Crete, that

you would set in order what remains and appoint elders (a plural, collaborative form of

leadership) in every city as I directed you" (Titus 1:5).[81]

Theologically, transformational leadership is informed by an affirmation of a

Trinitarian God. Irving asserts that the Bible is robustly Trinitarian.[82] To support this

claim, he points out that George Cladis notes that the understanding of God as Trinity

serves as a master image affecting how relationships and community are thought about.[83]

According to Cladis, "all Christians are brought into fellowship with the triune God,"

thus creating the context for relationships and collaboration within the church.

The perichoretic nature and notion of the Trinity (perichoresis) speak to the

consistency of the three persons of the Trinity found throughout the Creeds and other

Christian teachings. This also speaks to the relationship of the three persons of the

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[80] Justin Irving, "Decentralization and the Shared Leadership of the New Testament," ML-924P-30 Spring, 2021, Teams, Groups and the Transforming Leader (April 8, 2004) (paper presented, Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN, Spring 2021), 1.

[81] Irving, 7.

[82] Irving, 19.

[83] George Cladis, *Leading the Team-based Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 92-94.

Trinity—God the Father (creator), Son (savior/redeemer), and Holy Spirit (sustainer). The relationality of the Trinity points to the relational nature of transformational leadership.

If, on the other hand, we affirm that the very nature of God is to seek out the deepest possible communion and friendship with every last creature, and if through the doctrine of the Trinity we do our best to articulate the mystery of God for us, then preaching and pastoral practice will fit naturally with the particulars of the Christian life. Ecclesial life, sacramental life, and ethical life… will be seen clearly as forms of Trinitarian life: living God's life with one another.[84]

Observations of transformational leadership in the early church as found in Acts 1-11; 17:1-9; and 1 Thes. 1, gleaned from the life and ministry of Paul and others, provide insight into the nature of transformational leadership, and have implications for leading in 21st century ministry settings.

The first, perhaps most obvious observation is that amidst uncertainty in the society of that day, before his ascension, Jesus pointed to the power that would come through the Holy Spirit, when he said in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

Second, there is the sense that leaders in the early church quickly understood the importance of community, collaboration, and organizing people for the work of mission

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[84] Catherine Lacugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1973), 411.

and ministry. Acts 2:44 states that "all who believed were together, and they held all things in common."

Third, transformational leadership can be seen in those who were chosen to serve and the specific assignments they were given. Acts 6 points to the seven persons who were chosen, and how they stood before the apostles who prayed for them and laid hands on them.

Fourth, Paul, Silas, and Timothy's experiences in Acts 17:1-11 and 1 Thes.1 are examples of the effects of transformational leadership on communities and institutions. As Acts 17:4 indicates, "some of them (who heard and encountered Paul and Silas) were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas." The transition among much of the status quo from a Jewish religious worldview to a Christian religious worldview and life in Christ, is one through which Paul, Silas, and Timothy found themselves leading. In 1 Thes. 1:3, Paul, Silas, and Timothy intimate to those serving and leading in Thessalonica, "we remember… your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope…"

Jesus' call of his disciples also serves as a biblical basis and example of transformational leadership development. As he ministered in urban contexts—from Nazareth to Samaria and into Jerusalem—his model of leadership contained essentially three components. First, Jesus gathered persons by identifying those who possessed particular gifts. Secondly, Jesus built relationships, nurtured, mentored, coached, and discipled the persons whom he had identified and gathered. Thirdly, Jesus sought to further develop the gifts of those persons so that they would become empowered leaders, thus replicating the process of leadership development, leading to what would become

the model for apostolic succession as seen most clearly in Peter, James, John, and Paul's preaching, leadership, and ministries after Jesus' death, with the formation of the early church, and the leadership development that ensued.

Matt. 9:36-38 points to Jesus as a transformational servant-leader who called and equipped others, "Seeing the people, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers to his harvest."

In Matt. 9:36, Jesus was not irritated nor did he attempt to help himself with his leadership, but he was moved with compassion because of the people's condition. He saw persons in the crowds as those who needed help, and he came alongside them and had compassion. Matthew adds the sheep description to help readers more fully understand the heart of Jesus who sought to transform lives. The pastoral/leadership ethic of Jesus was one of a shepherd who would lay down his life in service with/to/for his sheep. As transformational servant-leaders, pastors and leaders must have an ethic like that of Jesus of caring for and serving with/for the sheep—the followers—that God has placed under their care.

The image of God's people as a flock without a shepherd is a familiar one in the Old Testament (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezek. 34) and is a reminder that Jesus was not concerned merely with the individual, but recognized that persons of faith can live and flourish only within the context of people of God whose Shepherd, God had appointed him to be. But the work of shepherding God's flock requires co-workers, or to change the figure, as Matthew does, the harvest, which will bring to the close, an age, and

establish the Kingdom of God and requires laborers. It is to share in the work of God that the disciples are called.[85]

As a transformational servant-leader, Jesus also modeled humility in his leadership. Henri Nouwen, in *The Selfless Way of Christ*, explicated Jesus' experience in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11), the temptations that he faced to be relevant, spectacular, and popular, and how Jesus overcame these temptations.[86] According to Nouwen, Jesus practiced "downward mobility," which helped him overcome temptations in the wilderness, and throughout his public ministry. The beckoning toward "downward mobility" in the context of a contemporary culture that values and rewards upward mobility and success serve as a reminder that today's leaders need to rely on and follow the example of Christ and depend on him to lead them, and it also serves as a reminder that humility, prayer, and community/communal accountability are key firewalls against self-centered, self-serving, transactional forms of leadership.

In *The Empowerment Church*, Carlyle Fielding Stewart asserts that a prerequisite of empowerment and numerical growth within the church is spiritual growth among the clergy and laity.[87] He asserts that Jesus' ministry proved to be one of empowerment, and

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[85] Charles Layman, ed., "Matthew," *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971), 621-622.

[86] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ: Downward Mobility and the Spiritual Life* (New York: Orbis, 2007), 17-44.

[87] Carlyle Fielding Stewart, III, *The Empowerment Church: Speaking a New Language for Church Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 16.

by extension, transformation. Stewart points to how Jesus' ministry and leadership demonstrated empowerment in four specific ways.[88]

First, Jesus taught people foundational principles of spirituality that enabled them to see their spiritual traditions in new ways and to conceptualize new possibilities of God in new spiritual frameworks.

Secondly, Jesus' ministry transformed people's spiritual perception and understanding of God through personal revelation, intervention, and interaction with people. Encountering Jesus meant that people were compelled to alter their ideas of God.

Thirdly, Jesus transformed the concept of people in relationship with God. They no longer viewed themselves as passive objects of God's will or as people wholly incapable of positively influencing their social environment and milieu. They saw themselves as co-intentional catalysts for positive change.

Fourthly, Jesus directly, as well as vicariously, transformed communities by providing individuals with the spiritual elements of positive change and renewal. Not only did the recipients of Jesus' power and grace experience change within, but their communities were also changed by the power of their testimonies of Christ's work in their lives.

In summary, biblical examples of Nehemiah, Paul, and others demonstrate that transformational leadership combines spirituality—deep faith, prayer, worship, discipleship, humility, service, sacrifice, and the heart and mind of Christ (Philippians 2:4-8)—with the leadership competencies of vision, strategic thinking, organizing,

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[88] Stewart, 23-24.

collaboration, team-building, and servanthood. For church leaders, it is not enough to be spiritual, and it is not enough to lead out of one's organizational, leadership, and managerial competencies and skills. Transformational church leaders combine both of these sets of qualities—spirituality and skills—to transform people and effect change. With this combination of spirituality and skill—leaders, churches, and communities have greater potential for vitality, thriving, and growth. Furthermore, the leadership of Nehemiah and Paul, both of whom led in urban contexts, also point to the importance of developing leaders with qualities and skills such as flexibility, organization, and collaboration which are critical for leading in urban contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

As was demonstrated in Chapter Two through a study of the lives, ministry, and leadership of Nehemiah and Paul, ministry in urban contexts presents unique challenges, one of which is developing effective leaders who are equipped to lead persons, churches, and other community organizations toward effectiveness, vitality, and growth. The literature review in this chapter explores two areas that could serve as foundational aspects of a transformational leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. These two areas are (1) understanding the urban context and urban ministry, and (2) an overview of transformational leadership concepts and leading change.

Understanding the Urban Context and Urban Ministry

The Urban Context

In *The Evolution of the American Society*, Howard Chudacoff and Judith Smith trace the history and evolution of cities and urban areas from the 17th through the 20th century. They point out that the history of city-building on the North American continent preceded the arrival of the Europeans.[89] Before 1800, only 3 percent of the world's

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[89] Howard Chudacoff and Judith Smith, *The Evolution of the American Society* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 1.

population lived in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants. Chudacoff and Smith point to

recent phenomena in American cities such as the decline of many central cities, the

revival of other central cities, the hope of educational and economic opportunity, the

realities of drugs and homelessness, the rise of Sun Belt cities, and the decline of Frost

Belt cities as some of the key indicators that characterize cities and urbanization today.[90]

The growing predominance of cities in America and around the world is identified

as the process of urbanization. Regarding urbanization, Harvey Cox states:

> In trying to define the term urbanization… we are confronted with the fact that
> social scientists are not entirely agreed on what it means. It is clear, however, that
> urbanization is not a quantitative term. It does not refer to population size or
> density, geographic extent, or a particular form of government. Admittedly some
> of the character of modern urban life would not be possible without giant
> populations concentrated on enormous contiguous landmasses. But urbanization
> is not something that refers only to the city.[91]

According to Ronald Peters, urbanization is typically understood as the process of

interlocking social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and spatial characteristics that

reflect the environment and ethos of the city.[92] Benjamin Tonna defines the process of

urbanization as the phenomenon by which millions of people move en masse from rural

to metropolitan areas—and more importantly—which transforms their lifestyle.[93]

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[90] Chudacoff and Smith, 294-308.

[91] Harvey Gallagher Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: MacMillan, 1966), 3-4.

[92] Peters, 26.

[93] Tonna, 5.

Urbanization and rapid growth of American cities in the 19th and into the 20th century were associated with industrialization, which resulted in an influx of immigrants and migrants to provide labor for emerging factories. As society became more sophisticated in growing and distributing food, labor needs for farming lessened. The development of the factory system led to a concentration of labor and services in urban areas.[94]

As a complex, continuous process, urbanization is, then, both the movement of people from rural to urban areas and the spread of urban cultural patterns to rural areas (which over time become more urban). According to Peters, the urbanization of the world and the closely related issues of ministry in urbanized contexts, are much more involved than mere statistics about population shifts or other demographic profiles. It is a subject essentially concerned with human relationships and divine realities as these are experienced in the ecology of the social, spatial, and spiritual context we refer to as the urban environment and what the urban area reveals to us about God.[95]

Urbanization is a global phenomenon. In recent decades, the world has experienced unprecedented urban growth with most of the growth occurring in less developed countries. In 1975—37% of the world's population lived in urban areas; in 2000—47% lived in urban areas; in 2015—over 60% of the world's population lived in urban areas, and by 2030—it is projected that over 80% of the world's population will live in urban areas. In the U.S.—75% of the population lives in urban areas, and half of

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[94] Tonna, 5.

[95] Peters, 8.

the U.S. population lives in 38 metropolitan centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas)[96].

David Claerbaut asserts that urbanization is an irreversible trend. At the beginning of the 20th century, about 8% of the world's population lived in cities. By the early 1980s, half of the world's population resided in urban areas. Demographics project that almost all of the world's population growth over the next thirty years will be in urban areas.[97]

According to Peters, the realities that define contexts in which urban ministry is carried out today can be summed up in three words—alienation, fear, and violence.[98] Peters asserts that alienation, fear, and violence in urban contexts are relational manifestations of the far deeper issue pondered throughout the history of human theological reflection: the problem of evil.[99] Consequently, evil is malevolent, deceptive, and destructive. It is contagious. Evil warps the spiritual perception, distorts material vision, and dulls the ethical senses in a manner that often belies its sinister and ultimately fatal qualities.[100]

Morally, evil can be understood as the absence of good, or any things that cause suffering in the human condition. Cornel West, in *Race Matters*, characterizes this as a

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[96] Peters, 7.

[97] David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry in a New Millennium* (Federal Way, WA: World Vision, 2005), 1.

[98] Peters, 8.

[99] Peters, 8.

[100] Peters, 13.

"nihilism" that seems to pervade human existence (particularly in much of Black America and in many of urban contexts). West wrote of the "nihilism of Black America" against the backdrop of the Los Angeles riots of April 1992, which followed the acquittal of the police officers charged in the beating of Rodney King, and the ensuing racial tensions in that city. West characterizes this nihilism as "a lived experience of coping with horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness."[101]

Several factors contribute to challenges that exist in many urban areas. According to William Julius Wilson, while structural forces are the primary cause of inner-city poverty and other social disparities among Blacks, it is also necessary to examine cultural forces that have emerged, over time, due to the structural forces.[102] He states that two types of social forces contribute directly to racial group outcomes such as differences in poverty and employment rate: social acts and social processes. *Social acts* refer to the behavior of individuals within a society. Examples of social acts are stereotyping, stigmatization, and discrimination in hiring. *Social processes* refer to the "machinery" of society that exists to promote ongoing relations among members of the larger group. Examples of social processes that contribute directly to racial group outcomes include laws, policies, and institutional practices that exclude people based on their race or ethnicity.[103]

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[101] Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993), 14.

[102] William Julius Wilson, *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 3.

[103] Wilson, 5.

Numerous challenges confront the future of cities and their vitality, and these ultimately impact the type of leaders needed to effect change in urban ministry contexts. According to Charles Euchner and Stephen McGovern, these challenges include poverty, economic development, housing, education, and crime—and they propose a communitarian approach aimed at bridging longstanding divisions.[104] Euchner and McGovern assert that anyone who wants to do something about the "urban crisis" needs to acknowledge political, social, and economic constraints. But it is also important to avoid paralysis. Within these constraints, people can make their own politics. Even modest urban revitalization policies at the outset can begin to inspire civic engagement, which can foster the development of a new political culture that respects community, participation in public life, and a more active role for government in promoting opportunity.[105]

Baltimore, MD is a case in point of a city where social and economic challenges have been precipitous over time. Lawrence Brown, a former associate professor of sociology at Morgan State University, argues that in Baltimore, there have been over 100 years of patterns of racial segregation, and practices and policies that promoted the exploitation of Black residents.[106] Investment in Baltimore is fragmented by race,

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[104] Charles Euchner and Stephen McGovern, *Urban Policy Reconsidered: Dialogues on the Problems and Prospects of American Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2-33.

[105] Euchner and McGovern, 32-33.

[106] Lawrence Brown, "Two Baltimore's: The White L vs. the Black Butterfly" *Baltimore Sun,* June 28, 2016, accessed September 6, 2022, https://www.baltimoresun.com/citypaper/bcpnews-two-baltimores-the-white-l-vs-the-black-butterfly-20160628-htmlstory.html?int=lat_digitaladshouse_bx-modal_acquisition-subscriber_ngux_display-ad-interstitial_bx-bonus-story_____.

income, and geography, creating what Brown finds to be the socio-political phenomenon

of "two Baltimores" as imaged in "the white L vs. the black Butterfly." The geographical

shape of an "L" in predominantly white communities gives these communities more

resources and support, and the shape of a "Butterfly" spans the east and west sides of the

city in predominantly Black communities, which are more likely to be neglected.[107]

Brown asserts that as a result of these patterns and practices, Baltimore is a city

that is hyper-segregated into two parts and that the city's hyper-segregated

neighborhoods experience radically different realities. Due to these dynamics, white

neighborhoods form the shape of a geographic "L" running north-to-south through the

center of the city, and accumulate structural advantages, while Black neighborhoods,

shaped in the form of a butterfly, on the city's east and west, accumulate structural

disadvantages. According to Brown, Baltimore's hyper-segregation is the root cause of

racial and economic inequity, health and housing inequities/disparities, drug addiction,

educational inequality, and community unrest and violence.[108]

Similarly, in *Sabbath in the City*, Bryan Stone and Claire Wolfteich identify six

critical challenges in cities that can affect the sustenance of ministry leadership

excellence in urban contexts. These challenges are (1) transitions occurring in declining

neighborhoods, commuting neighborhoods, and aging congregations; (2) the expansive

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[107] Lionel Foster, "The Black Butterfly: Racial Segregation and Investment Patterns in Baltimore," *Urban Institute*, February 5, 2019, "The Black Butterfly", accessed September 20, 2022, Racial Segregation and Investment Patterns in Baltimore (urban.org).

[108] Brown, "Two Baltimores: The White L vs. the Black Butterfly."

nature of social need, where churches are key places where people continue to go to seek help; (3) local church identity in the context of denominational bodies which often challenge churches' relevance in local communities; (4) diversity and immigration, and questions of how churches effectively address the needs of the young, elderly, and economically and socially diverse; (5) division and alienation among diverse groups of people within communities; and (6) the lack of resources, and thus the need to devise needs-based and asset-based strategies and approaches to addressing the scarcity of resources.[109]

Given these challenges, several areas need attention to sustain leadership excellence in urban ministry contexts. Stone and Wolfteich assert that keys to sustaining leadership excellence in urban ministry settings include: (1) cultivating holy friendships; (2) sabbath practices that honor creation and promote liberation; (3) renewing the spirit; and (4) finding God in the city.[110] They assert that urban leaders need to seek and sustain an "urban spirituality" that is attuned to discovering and creating necessary rhythms, patterns, and practices to nourish the leader's spirit.[111]

In *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African-American Communities,* Robert Franklin offers a sociological analysis of various challenges that exist in urban contexts, and by extension, that confront many of those serving in urban ministry

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[109] Stone and Wolfteich, 1-20.

[110] Stone and Wolfteich, 26-90.

[111] Stone and Wolfteich, xvii.

settings, and what he refers to as "crisis in the village."[112] For Franklin, the challenges facing many urban communities today are contradictory to the very nature of the foundations upon which these communities have historically been shaped.

Franklin is a product of the South-side of Chicago, IL near the Robert Taylor Homes, which before its demolition in 2007 was the largest public housing project in the world. He points out that much of the demise and crisis in the proverbial "village" today is rooted in factors like rising levels of unemployment and underemployment, the lack of affordable housing, and a crisis in urban healthcare. These root causes and their results, including rising dropout rates among students in urban school systems and rising levels of youth violence, present significant challenges to the prospect of the realization of a *restored hope* in communities—especially in urban areas across our nation.[113]

Franklin asserts that for restoration to occur in urban communities, collaboration is essential. His collaborative approach to "restoring the village" has six interrelated aspects: (1) focused conversation, (2) collaborative leadership, (3) vision and planning, (4) accountability and action, (5) sustaining and fundraising, and (6) documenting and celebrating progress.[114]

The nature and conditions of cities today point to the dynamic forces and factors of tremendous needs and opportunities, and apparent despair and hope. These forces and

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[112] Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African-American Communities* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007), 1-40.

[113] Franklin, 1-40.

[114] Franklin, 227-244.

factors call for transformational leaders who can move people and processes through change and toward sustained growth and thriving. As cities are centers of activity and will become even more so in the future, life in them will serve as key indicators of how society will flourish.

Urban Ministry

Because of the unique nature of urban areas, urban ministry has several unique characteristics. According to David Claerbaut, a good definition of urban ministry is that it is a community, usually organized formally, of God's people in the city. Ministry is carried out both within, to the members, and without, to the world.[115] Ronald Peters defines urban ministry as a way of understanding God, based on the dynamics of the city, and involves a theological praxis that seeks to enhance the quality of life for all creation.[116]

In characterizing urban ministry, Robert Franklin details five types of ministry engagement in urban contexts.[117] These five types are (1) *Ministries of charity and mercy* that provide direct relief to people who suffer. Most churches participate in some form of this type of ministry. (2) *Ministries of nurture* that offer sustained support to assist people in becoming self-reliant. This demands a greater commitment of time and resources than ministries of charity and mercy. (3) *Ministries that provide human services* that are

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[115] Claerbaut, x.

[116] Peters, 8.

[117] Robert M. Franklin, see preface to eds. Eldin Villafane, Bruce Jackson, Robert Evans, Alice Frazier, *Transforming the City: Reframing Education for Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), xxii.

reflected in the way the church structures itself (often through the creation of private, nonprofit organizations—e.g.,501c3, community development corporations) to provide services such as child care, job training, community services, etc. (4) *Ministries of justice* that provide a prophetic, public witness of social activism. In this way, the church becomes a voice for the voiceless and a forum for the powerless. (5) *Ministries of comprehensive community transformation* that involve developing and announcing a vision of the "good community." Churches engaged in such ministries take a leading role in acquiring vacant land, organizing capital, supporting micro-enterprises, and directing public and private resources.

According to Mark Chaves, et.al., congregations engage in a great variety of social service activities, but some types of activities are much more common than others. The single most common kind of helping activity involves food assistance, with half (48%) of all congregations mentioning feeding the hungry among their four most important social service programs.[118] Programs specifically aimed at children and youth (32% of all congregations), addressing health needs (18%), offering education or training other than religious education (16%), serving the homeless (15%), providing clothing or blankets to people (15%), and building or repairing homes (14%) were also among the most commonly mentioned activities, though they were much less common than food assistance. More rarely mentioned by congregations as one of their four most important social service projects are those requiring longer-term commitments and more intensive

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[118] Mark Cheves, Joseph Roso, Anna Holleman, and Mary Hawkins, *Congregations in 21st Century America* (Durham, NC: Duke University, Department of Sociology, 2021), 48.

interaction with the needy. Programs aimed at helping prisoners, substance abusers, the unemployed, immigrants, and victims of domestic violence, for example, were listed by fewer than 5% of congregations as one of their four most important programs, and only 11% of congregations place any one of these activities on their top-four list.[119]

Franklin asserts that leaders who engage urban communities in these and many other ways must be formed and nurtured. He asserts that such ministries require leaders who are transformed nonconformists, and states that transformed nonconformists do not appear automatically or accidentally."[120] At best, such leaders emerge from learning contexts that have been forged in the flame of experimentation, evaluation, prayer, and practical critical, and theological thinking. Strategic theological thinking and planning about urban ministry should give some attention to matters of curriculum, faculty, institutional partnership, evaluation, and the warrants (biblical, theological, and ethical) for such ministry.[121]

Ronald Peters asserts that there are eight interwoven areas of urban ministry upon which churches should focus. These areas are (1) economic life, (2) educational systems, (3) family life, (4) public health, (5) ethnic/racial relations, (6) religious culture, (7) restorative justice (civil/political rights), and (8) the environment (environmental justice).[122] These eight areas—what Peters refers to as lenses and focus areas in urban

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[119] Cheves, et. al., 48.

[120] Franklin, xxiii.

[121] Franklin, xxiii.

[122] Peters, 159-165.

ministry—represent themes that characterize the context of urban ministry. These focus areas relate to public issues that tend to characterize urban ministry globally in all regions and cultures and comprise organizational networks common to urban areas around the world.[123]

Peters further asserts that one of the biggest challenges facing practitioners of urban ministry has less to do with the geographical and sociological context of the city itself than with pervasive realities that define the era in which we live.[124] He proposes that several chasms exist in cities that serve as points of division and alienation, and point to the need for reconciliation. He characterizes a chasm as a deep cleft or depression, a gorge, that constitutes a huge division in an otherwise relatively unbroken stretch of landscape and, as such, symbolizes much that characterizes urban ministry.[125]

According to Peters, at least four chasms must be bridged in developing an approach to doing urban ministry: (1) *The urban ministry and Christian ministry chasm*, which is an artificial ecclesial barrier that must be removed; (2) *The urban and rural chasm* where there is a failure to see the fundamental unity that exists between urban and rural communities. Many of the challenges that exist in urban communities also exist in rural communities. (3) *The ethics and evangelism chasm* where there needs to be a recognition of urban ministry's roots in justice advocacy (ethical agency) and evangelistic mission (spreading the Gospel). (4) *The urban as a code word and urban as*

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[123] Peters, 159-165.

[124] Peters, 11-18.

[125] Peters, 19.

a theological symbol chasm where "urban" is often a code word for "Black," "Brown," "those people," "poor," and "non-mainstream," Peters asserts that as a theological symbol— "urban" is an eschatological paradigm and symbol of hope.[126]

Identifying a clear set of core values is also essential for guiding ministry in urban contexts. Peters states that core values are "those ideals or principles that form the essence of Christian ministry. They are basic, central, nonnegotiable beliefs that motivate and energize ministry."[127] Those values undergird the self-esteem and vision of individuals and the church as a community. With them, the Gospel can become a reality in people's lives. He identifies six core values that are essential for urban ministry: theism, love, community, creativity, reconciliation, and hope.[128]

Essentially, urban ministry is a means of reconciling urban communities with the church and Christ. The ministry of Jesus was one of reconciliation, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world with Godself" (II Cor. 5:19). Christ left the church with the commission to go and do likewise. The church is the vehicle that continuously carries out the ministry of God in the world. The ministry of the church, through its various ways of serving the world, is the bridge between God and humanity; it is God working in and through people and institutions as God continues to reconcile the world with Godself.

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[126] Peters, 20-26.

[127] Peters, 110.

[128] Peters, 112-134.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer characterized the church as Christ existing as community.[129] He explicated several characteristics of the Christian community (the church). First, he saw a relationship between Christian community and sanctification. He stated, "Christian community is like the *Christian's sanctification*. It is a gift of God that we cannot claim. Only God knows the real state of our fellowship or our sanctification. What may appear to be weak and trifling to us may be great and glorious to God."[130]

Second, Bonhoeffer pointed to *Christ and the Holy Spirit as the foundations of Christian community*. He stated, "Because Christian community is founded solely on Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual and not a psychic reality. In this, it differs absolutely from all other communities... The community of the Spirit is the fellowship of those who are called by Christ; the human community of spirit is the fellowship of devout souls."[131]

Third, according to Bonhoeffer*, Christian community is marked by spiritual love.* Because spiritual love does not desire but rather serves, it loves the enemy as a brother (or sister). It originates neither in the brother (sister) nor in the enemy but in Christ and the Word. Humanity's love can never understand spiritual love, for spiritual love is from above; it is something completely strange, new, and incomprehensible to all earthly love.[132]

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[129] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Communion of Saints.* trans. Robert Gregor Smith (London: William B. Collins, 1963), 134.

[130] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community.* trans. John Doberstein (New York: Harper Collins, 1954), 30.

[131] Bonhoeffer, 31.

[132] Bonhoeffer, 35.

Ministry, then, is to be understood as an act of compassion and love and grows out of God's gracious love for humanity. Ministry is how salvation in Christ is offered to the world. This understanding of ministry is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the way that Jesus called, taught, and then sent those who would accept his teachings and be in ministry with the world, living out the mission of God (*Missio Dei*).

In *Theology from the Trenches: Reflections on Urban Ministry,* Roger Gench offers a covenantal model for doing urban ministry and characterizes urban ministry as a covenant community that is shaped through establishing the cruciform covenant, creating a covenant community, engaging a covenant community, and deepening a covenant community.[133] Gench, a theologian and the pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, an urban congregation located in downtown Washington, DC, provides a theoretical and practical framework for how organizing ministry for transformation and growth can occur through developing a covenant community and asserts that urban congregations committed to ministry in their contexts grapple with formidable issues endemic to these contexts—homelessness, scarcity of living wage jobs, racism, mental illness, crime, and education and economic disparities. According to Gench, the covenant began/begins with the redeeming/saving work of Christ on the Cross.[134]

God's culminating vision in the Bible is an urban one—a vision of the New Heaven and New Earth, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down of heaven from

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[133] Roger J Gench, *Theology from the Trenches: Reflections on Urban Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 29-77.

[134] Gench, 3.

God (Rev. 21:2).[135] Cruciformity and crucifixion are (1) historical reality, and (2) a symbol of the abuse of power. The crucifixion is symbolic of any exercise of power that dominates, deforms, or defaces human life.[136] Gench then offers perspectives on how to effectively organize for congregational renewal in urban contexts. He draws on Mike Gecan's four tools for effectively analyzing and organizing one's congregation and community.[137] These tools are (1) the individual (relational) meeting; (2) power analysis of both the church and organizations in the community; (3) teaching and training; and (4) action and evaluation.

In terms of *creating a covenant community* as a framework for community organizing, Gench observes that in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus was always eating, and was always going to/from a meal. According to Gench, one-on-one meetings are a foundational aspect of creating a covenant community. The focus of these relational meetings should be on building relationships and creating a covenantal culture of deep and abiding connection through the hearing and storytelling.[138]

He offers that the next step is *engaging the covenant community*. This entails involving the community in a listening campaign. He states that "Listening is at the heart of communal life" as listening facilitates collective discernment and is a means by which people can be integrated and engaged in the church's shared ministry. Engaging the

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[135] Gench, 4.

[136] Gench, 5.

[137] Gench, 25.

[138] Gench, 29-44.

covenant community essentially involves living into the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36-40), which calls for the integration of heart, mind, and will as an embodiment of God's love.[139]

According to Gench, the final step in organizing a church/community for action and change is *deepening the covenant community*. This is an ongoing process that occurs through contemplative practices and entails both personal and corporate prayer and worship, and creates the space in which persons discern a yearning for God and God's people.[140]

In *Walking with Nehemiah,* Joseph Daniels utilizes the biblical image of Nehemiah walking and surveying the walls of Jerusalem, which lie in ruins, as the starting point for the transformation of faith leaders, the church, and the community. Daniels is the pastor of Emory Fellowship United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, an urban congregation that has grown from 25 active members in 1992 to now over 1,000 members. He asserts that leaders must survey the pockets of their churches and communities that are in ruin and then respond accordingly. "It isn't until you know for whom or what your heart breaks that God can reveal where in the community and with whom your ministry needs to be done."[141] When we get to the place where we can

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[139] Gench, 45-62.

[140] Gench, 63-78.

[141] Daniels, 1.

replace statistics with faces and real-life stories then we will be more inclined to help and less apt to hinder or simply hide.[142]

Daniels recommends that leaders engage in "Nehemiah Walks" of their communities, and suggests that several things are important to ensure that the "Nehemiah Walks" yield clarity for what is needed to restore the community. Similar to Gench, Daniels shares that first and foremost, "Relational 1:1" campaigns inside the congregation are an effective way of discovering the heartbreak of the congregation.[143] Relational 1:1s can be a good tool for gathering information and understanding what issues are important to the life of church and community members, and where change is occurring inside the church walls, and in the community.

He then speaks of the necessity of bathing the church and community, or that which has caused heartbreak, in prayer. Prayer helps to ensure that the church's plans align with God's will. A major portion of the work of transformation is recognizing that not everybody will on board. Daniels states:

> The leaders of the congregation have to acknowledge that the congregation is not all-in about God's restoration process. The congregation has to decide whether it is going to play church or be the church. Usually, at this stage, church councils or leadership teams have to have a "come to Jesus" meeting about what the congregation is about and what it is going to be known for.[144]

Similarly, in *Restoring At-risk Communities*, John Perkins asserts that urban ministry starts with identifying the needs of the people. Responding to those needs in

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[142] Daniels, 1.

[143] Daniels, 14.

[144] Daniels, 38.

holistic ways is based on biblical principles, is tested by time, develops and utilizes

leaders in the community, encourages relocation to live among the people, demands

reconciliation, and empowers through redistribution of all community members by

sharing skills, talents, education, and resources.[145] He suggests that the "felt need"

concept of engaging members of at-risk communities must be practiced by "starting with

people's felt need."[146]

Perkins offers critical insights on approaches to restoring challenged urban

communities through what he identifies as the 3-Rs—Reconciliation, Relocation, and

Redistribution.[147] He offers the three-step journey (admit, submit, and commit) as a tool

for racial, economic, and social reconciliation, where separation and distance exist among

people.

First, he writes of the positive effects of the physical relocation of people into the

communities in which they are doing ministry as a means of building trust, developing

relationships, and demonstrating signs of full investment in the community's well-being.

Perkins points out that Jesus lived among the people he served during his earthly

ministry.

Then, Perkins discusses the importance of reconciliation of people with God, and

their neighbor.[148] Reconciliation gets to the crux of community connection and

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[145] Perkins, 26.

[146] Perkins, 17.

[147] Perkins, 75-162.

[148] Perkins, 75-106.

engagement in urban ministry contexts. It requires a decisive paradigm shift—one evidenced by friendships of trust, common mission, and mutual submission that go beyond Sunday morning.[149]

Finally, Perkins discusses the importance of redistribution.[150] His thesis is that while economic redistribution is important in ministering in many urban communities, the most important things to be redistributed are people in the community. Justice cannot be achieved from a distance. Redistribution results when people, reconciled with God and each other, share whatever resources they have to work together for the common good of the community.

Several best practices can be identified for effective urban ministry. Jason Byassee, in "Strategies for Urban Ministry," offers case studies of several churches in Chicago, IL that have sought to address the challenges facing their churches and communities through ways of improvising, trying new approaches, and risking failure.[151] His findings are that successful urban ministries focus on doing a few things well, like connecting with people through hospitality, art, companionship, theater, food, or service.

Rudy Rasmus is the pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church in downtown Houston, TX. St. John's is one of the fastest-growing inner-city congregations in America, having grown from 25 active members in 1990 to over 8,000 active members

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[149] Perkins, 110.

[150] Perkins, 139-159.

[151] Jason Byassee, "Strategies for Urban Ministry," *The Christian Century* (Chicago, IL: The Christian Century, March 8, 2008), 22-29.

today. Rasmus asserts that to have a strong, vibrant ministry in urban communities, 5-Cs

must be incorporated: common sense, collaboration, commitment, consistency, and

contributions.[152] He shares that it is important to –

> "…set clear goals and establish a workable strategy. Ask plenty of questions, build a great team, and look for resources to help you. If your heart is broken because you see the needs of men, women, boys, and girls on the street, enlist the leaders of your church to pray and help you communicate God's love in a tangible way to those who desperately need it. As God leads you to build your team and find resources, take action to touch the lives of "the least of these."[153]

In terms of leadership traits that are important for persons serving in urban

ministry contexts, in *Urban Churches: Vital Signs—Beyond Charity Toward Justice*, Nile

Harper identifies fifteen "vital signs" that urban churches tend to have in common that

are emblematic of the improving health of these congregations and communities.[154] One

of these vital signs is the ability of urban leaders to capitalize on human gifts and what

sociologists call "social capital." Harper asserts that this is the inner resource that lifts up

new and indigenous leadership; it is the human asset that helps empower previously

uninvolved people.[155]

Harvey Conn and Manuel Ortiz, in *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City and*

the People of God, similarly identified several contextual traits of urban leaders, and

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[152] Rudy Rasmus, "Leading Ministry with the Homeless" in *Leading Ideas* (Washington, DC: Lewis Center for Church Leadership, June 24, 2009), accessed September 5, 2022, https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/leading-a-ministry-with-homeless-people/.

[153] Rasmus, "Leading Ministry with the Homeless."

[154] Nile Harper, *Urban Churches: Vital Signs - Beyond Charity, Toward Justice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 1.

[155] Harper, 10.

propose that there are three types of urban leaders—relocated leaders, indigenous leaders, and multi-ethnic leaders.[156] According to Conn and Ortiz, relocated leaders enter the urban community from a different environment or culture, such as a suburban or rural context. Indigenous leaders are those who have grown up in the city and belong to a certain culture. And multi-ethnic leaders are typically ministering in a racially-ethnically diverse context and might work with other leaders in a local church.

Conn and Ortiz also assert that the critical impact that context has on leadership requires that the three kinds of urban church leaders be distinguished. Apart from understanding the important role of context in urban ministry, it is not possible to distinguish these different kinds of leaders. Leaders and their churches need to be aware of these differences so that they can consider them in their preparation for ministry.[157]

In summary, given the unique qualities and dynamics of urban communities today, urban ministries and the leaders who serve in these contexts must be uniquely equipped with relational and technical skills to lead in facilitating community wholeness and flourishing. Urban ministry seeks to address the particular felt needs that exist among people in defined urban contexts. This is often seen in addressing people's tangible felt needs for education, employment, health care, housing, safety/policing, technology, and transportation. But urban ministry also entails addressing the common human spiritual strivings of seeing and experiencing God in communities through the work of fulfilling

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[156] Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom of God, the City, and the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 378-397.

[157] Conn and Ortiz, 379-380.

God's mission through acts of worship, discipleship, fellowship, mission, and evangelism. Urban ministry entails promoting and being agents of God's love, peace, blessing, justice, and hope among people in urban contexts.

Transformational Leadership Concepts and Leading Change

Concepts

Critical to the future vitality of urban churches in the 21st century is devising approaches to developing passionate, effective transformational leadership tailored to the needs of urban ministry settings. Within the context of consistently rapid change, churches, like most other institutions today, need effective transformational leadership. Churches need women and men who have a vision for a better future, God's preferred future, and who possess the necessary skills to help move churches and communities toward that future. Without transformational leadership, churches face the prospect of losing direction and failing to fulfill God's mission, vision, and purpose.

Edward Dayton and Ted Engstrom assert that there is a great need for information and guidance on leadership in not-for-profit, service, religious, and other non-business types of organizations. Not enough is known about leadership in not-for-profit organizations, given that most of the research about leadership, management, and organizational theory has been concerned with profit-making organizations.[158] To remain faithful to their calling, churches have an obligation (a divine calling and mandate) to examine approaches to leadership development from multiple perspectives.

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[158] Edward R. Dayton, and Ted Engstrom, *Strategy for Leadership: Planning, Activating, Motivating, Elevating* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1979), 14-15.

The need for effective transformational leaders is seen in the decline in many churches and denominations over the past several decades. Lovett Weems states –

> In the last two decades, five mainline denominations had a net loss of 5.2 million members, while the population of the country rose by 47 million. The figures are even worse when one looks at people of color and people in poverty.[159]

According to Weems, "…the church has yet to explore the implications of leadership for the life of the church and the role of its leaders. The church desperately needs new wisdom that draws upon the richness of Christian teaching and tradition, and, at the same time, mines the best of contemporary research on leadership."[160]

In defining church leadership, Weems asserts that it is never solely about personal authority, a leader's style, or a management process, but rather about the faithful future of faith traditions and communities. Leadership becomes a channel of God's grace in helping God's people discern to what God is calling them and helping them take their next faithful step toward God's vision.[161] According to William C. H. Prentice, leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of (other people). The person who successfully marshals their human collaborators to achieve particular ends is a leader. A great leader is one who can do so day after day, and year after year, in a wide variety of circumstances.[162]

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[159] Lovett H. Weems, *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture and Integrity* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2010), 18.

[160] Weems, 18.

[161] Weems, 1.

[162] William C. H. Prentice, "Understanding Leadership," *Harvard Business Review* (Boston: Harvard Business Review, January 2004), accessed February 22, 2023, https://hbr.org/2004/01/understanding-leadership.

Leadership can thus also be viewed as an influenced relationship between leaders and followers who seek real changes which reflect their mutual purposes. It is a process that any person can perform; it is not limited by position, title, circumstance, or context. It involves a set of attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are learned, not inherent, and essentially means working cooperatively with others to accomplish agreed-upon goals.

Given these definitions and characteristics of leadership, the philosophies, systems, processes, and resources that need to emerge to bring about constructive approaches to leadership development for the future should be clearly defined, articulated, and developed. This could result in intentionality around leadership development, and it becoming the norm throughout churches. Once leadership has been defined, attention can then be focused on how churches and organizations go about "channeling and tapping" into existing streams of knowledge and perspectives of societal leadership and leadership development. Then, the matter of how intentionality around identifying, nurturing, and developing Christian leaders can begin to be addressed.

Weems cites David Schuller in pointing out that "the most detrimental factors in pastoral effectiveness are (1) self-serving ministry, (2) undisciplined living, and (3) emotional immaturity."[163] When any of these three exist in the behavior of the leader, ministry becomes less effective and increasingly frustrating. When the focus of the ministry is on the leader—manifesting in the appearance of a desire for affirmation, acknowledgment, control, or authority—this is when leadership challenges and organizational ineffectiveness can occur. Conversely, when ministry and leadership are

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[163] Weems, 115.

outwardly focused—when it is open, vulnerable, and charitable—then the leader knows

that they are working toward God's vision instead of their own. The need for dynamic,

relational, effective leaders in the church is further articulated by Weems:

> Leadership is needed for Christian communities as for other human communities, but not necessarily leadership in a fixed hierarchical model. Churches are likely to grow toward partnership among their members when there is dynamic leadership behavior among a variety of people and not just one leader.[164]

This speaks to the need for transformational leaders. Peter Northouse asserts that

"As its name implies, transformational leadership is a process that changes and

transforms people."[165] According to Northouse, transformational leadership is seen when

leaders' behaviors influence followers and inspire them to perform beyond their

perceived abilities. As people are transformed, organizations are, by extension,

transformed. He also asserts that transformational leadership is one form of follower-

focused servant-leadership. Follower-focused servant-leadership can be seen in the

differentiation between transformational leadership and transactional leadership.[166]

Northouse asserts that in contrast to transactional leadership, transformational

leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection

that raises the level of motivation and morale in both the leader and the follower.[167]

Transactional leaders develop means of exchange (quid pro quo, this-for-that, reciprocal)

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[164] Weems, 18, quoting from Letty M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979).

[165] Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* 8th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2019)*,* 161.

[166] Northouse, 161.

[167] Northouse, 164.

with followers, but the transformation of people is typically not the primary objective of the transactional leader. In transactional leadership, behavior is maintained, and jobs are performed within the context of static transactional relational norms that are maintained over time, like the simple expectation that people will be paid an agreed-upon salary in exchange for the work that they do. Again, this type of exchange doesn't necessarily lead to the transformation of people or organizations in the short or long term.

In distinguishing between transactional and transformational leadership, Mark McCloskey and Jim Louwsma assert that in transactional leadership, the follower serves the leader, while in transformational leadership, this is turned to where leaders serve followers and the organization.[168] They point out that the relationships of most leaders and followers are transactional, as the transactional leader seeks to make a deal, and by contrast, the transformational leader seeks to engage followers in a relationship[169] They characterize transformational leaders as "catalysts for empowering personal change in their followers' lives" who hold persons accountable to "operate at their best."[170]

Similarly, Northouse points out that transformational leaders set out to empower followers and nurture them in change. They attempt to raise consciousness in individuals and to get them to transcend their self-interests for the sake of others.[171] Transformation can be seen in the shifting of thinking, behaviors, and habits among leaders and those

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[168] McCloskey and Louwsma, 36-44.

[169] McCloskey and Louwsma, 36-44.

[170] McCloskey and Louwsma, 20.

[171] Northouse, 177.

they lead. This implies a move from what is (actual) to a preferred state (aspirational). Based on how leadership has been defined and characterized above, then transformational leadership can be viewed as how transformation in persons is most effectively influenced by a leader or group of leaders.

McCloskey and Louwsma offer a model for virtue-based transformational leadership development and assert that true transformation is an ongoing process that is rooted in values and vision. The leader's moral character is considered of greatest importance to a process of transformation that is driven by the values and vision of all involved… Virtue is moral strength placed in service of others.[172] McCloskey and Louwsma assert that the development of a transformational leader is a process that is rooted in virtue, where the leader finds themself somewhere in the process—on a continuum—of moving from transactional to more transformational approaches to leadership, and seeks to grow into becoming more transformational, and less transactional in their leadership over time.

Charles Bugg asserts that leaders must look intrinsically before seeking to motivate and lead others.[173] He further asserts that it helps for leaders to address the following questions: "What does God see in (me) that needs changing to become a better leader?" and "What am (I) willing to change to become a more effective, God-led leader?" Bugg also posits that transformational leadership presumes that leaders need to

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[172] McCloskey and Louwsma, 45.

[173] Charles Bugg, *Transformational Leadership: Leading with Integrity* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys Publishers, 2010), 5-15.

change. Leadership does not mean that every one of us does everything right or that we must be successful in each aspect of our work. Leadership not only demands risk, but it also requires a willingness to learn from mistakes and to forgive ourselves for being humans who sometimes fail God, ourselves, and others.[174]

A key insight from McCloskey and Louwsma regarding transformational leadership pertains to the employment of the 4-Rs model—*Relationships, Roles, Responsibilities, and Results.*[175] The 4-Rs can serve as key points of inquiry in the leadership development process to help leaders better understand the impact of relationships, roles, responsibilities, and results on their overall effectiveness, along with the effectiveness of their respective teams and organizations.[176] Using the 4-Rs as points of inquiry and qualitative assessment in leadership development can help organizations engage more systematically and intentionally in processes of qualitatively assessing and measuring (and in some cases, empirically quantifying) leadership effectiveness across an organization.

In their article, "The Crucibles of Leadership," Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas address the matter of what makes a leader, and why certain people seem to naturally inspire confidence, loyalty, and hard work, while others stumble, again and again. They assert that extraordinary leaders find meaning in—and learn from—the most negative events, and like phoenixes rising from the ashes, they emerge from adversity

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[174] Bugg, 13.

[175] McCloskey and Louwsma, 36-44.

[176] McCloskey and Louwsma, 36-44.

stronger, more confident in themselves and their purpose, and more committed to their

work.[177] Bennis and Thomas call these transformative events "crucibles"—severe tests or

trials. They offer case studies of persons who have experienced "crucibles," and what can

be gleaned from their experiences that give insight into what makes extraordinary,

transformational leaders.

For leaders, and by extension organizations to grow, Stephen Covey asserts that a

large degree of interdependence must be at work. He further asserts that interdependence

is a higher value than independence.[178] Covey states that "Human life is interdependent.

We can combine our talents and abilities and create something greater together.

Interdependent people combine their efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their

greatest success."

By recognizing that leadership is a group function to which all members can

contribute, a sense of teamwork can be developed. Sharing leadership, recognition,

satisfaction, and responsibility ensures that all the resources of the group and the skills of

group members will be used productively. Lovett Weems writes of the criticality of

developing teams. He makes several observations about the necessity of leaders operating

in the context of a team. An important observation is that: "Effective leadership…is much

more a relational process than people often assume."[179] Leaders, Weems says, must be

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[177] Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas, The Crucibles of Leadership," *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Leadership* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), 97-114.

[178] Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 215-234.

[179] Weems, 59.

willing and able to relinquish their authoritative leadership role to strengthen others in the

joint task of implementing the vision for the community.[180] A leader, he writes, must be

"able constantly to shift roles among being leader, peer, and follower."[181] In this way, a

leader empowers others to share personally in the vision.[182]

Weems further asserts that the more successful an organization is, the more it

requires leaders who can develop high functioning teams. Thus, effective leaders exert

great effort in team-building. They understand what it means to be both a leader and a

servant of the team, and they willingly acknowledge indebtedness and gratitude to team

members.[183]

Effective team-building is an essential aspect of transformational leadership and

organizational vitality and growth. In "Examining the Differential Longitudinal

Performance of Directive versus Empowering Leadership in Teams," Natalia Lorinkova,

Matthew Pearsall, and Henry Sims assert that leadership styles are important to

leadership, team development, and organizational effectiveness. Their research integrates

various theories from leadership literature to resolve ambiguity regarding the relative

benefits of empowering and directive leadership styles.[184] Based on longitudinal

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[180] Weems, 67.

[181] Weems, 57.

[182] Weems, 58.

[183] Weems, 59.

[184] Natalie Lorinkova, Matthew J. Pearsall and Henry P. Sims, "Examining the Differential Longitudinal Performance of Directive versus Empowering Leadership in Teams," *Academy of Management Journal* (Briarcliff Manor, NY: Academy of Management, 56(2), May 7, 2012), accessed September 12, 2022, (PDF) Lorinkova, Pearsall and Sims 2013 (researchgate.net).

performance data from 60 teams, their empirical findings suggest that teams led by a directive leader initially outperform those led by an empowering leader, but over time, teams led by empowering leaders experience greater performance improvement because of higher levels of team learning, coordination, empowerment, and mental model development.

Similarly, Linda Gratton and Tamara J. Erickson posit that the only way to assemble the knowledge and breadth required to pull off many of the complex tasks (organizations) face today is to assemble highly collaborative teams, with highly skilled and educated team members.[185] Gratton and Erickson outline eight ways to build collaborative teams: investing in signature relationship practices, modeling collaborative behavior, creating a "gift culture" through mentoring and coaching, ensuring the requisite skills, supporting a strong sense of community, assigning team leaders that are both task- and relationship-oriented, building on heritage relationships, and understanding role clarity and task ambiguity.

Like Gratton and Erickson, Joseph Folkman points to five aspects of building a highly effective team.[186] He states that team leaders inspire more than they drive, resolve conflict and increase cooperation, set stretch goals, communicate, and are trusted.

Another critical aspect of developing highly effective teams is that team members should feel that their work is meaningful and that they are playing a role in the team's

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[185] Linda Gratton and Tamara J. Erickson, "Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams," *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Teams* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013), 55-74.

[186] Joseph Folkman, "5 Ways to Build a High-performance Team," *Forbes* (Jersey City, NJ: Forbes, August 20, 2019), accessed September 12, 2022, 5 Ways To Build A High-Performance Team (forbes.com).

effectiveness. James Laub's APS (Autocratic, Patriarchal, Servant) model of moving

from autocratic to patriarchal leadership, and then eventually to servant-leadership

provides an image/model/process of what it takes for leaders to effectively develop other

leaders and teams, as leaders in the perspective of servant-leaders put the needs of the

people on their teams first.[187] His six variables for servant-leaders are important for

starting and building empowered teams. These variables are that servant-leaders (1) value

people, (2) develop people, (3) build community, (4) display authenticity, (5) provide

leadership, and (6) share leadership. Laub states that "servant-leadership is an

understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those who are being led

over the self-interest of the leader."

It is difficult for many Christian leaders to be authentically vulnerable, open, and

loving in a utilitarian, materialistic, reciprocal, upwardly mobile culture that measures the

value of a person by standards of productivity and efficiency. Indeed, ministry today

often seems to lack the "meaningful, concrete" measures of effectiveness and success that

the post-industrial age urgently demands. How is healing amidst personal loss and frailty,

comforting and caring amidst grief, filling emotional emptiness, or restoring relationships

to be measured in terms of "effectiveness" and "success" in culturally defined terms?

Henri Nouwen, in *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership,*

asserted that for Christian leaders to be authentic and effective, they must address the

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[187] James Allen Laub, "Assessing the Servant Organization: Development of the Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment (SOLA) Instrument," Doctor Education Dissertation (Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University, 1999).

temptations inherent in secular ideas of leadership and success while moving toward a more Christ-centered vision and practice of leadership. He addressed the temptations that all leaders feel to be relevant and essential by "[doing] things, [showing] things, [proving] things, and [building] things.[188] He further asserted that Christian leaders should consider temptations in light of the tasks and the disciplines of their calling.

Nouwen suggested that the way Christian leaders must measure ministry effectiveness is through their irrelevance. Just as Jesus instructed his disciples to be in the world but not of it, Nouwen said that contemporary Christian leaders must "dare to claim their irrelevance…as a divine vocation that allows them to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success, and to bring the light of Christ there."[189] According to Nouwen, this is accomplished by responding to Jesus' question to Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: "Do you love me?" Nouwen called this question "central to all our Christian ministry…that can allow us to be, at the same time, irrelevant and truly confident."[190] It makes us irrelevant because it redirects our attention away from the worldly demand for power, accomplishment, and control toward a loving relationship with God in Christ.

The Christian leader's irrelevance should, thus, be grounded in adherence to and operation from a completely different standard of success than that which is embraced by

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[188] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 2002), 28.

[189] Nouwen, 35.

[190] Nouwen, 36.

the world at large. The Christian leader's confidence should be grounded in knowing that sustenance comes from the power and love of God that is unconditional, without limits, and which will persevere and endure against "all rule and authority, power and dominion" (Eph. 1:21). The Christian leader can only achieve intentional irrelevance in ministry if he/she maintains and nurtures a personal relationship with God through prayer. "The central question is," Nouwen wrote, "Are leaders of the future truly men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word, and to taste fully God's infinite goodness?"[191]

From the church's perspective, leadership can and should offer a counter-cultural perspective to the siren calls of the modern marketplace. Church leadership—spiritual leadership—points the way to a better world, the kind of world intended by God at the dawn of creation and reiterated by Jesus in his teachings about the Kingdom of God. Effective transformational leadership helps the church and its leaders understand that the church does not exist in and for itself, but that it exists to be in mission and ministry with all of God's people.

Leading Change

Change is a natural phenomenon in churches and communities, and any church that is not transforming, within the context of the changes occurring in its ministry context and broader society, is on a path to decline and eventual death. Transformation in

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[191] Nouwen, 43.

the church, as is the case with any organization, is driven by the quality of its leadership. This is to say that transformational church leaders are a key determinant in transforming churches and ministries.

Lovett Weems asserts that leadership is essentially about change. It is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.[192] A prayer from the African-American church puts it well: "Lord, we're not what we want to be, we're not what we need to be, we're not what we are going to be, but thank God Almighty, we're not what we used to be."[193] Weems provides insight into how transformational leaders help build their church's identity and facilitate vitality. He asserts that change, though difficult, is possible and that transformational leaders become skilled at facilitating organizational change and vitality.[194]

Effective transformational leaders in any context are adept at adapting their leadership within the context that they are leading. As every leader and church needs transformation, leaders need to understand the context and the skills that are necessary to effectively lead in a particular context.

In his article, "What Leaders Really Do," John Kotter asserts that leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action. Each has its function and characteristic activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly

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[192] Weems, 22.

[193] Weems, 22.

[194] Lovett, H., Weems, Jr., *Take the Next Step: Leading Lasting Change in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 17.

complex (organizational) environment.[195] Kotter further asserts that leadership is

essentially about coping with change, while in contrast, management is about coping with

complexity. Leadership is about aligning people, whereas management is about

organizing systems.[196]

In *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It: A Guide to Leading Change,* Robert

Quinn offers an image of leading change as one of building a bridge as it is being walked

on. He posits that there is a fundamental need for leaders to be changed from within to

provide transformational leadership most effectively with others and help change the

trajectory of organizations. Quinn discusses the myth of the ruthless hero and talks about

leaders who sacrifice themselves by neglecting their lives outside the job and how such

leaders are externally driven and internally closed off.

Quinn offers eight practices for entering the fundamental state of leadership, or

what might also be deemed to be the journey toward becoming a transformational

leader.[197] These eight practices are: (1) *Reflective Action*—The challenge is to be both

reflective and active. Here, the leader regularly reflects on what is happening in their life,

and in their leadership context. This causes leaders to constantly ask how change can

occur within the leader to improve relationships and situations. (2) *Authentic*

Engagement—This involves the leader being engaged in the world and acting out of who

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[195] John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Leadership* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), 37-56.

[196] Kotter, 37.

[197] Robert Quinn, *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It: A Guide to Leading Change* (San Francisco; Jossey-Bass, 2004), 95-184.

they are as their true, authentic selves, with love for what they are doing, and being authentically engaged with others. (3) *Appreciative Inquiry*—This involves a form of analysis that helps to identify and celebrate successes of the past, and move the organization toward transformation amidst rapid change. (4) *Grounded Vision*—This involves looking toward a preferred future, while also being grounded in the present reality of the people, and the facts of people's and organization's current situation. (5) *Adaptive Confidence*—Here, the leader is willing to enter uncertain situations because they have confidence in their abilities and belief in a higher purpose. The leader is confident that they can learn and adapt as they move forward. (6) *Detached Interdependence*—Here, the leader affirms the value and importance of interdependence as a means of accomplishing a mission and realizing a vision. This changes perspective, and helps with focusing on collaboration and the higher collective good. (7) *Responsible Freedom*—This involves living in personal freedom and being willing to take responsibility for one's thoughts, actions, decisions, successes, and setbacks. (8) *Tough Love*—Here, the leader functions authoritatively, but is humble enough to show that they care about those they are leading and about their organization's success.

Jesus referred to the principle of tough love as being as wise as a serpent and as gentle as a dove (Matt. 10:17), and Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of this as having "a tough mind and a tender heart."[198] According to King, this means being tough-minded

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[198] Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1963), 13-20.

enough to resist evil, and tender-hearted to resist with love.[199] For spiritual leaders,

developing the capacity to walk through areas of uncertainty with confidence and vision

and to "build the bridge as it is being walked on" effectively means walking by faith. An

image that emerges when thinking of "building the bridge as it is being walked on" is

when Jesus walked on water, and Peter said to him, "tell me to come to you on the water"

(Matt. 14:22-33). Peter had to essentially walk out in uncertainty, trusting in Jesus and

although his faith was not strong, in no small way, Peter began to build his bridge to

becoming the leader Jesus wanted him to become as he walked on water toward Jesus.

In *On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Leading Your Congregation through the

Wilderness of Change,* H. Beecher Hicks asserts that the ability of leaders to cast vision is

essential for leading churches through change. Based on his research and 34 years of

experience as the pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, DC, Hicks

outlines twelve principles for visionary leadership and leading change.[200] These

principles are: (1) Proper planning is essential for effective visioning and vision

implementation. (2) Keep the people informed. (3) The leader is central to the vision-

casting and buy-in process. (4) The congregation sees the person before they see the

vision. (5) Competing voices within the church make it difficult for the congregation to

hear what is truly being said, no matter how precise the language is. (6) It will be difficult

for the congregation to conceptualize the vision. (7) Vision-casting implies customized

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[199] King, 14.

[200] H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., *On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Leading Your Congregation through the Wilderness of Change,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 215-226.

change. (8) The visionary must avoid distractions. (9) Vision-casting takes time. (10) The congregation has a responsibility. (11) "Everybody Talkin' 'bout Heaven Ain't Goin' There!" (12) The Struggle Will Continue.

Hicks states that a clear vision statement is necessary because it helps both leaders and the church at-large understand where the ministry is going, how it is going to get there, and what the desired outcomes and expectations are once it has arrived. Vision is vital for ministry. Without vision, people cannot see or grasp their direction.[201]

Importantly, transformational leaders essentially become the chief visionaries of their organization and must be able to communicate the need clearly and consistently for change in compelling and convincing ways and then draw others into the process of facilitating and implementing change. Lovett Weems states that leadership is the ability to anticipate the future based on the past and present. One description of the leader says, "Our leaders tell us what we are thinking. Our leaders tell us what we are feeling." When true visions emerge, the response of the people in the group is a nod of recognition, identification, and affirmation.[202]

There is evidence that points to why certain organizations thrive amid uncertainty and change, while others may not. Jim Collins and Morten Hansen's findings of 10x companies (and their leaders) indicate that companies that thrive amid uncertainty and change have an invariant possession of the three core behaviors of *fanatic discipline, empirical creativity,* and *productive paranoia*. These fit with the correlative

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[201] Hicks, 10.

[202] Weems, *Church Leadership*, 42.

characteristics of capable, transformational leaders—focus, collaboration, and stability.[203]

Collins and Hansen assert that these three characteristics of capable leaders are critical

for leadership amid uncertainty and change.

Ken Cochrum's outline of "Vision, Understanding, Clarity, and Agility" (VUCA)

prime skills among leaders across organizations is also helpful in understanding and

leading through change. Here, attention is given to addressing four dynamics incumbent

in change—*volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity* and shifting toward a focus

on four prime skills—*vision, understanding, clarity, and agility*. According to Cochrum,

the development and deployment of VUCA prime skills lend to means of developing

informal networks that can lead to sustainable and scalable growth across an

organization. With change leadership, both people and tasks are important—and change

leaders need to be both relational and missional, as was Jesus (John 13-17).[204]

John Kotter's work on change theory and management is also helpful in reflecting

on the nature of leadership through organizational change. In *Leading Change,* Kotter

reflects on various dimensions of change and how to lead through it. His eight-step

change-management process involves: (1) establishing a sense of urgency, (2) creating a

coalition, (3) forming a strategic vision and initiative, (4) enlisting a volunteer army, (5)

enabling action by removing barriers, (6) generating short-term wins, (7) sustaining

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[203] Jim Collins and Morten Hansen, *Great by Choice: Chaos, Uncertainty, and Luck* (New York: Harper Business, 2011), 3-21.

[204] Ken Cochrum, "Vision, Understanding, Clarity, and Agility (VUCA) Prime Skills," ML-923DEP-30 Fall 2020 Transformational Ministry Leadership: Theory and Practice (class lecture, Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN, Summer 2020).

acceleration, and (8) instituting change.[205] While Kotter's model is helpful, there needs to be room for adjustment and flexibility in leading a team or organization through change. This speaks to the messiness and uncertainty embedded in change and change leadership.

Kotter further asserts that today's leadership climates and change cycles are more dynamic, non-linear, and fast-paced than those of the past and require informal networking among leaders to get many things done. So, the issue, then, revolves around how—given volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (as proposed by Cochrum)—to employ Kotter's eight-step process in dynamic and fast-paced leadership climates and change cycles. In many respects, Kotter's eight principles: *create, build, form, enlist, enable, generate, sustain, and institute* are not fixed in such a dual operating system but are to be constantly evaluated and tweaked in the dynamic integration of structures, hierarchies, and informal networks.

In *Resurgence: Navigating the Changing Ministry Landscape*, Candace Lewis and Rodney Smothers offer insights into ways that leaders can help churches reinvent themselves to engage their communities in new ways amid change. They characterize "resurgence" as the next season of transformation that churches can experience. It is the identification of a new skill set called "navigating" that will help in discovering best practices and new pathways that create new life in once-vital congregations.[206]

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[205] John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 1996), 37-168.

[206] Candace M. Lewis and Rodney Thomas Smothers, *Resurgence: Navigating the Changing Ministry Landscape* (Nashville, TN: Heritage Publishing, 2018), 10.

Lewis and Smothers outline seven ways that resurgence can occur in churches as leaders facilitate the movement from *industrial to digital, comfort and care to chaos and crisis, caretaker to a catalyst for change, boss to team leader, telling to coaching, scarcity to abundance, and membership to discipleship*.[207] At the heart of resurgence is transformation. Doing church differently at every level requires moving God's people to invest in a greater vision of holistic transformation.[208]

Employing Kurt Lewin's three-step model for leading change, developed in the 1940s can also help organizations work through change. Lewin offered the three-step model of *unfreezing, implementing change, and refreezing*.[209] First, leaders need to facilitate processes that help to *unfreeze* the current state and practices of the organization and convince employees and stakeholders that change is necessary. Second, it is important to *implement change* in strategic ways. And third, it is essential to *refreeze* where change has occurred and to consistently reinforce and embed change across the organization.

Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal's model for framing/reframing organizations (in the areas of structure, people, politics, and symbols) is also insightful for leading change.[210] In *Reframing Organizations*, they write of the importance of first being

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[207] Lewis and Smothers, 45-144.

[208] Lewis and Smothers, 148.

[209] Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (New York: Harper and Row, 1947). Lewin's three-step change-management model was developed in the 1940s.

[210] Lee G. Bolman and Terrance Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*, 6th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2017), 3-24.

attentive to framing around structure and the importance of getting organized. In terms of

human resource (people) framing, Bolman and Deal assert, "Our most important asset is

our people."[211] They point to the complexity of understanding human needs, and the

importance of other-centered communication. Understanding human needs and

motivation are important considerations in any organizational setting, in seeking to

maximize the effectiveness of human resources (staff and volunteers/members) who are

critical to the fulfillment of the organizational mission, vision, and purpose. Bolman and

Deal's outline for "reframing" points to the importance of hiring the right people, keeping

them, investing in them (equipping them), empowering them, and promoting diversity

(across the various forms of diversity in an organization).[212]

In summary, there are several unique dynamics, challenges, and opportunities

entailed in urban settings, and by extension - urban ministry contexts. These dynamics,

challenges, and opportunities call for transformational leaders who are skilled in

addressing the particular needs and opportunities of these ministry contexts. Cases of

effective urban ministry leaders like Rev. Dr. Rudy Rasmus at St. John's United

Methodist Church in Houston, TX, Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Lewis at Middle Collegiate

Church, New York, NY, Rev. Adriene Thorne at Riverside Church, New York, NY, Rev.

Dr. Mark Gornik at New Song Church in Baltimore, MD, Rev. Dr. Roger Gench at New

York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, and Rev. Dr. H. Beecher Hicks at

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[211] Bolman and Deal, 111.

[212] Bolman and Deal, 138-154.

Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, DC point to the efficacy of transformational leadership and qualities like relationality, collaboration, adaptability, and persistence as being essential to developing people and building vital and impactful urban ministries.

Transformation and adaptation are primary challenges for the 21st century church and its leaders. Given the multifarious complexities of the church and society, it is the challenge of leaders to lead in changing the realities in churches and communities in ways that lead to transformation. It is the transformed, transforming, transformational leader's task to speak truth where there is un-health and dis-ease in the church and world, to lead in transforming current realities where necessary, and to celebrate and build on those places and spaces where the church and God's people are healthy, vital, thriving, and growing, and where God's presence can be seen and felt.

Transformed and transforming leaders today must be prayerful and discerning, discreet and strategic, deliberate, humble, wise, and sober in determining what will be needed to lead churches and communities toward the specific vision—the preferred future—that God intends. Like Nehemiah, transformational religious leaders today must be visionary, focused, collegial, organized. And like Paul, transformational religious leaders today must be pastoral and theological, love everybody while listening to them and leading them, and stay true to the Gospel while addressing the realities of a fast-changing world. The transformational, transformed, transforming leader's life must be the life of changing, growing, innovating, improvising, and adapting as they seek to be God's agents of helping to transform lives, communities, and the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Scope of Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Contexts

Research Methodology and Approach

Nature of the Research and Description of Data Sources

The qualitative research approach employed in this project was a case study

involving the three churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry (Epworth

Chapel UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

UMC). The primary data collection instruments used in the case study were one-on-one

interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

John Creswell describes a "case study" as a design of inquiry from sociology in

which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction

based on the experiences of participants.[213] Case study research involves the study of an

issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a

context).[214] A case study is a form of qualitative research. According to Patricia Leavy:

> Qualitative approaches to research value the depth of meaning and people's
> subjective experiences and their meaning-making process. These approaches
> allow us to build a robust understanding of a topic, unpacking the meanings
> people ascribe to their lives—to activities, situations, circumstances, people, and
> objects. Methodologically, these approaches rely on inductive designs aimed at
> generating meaning and producing rich, descriptive data. Qualitative approaches

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[213] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 14.

[214] Creswell (2007), 73.

are most commonly used in exploratory or descriptive research (although they can be used in research with other goals).[215]

This thesis project proposed that there is a need for a focused leadership development model aimed at developing transformational leaders to serve in urban ministry contexts. The research sought to test this proposal and then arrive at a framework for a transformational leadership development process/model for clergy and lay persons serving in urban ministry contexts.

The research instruments designed for the conduct of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits sought to (1) give an indication and provide evidence of participants' understanding of leadership, and specifically, transformational leadership, (2) give an indication and provide evidence of the participant's perceptions of their leadership effectiveness, (3) give an indication and evidence of the participant's perceptions of the overall quality and climate of leadership and leadership development in their respective churches, (4) give an indication and evidence of the need for a focused transformational leadership development model aimed at strengthening leadership in urban ministry contexts, and (5) give an indication and evidence of what a model for transformational leadership development for lay and clergy persons serving in leadership in urban ministry contexts should entail.

 The reason for selecting one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits as the means of data collection was because of their potential for providing data/information through multiple means, and from multiple sources among persons in the three churches

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[215] Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Art-based, and Community-based Participatory Research Approaches* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 124.

of the BCCM (one-on-one interviews and focus groups), and three similar congregations in Baltimore (site visits), and for their potential to provide data from these multiple sources that can be compared.

According to Paul Leedy and Jeanne Ormrod, one of the strengths of interviews and focus groups is that they can yield multiple types of information (e.g., biological information, people's beliefs and perspectives about facts, feelings, motives, and present and past behaviors).[216] Another strength of interviews and focus groups is that they are typically open-ended or semi-structured, and thus are more flexible, and more likely to yield information which a researcher had not planned to ask.[217]

John Creswell points out that focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information (they allow group interaction), when interviewees are similar and cooperate, when the time to collect information is limited, and when individuals who are interviewed one-on-one may be hesitant to provide information.[218]

Leedy and Ormrod point out that a disadvantage/weakness of interviews and focus groups is that the interviewer gets different information from different people and might not be able to make comparisons of the data from among the interviewees.[219] The

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[216] Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design,* 9th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2010), 148.

[217] Leedy and Ormrod, 148.

[218] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 133.

[219] Leedy and Ormrod, 148.

authors point out that another disadvantage is that when a researcher asks questions about past events, behaviors, and perspectives interviewees must rely on their memories, and human memory is rarely as accurate as the tape recorder or video recorder might be.[220] This could potentially impact the accuracy and reliability of the data that is collected.

According to Leedy and Ormrod, site visits and observation offer the advantage/strength of being flexible. The researcher can take advantage of unforeseen data sources as they surface.[221] The authors point out that one of the drawbacks/weaknesses of site visits/observation is that the researcher will not always know what things to look for, especially at the beginning, and may waste considerable time observing and recording trivialities while overlooking entries more central to the research question.[222] The authors point out that a second drawback/weakness of site visits and observation is that recording events can be problematic. Written notes are often insufficient to capture the richness of what one is observing.[223]

Creswell suggests several best practices for the research instruments—interviews, focus groups, and site visits—selected for this project. For interviews and focus groups, he suggests the following best practices: (1) Use adequate recording procedures when conducting interviews. (2) Design and use an interview protocol, a form about four or

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[220] Leedy and Ormrod, 148.

[221] Leedy and Ormrod, 147.

[222] Leedy and Ormrod, 147.

[223] Leedy and Ormrod, 147.

five pages in length, with approximately five open-ended questions and ample space between questions to write responses. (3) Refine the interview questions further through pilot testing. (4) Determine the place to conduct the interview. (5) After arriving at the interview site, obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study. (6) During the interview, stay with the questions, complete the interview within a specified time, be respectful and courteous, and offer few questions and advice.[224]

For site visits/observation, Creswell suggests the following best practices: (1) Select a site to be observed. Obtain the required permissions needed to gain access to the site. (2) At the site, identify who and what to observe, and for how long. (3) Determine, initially, a role to be assumed as an observer. (4) Design an observational protocol as a method of recording notes in the field. (5) Record aspects such as portraits of the informant, the physical setting, particular events and activities, and the researcher's reactions. (6) During the observation, have someone introduce you if you are an outsider. (7) After observing, slowly withdraw from the site, thanking the participants and informing them of the data use and their accessibility to the study.[225]

Several steps identified by Leedy and Ormrod helped in the data collection and analysis for this project: (1) organizing details of the case, (2) categorizing data, (3) identifying patterns, and (4) synthesizing and generalizing.[226]

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[224] Creswell (2007), 133-134.

[225] Creswell, 134-135.

[226] Leedy and Ormrod, 138.

In terms of validity and reliability of the data collected for this project, data was deemed to be valid and reliable if it was gathered within the bounds of the case study—among the leaders in the BCCM, from the three churches selected for site visits, and if the data was collected using the research instruments designed for interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Creswell proposes four primary criteria for standard validation of qualitative research: (1) Credibility—Are the results an accurate interpretation of the participants' meaning? (2) Authenticity—Are different voices heard? (3) Criticality—Is there a critical appraisal of all aspects of the research? (4) Integrity—Are the investigators self-critical?[227] According to Creswell, secondary criteria for collected data relate to explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity.[228]

A major consideration in the data collection for this project was whether the data collection instruments that were designed for interviews, focus groups, and site visits would help glean the information needed to best inform the need for the development of a model for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry settings. Furthermore, based on the findings of the research, it was hoped that conclusions could be arrived at as to approaches that can be taken to best develop transformational leaders among persons (lay and clergy) serving in urban ministry settings.

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[227] Creswell, 206.

[228] Creswell, 206.

Initial inquiry and examination regarding the need for transformational leadership development in urban ministry contexts included the study of cases involving several churches outside the BCCM and leadership development models in the literature reviewed for this thesis project. Among the churches that were studied—which included phone conversations with the churches' pastors—were New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC (Rev. Dr. Roger Gench, Pastor), Asbury United Methodist Church, Washington, DC, (Rev. Dr. Ianther Mills, Pastor), Foundry United Methodist Church, Washington, DC (Rev. Dr. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, Pastor), Emory Fellowship United Methodist Church, Washington, DC (Rev. Dr. Joseph Daniels, Pastor), New Song Church, Baltimore, MD (Rev. Dr. Mark Gornik, former Pastor), and St. John's United Methodist Church, Houston, TX (Rev. Dr. Rudy Rasmus, Pastor).

Additionally, the researcher's preliminary research involved the study of several urban churches in Alabama. In August 2022 (Aug. 1-4), the researcher had on-site visits and conversations with pastors and several church leaders in Alabama about the state of their respective church's leadership development. The purpose of these visits and conversations was to glean additional insight from urban churches outside the Baltimore-Washington area. These churches were 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL (Rev. Arthur Price, Pastor), Bethel Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL (Rev. Thomas Wilder, Pastor), Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Selma, AL (Rev. Leodis Strong, Pastor, along with the AME Bishop of Alabama, Harry Seawright), and Plum Grove Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, AL (Rev. Dr. Tyshawn Gardner, former Pastor).

As a form of post-project data collection and analysis, the researcher conducted additional in-person follow-up one-on-one interviews with each of these for pastors in

Alabama, Bishop Seawright, and several of their church leaders during the first week of October 2022 (October 3-7) to glean further insights as to best practices and approaches for developing transformational leaders to serve in urban ministry contexts.

Initial examination and research also involved numerous informal conversations, over several weeks, with lay and clergy church leaders serving in the three churches of BCCM, and with several other lay and clergy leaders serving in churches and communities in the greater Baltimore area who were not a part of three site visits for this project.

These informal conversations involved leaders from at least fifteen different Baltimore-area congregations and ministries, representing eight different Christian denominations (African Methodist Episcopal, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, and United Methodist), and several independent/non-denominational congregations, representing several different communities across the greater Baltimore area. Out of these conversations a need for approaches and models of transformational leadership development tailored specifically toward persons serving in urban ministry contexts was identified. These conversations provided important insight as to the efficacy of moving forward with the case study qualitative research with BCCM leaders and leaders from the three churches selected for site visits that could give more precise insight, based on the use of research instruments, into the need for a transformational leadership development model, and what specific approaches might be taken in developing it.

For the one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits, the focus was on a narrow group of leaders from the BCCM—the BCCM Parish Action Team (16 leaders)

and other selected leaders in the BCCM churches, and selected leaders/participants in the three churches where site visits were conducted.

Description of Data Sources

Primary Data

The primary data collection tools (research instruments) used in this project were one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits. Primary data included (a) one-on-one interviews with 16 members of the BCCM's Parish Action Team, comprised of 12 laity and 4 clergy persons (excluding the researcher) serving in leadership in the three BCCM churches, (b) collection of information from two focus groups with leaders in the BCCM churches who are not members of the Parish Action Team, and (c) collection of information from three site visits to churches in Baltimore outside the BCCM.

Secondary Data

Secondary data included biblical and theological sources as well as relevant mainstream literature on the urban context and urban ministry, and literature on transformational leadership and leading change. Secondary data also included information from the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church's Office of Congregational Development in Fulton, MD—including MissionInsite data on the three geographic areas in which the BCCM churches are located (zip codes 21207 and 21217), the United Methodist Church's Office of Discipleship Ministries in Nashville, TN, and the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. MissionInsite reports (ExecutiveInsite and MinistryInsite reports) for each BCCM church and community provided various types of demographic information for a two-mile geographic radius of each church. This

information included actual and projected data on race and ethnicity, age, economic

status, religious preferences, and other demographic categories, and helped to provide

evidence of existing and emerging trends in each community.

Research and Project Overview

The first step in the research was to study the lives and ministries of two biblical

figures—Nehemiah and Paul—to gain insight into characteristics of transformational

leadership that they possessed that could serve as foundations for a transformational

leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry contexts as proposed

in this project. (See Chapter Two)

The second step in the research was to undertake a review of current literature

relevant to the urban context and urban ministry, and transformational leadership and

leading change. (See Chapter Three)

The third step was to develop a set of questions for one-on-one interviews, focus

groups, and site visits. These sets of questions (research instruments) served as guides for

the conduct of interviews, focus groups, and site visits. (See Appendix B)

The fourth step in the research process was to conduct one-on-one interviews with

16 leaders (12 laypersons and 4 clergypersons) who are a part of the BCCM Parish

Action Team. As the members of this team lead in steering the collective work of the

BCCM, they were able to provide critical insight as to the strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities, and threats (SWOT) incumbent in the overall leadership climate within the

three BCCM churches, and give direction as to the transformational leadership

development model that could emerge from this project.

The fifth step involved conducting two focus groups with leaders in the BCCM churches who are not members of the Parish Action Team to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the current leadership climate in the BCCM churches and help determine steps for developing a comprehensive, sustainable, scalable, and replicable transformational leadership development model that could be used in the three BCCM churches, and potentially with other urban churches and leaders.

The sixth step involved doing site visits with three additional urban churches in Baltimore that have similar general characteristics (size and community type) as the three BCCM churches. Site visits involved observation and conversation with clergy and laity, and studying available online information regarding these congregations, including each church's website. The objective of the three site visits was to compare and contrast their ministries with the three BCCM churches and glean insights into best practices that could be helpful in developing the transformational leadership development model that could emerge from this project.

The seventh step involved analyzing and synthesizing data from each of the primary and secondary data sources to help determine the direction and format of the proposed transformational leadership development model.

The eighth step involved developing an outline for five training modules for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts and testing these modules through conducting leadership development training with leaders in the three BCCM churches.

Subproblem Treatment

Subproblem One

The first subproblem was to study the lives and ministries of Nehemiah and Paul to identify the qualities they possessed as transformational leaders.

Data needed. The data needed were insights, observations, and conclusions from scripture and theological sources from the body of literature on Nehemiah and Paul that relates to the project's objectives.

Criteria for acceptable data. Acceptable data included that which came from scripture and scholarly sources and the researcher's interpretation of the data through analysis and exegesis.

Location of the data. The data was located in scriptures, scholarly theological sources, commentaries, journals, dissertations, and articles. These resources were obtained from the researcher's personal library, seminary libraries (including Bethel Seminary's library), local libraries, and via the Internet.

Securing of the data. The data was secured from the researcher's personal library, seminary libraries (including Bethel Seminary's library), local libraries, or via the Internet.

Use of data. The data was evaluated and systematically organized to inform the researcher's understanding of scriptural and theological perspectives on Nehemiah and Paul, urban contexts, and transformational leadership.

Subproblem Two

The second subproblem was to determine what can be learned, adopted, and adapted from the study of relevant literature on the urban context and urban ministry, and transformational leadership and leading change.

Data Needed. The data needed were insights, observations, and conclusions from relevant literature on the urban context and urban ministry, and transformational leadership and leading change.

Criteria for acceptable data. Acceptable data was that which came from scholarly sources in the areas of the urban context and urban ministry, and transformational leadership and leading change, and the researcher's interpretation of the data through analysis.

Location of the data. The data was located in peer-reviewed academic books, journals, articles, and dissertations. These resources were obtained from the researcher's personal library, seminary libraries (including Bethel Seminary's library), academic and local libraries, and via the Internet.

Securing of the data. The data was secured from the researcher's personal library, seminary libraries (including Bethel Seminary's library), academic and local libraries, or via the Internet.

Use of data. The data was evaluated and systematically organized to inform the researcher's understanding of the urban context and urban ministry, and transformational leadership and leading change.

Subproblem Three

The third subproblem was to determine what can be learned, through the conduct of a qualitative case study on the three BCCM churches, to determine the training needs for developing transformational leaders in urban ministry contexts.

Data needed. The data needed were insights, observations, and conclusions from one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Criteria for acceptable data. Acceptable data included that which came from one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Location of the data. The data was located in information gleaned from one-on-one interviews conducted among 16 members of the BCCM Parish Action Team, two focus groups among leaders in the BCCM churches who are not members of the BCCM Parish Action Team, and participants from three Baltimore churches selected for site visits.

Securing of the data. The data was secured from interviewees, focus group participants, and participants from the churches selected for site visits.

Use of data. The data was evaluated and systematically organized to inform the researcher's understanding of training needs that could serve as a foundation for a transformational leadership development model for leaders serving in urban ministry contexts.

Subproblem Four

The fourth subproblem was to develop a framework for a transformational leadership development model for leaders (pastors and laity) serving in urban ministry contexts.

Data needed. The data needed were insights gleaned from one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Criteria for acceptable data. Data was deemed acceptable when it came from responses to one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Location of the data. The data was located in information gleaned from one-on-one interviews of members of the BCCM Parish Action Team, two focus groups

conducted with other selected leaders in the churches of BCCM, and from participants in site visits to three Baltimore churches selected for this project.

Securing of the data. The data was secured from interviewees, focus group participants, and participants from the churches selected for site visits.

Use of data. The data was evaluated and systematically organized to develop a framework for a transformational leadership development model for leaders serving in urban ministry contexts.

<div align="center">Research Instruments</div>

For this project, three research instruments were designed and used as a means of data collection to determine the need for a model for transformational leadership development in an urban ministry context. The three research instruments that were developed were used as guides for one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits. (See Appendix B)

One-on-One Interviews

The one-on-one interview instrument that was designed for this project was based on Qualitative Data Collection which involved Purposive Samples[229] and Participatory Research.[230] All of the questions contained in the interview instrument were asked of each of the interviewees. Specifically, the research involved semi-structured one-on-one

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[229] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 83.

[230] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2016), 226.

interviews with 16 leaders (12 lay persons and 4 clergy persons) who are members of the BCCM's Parish Action Team.

According to John Creswell, interviews can be categorized in the following three ways: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured. Unstructured interviews are conducted with few if any, interview questions. They often progress in the manner a normal conversation would, however, they focus on the research topic. Semi-structured interviews may have several questions, but space is given in the interview process for conversation and exploration into areas that might not be contained in the original set of interview questions. Semi-structured interviews typically last for 30 minutes to more than an hour, and are based on a semi-structured interview guide, which is a schematic presentation of questions or topics that needs to be explored by the interviewer. To achieve optimum effectiveness, semi-structured interview guides serve the purpose of keeping the interview focused on the desired line of inquiry, while also providing flexibility. Structured interviews involve adherence to asking interviewees to address a predetermined set of interview questions.[231]

As previously mentioned, the one-on-one interviews conducted for this project were semi-structured. The reason for conducting semi-structured interviews with the members of the BCCM Parish Action Team was because of their ongoing leadership roles with the BCCM and their respective churches, and because of the existing relationships of the interviewees with the researcher. With the launch of the BCCM in July 2020, leaders were selected for the Parish Action Team based on the leadership roles

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[231] Creswell, 78.

and responsibilities they currently have in the life of their respective BCCM church, and therefore the initial and ongoing expectations of Parish Action Team members has been that they will model servant-leadership in their respective ministry areas, and among the persons they are responsible for leading across the churches in the BCCM.

The interview instrument that was developed contained ten questions. The questions were designed to glean information on several specific areas: (1) the individual interviewee's particular experience and understanding of transformational leadership; (2) the interviewee's perceptions of the state of leadership development among the BCCM churches; and (3) needs for transformational leadership development for urban ministry contexts. (See Appendix B) Finally, the expectation and hope were that the interviews conducted with members of the BCCM Parish Action Team would provide information and data that would provide insight into what should be entailed in a transformational leadership model to serve the ongoing needs of the BCCM churches and perhaps other urban churches in the Baltimore area and beyond.

Focus Groups

The focus group instrument for this project was designed and crafted based on Qualitative Data Collection which involved Purposive Samples[232] and Participatory Research.[233] Focus group participants were selected based on their identified leadership roles in one of the three BCCM churches and were leaders who were not members of the BCCM Parish Action Team. According to Creswell, in focus groups, invited groups of

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[232] Sensing, 83.

[233] Swinton and Mowat, 226.

people are interviewed in a discussion setting in the presence of the session moderator

and generally, these discussions last for 60-90 minutes.[234] Like every research technique,

focus groups have their merits and demerits. They offer the opportunity for participants to

express opinions openly, while in these types of discussion settings, only a few issues can

be focused on, and full participation may be limited, with few constructive initiatives and

suggestions about the research topic being generated.[235]

The focus group instrument that was developed contained seven questions. The

questions were similar to the questions used for one-on-one interviews and were designed

to align with the interview questions, with hopes of gleaning comparisons and contrasts

with information collected from one-on-one interviews in several specific areas,

including: (1) the participants' experiences and understanding of transformational

leadership; (2) the participants' perceptions on the state of leadership development

among the BCCM churches; and (3) particular needs for transformational leadership

development for BCCM leaders, and perhaps leaders in other urban ministry contexts.

Site Visits

The site visit instrument used for this project was designed and crafted based on

Qualitative Data Collection which involved Purposive Samples[236] and Participatory

Research.[237] According to David Gray, site visits, as a type of research method, are a

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[234] Creswell, 78.

[235] Creswell, 78.

[236] Sensing, 83.

[237] Swinton and Mowat, 226.

form of observation and field study. In observational research design, multiple study sites are involved. Observational data can then be integrated as auxiliary or confirmatory research.[238]

In determining the three churches with which to conduct site visits, the researcher selected churches in Baltimore City that were similar in demographic makeup to the three BCCM churches. MissionInsite data and information from the Baltimore-Washington Conference Office of Congregational Development (United Methodist Church) were obtained and analyzed which helped to identify the churches where site visits were conducted.

The rationale was that demographic similarities, such as community racial and economic make-up, household income, average age, as well as church size, budget, and existing ministries, could help point to comparisons and contrasts with the BCCM churches and churches where site visits were conducted in terms of existing leadership strengths and challenges, participant interests in transformational leadership development, the need for a transformational leadership development model tailored toward leaders serving in urban ministry contexts, and what the model might entail.

Based on these criteria, the three Baltimore churches that were selected for site visits were Union Memorial United Methodist Church, Ames Memorial United Methodist Church, and John Wesley United Methodist Church. Specifically, through the use of MissionInsite data on the zip codes where the three churches are located (21216

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[238] David E. Gray, *Doing Research in the Real World,* 4th ed. (Los Angeles, California: Sage Publications; 2018), 161-191.

and 21217), United Methodist Church statistical information from the 2019 and 2020

Baltimore-Washington Conference UMC Journals, and information obtained from the

Baltimore Washington Conference Office of Congregational Development (United

Methodist Church), comparisons in terms of community demographics—per capita and

household income, race/ethnicity—and church profile information—

congregation/worship size, budget, program ministries—pointed to similarities that could

potentially lead to valid conclusions as to the potential needs and composition of a model

for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry

contexts.

Relationship to Existing Literature

Several observations can be made about the relationship between the qualitative

research approach and the literature reviewed for this project on biblical figures, urban

ministry and transformational leadership. Among these observations are that (1) the

leadership of the biblical figures—Nehemiah and Paul—serve as models of exemplary

transformational leadership; (2) there are unique characteristics of urban contexts, and

thus the need for unique approaches to performing ministry in these contexts; (3) some of

the unique qualities that could be identified in effective urban ministry practitioners as

identified in the literature are adaptability, rationality, collaboration, creativity,

resourcefulness, and persistence; (4) relationships, collaboration, and adaptability play

central roles in transformational leadership. The evidence in the works reviewed on

leadership and change by Lovett Weems, Robert Quinn, John Kotter, Jim Collins, H.

Beecher Hicks, and others points to transformational leadership being closely connected

to relationality, collaboration, and adaptability in leaders; and (5) there is a clear focus with transformational leadership on transforming people and organizations.

The literature that was reviewed in this research on the biblical examples of Nehemiah and Paul, and the literature that was reviewed on urban ministry and transformational leadership indicates that effective transformational leadership has a positive impact on effective, vital, and growing ministry. The biblical case studies and literature also point to the importance and impact of giving specific attention to context—in the case of this research, the urban context—in developing models and approaches to transformational leadership development.

The case of Nehemiah as a ministry leader in an urban context—Jerusalem—provides evidence for this assertion. Several characteristics of transformational leaders can be identified in Nehemiah's leadership in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls as is discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Some of the transformational leadership qualities identified in Nehemiah include the following: (1) Transformational leaders have a genuine concern for the well-being of their people. Nehemiah said, "And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem" (Neh. 1:2). (2) Transformational leaders show care toward their people. In Neh. 3:4, he intimates, "As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven." When Nehemiah got the distressing news about the condition of Jerusalem, he found himself mourning, weeping, and praying for his people. (3) Transformational leaders know and are dependent on God. In Nehemiah 1:5, he said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast

love with those who love him and keep his commandments." Even though the nation of Israel was being judged by God, Nehemiah still focused on the promise of God's love for them. (4) Transformational leaders identify with those they lead. Nehemiah prayed "let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned" (Neh.1:6). In his prayer, it is not an us/them dichotomy, it is "we" who need God's leading. (5) Transformational leaders lead with humility. Nehemiah's prayer throughout Nehemiah 1 reflects a level of humility that all leaders should desire. He did not think of himself as being better than the people of Israel but identified with them.

Like Nehemiah, Paul's life, ministry, and leadership provide a clear indication of qualities that are necessary for effective transformational leadership. Paul's ability to understand different cultures and contexts helped him to be adaptive as he needed to focus his life, teaching, ministry, and leadership on the needs of those he led (1 Cor. 9:20). Paul changed his leadership style to meet different needs in different contexts. For example, he wanted to deal with the Galatians, face-to-face, so they could know the full force of his pastoral concern (Gal. 4:20), but he spared the Corinthians a painful visit, preferring to write (2 Cor. 1:23-24). This shows that Paul understood people and their needs, and at points adapted his leadership to fit different situations.

His letters also depict numerous personal connections and relationships. Romans 16 alone mentions thirty-five people by name, and several others through their

associations with those named.[239] Paul's leadership was relational, personal, and directed toward the good of others. It was located and exercised within a network of relationships, which he valued and fostered. Some of these relationships were asymmetrical—where he had a role and authority that set him apart. Significantly, all relationships also had symmetrical elements, where Paul was one among many—fathers, apostles, workers, servants—and where he shared a mutual identity and bond with fellow believers. More broadly, his letters were not "form letters" but targeted letters, written to specific people in specific churches in specific locations and differing cultural and ministerial contexts. His commitment to personal relationships and contextualized ministry, and coming alongside people, lies behind his appeals and exhortations for certain beliefs and conduct to transform lives and the church.[240]

An objective of this research was to identify qualities of transformational leadership that can be used to develop leaders in urban ministry contexts. As has been pointed out through the review of various literature sources on transformational leadership, leadership expert James MacGregor Burns asserts that transformational leadership can be seen when leaders and followers help each other advance to a higher level of effectiveness, morality, and motivation."[241] Burns, Peter Northouse, and other transformational leadership theorists posit that transactional and transforming leadership are mutually exclusive styles.

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[239] Hill, 1105.

[240] Hill, 1105.

[241] James Macgregor Burns, *Transforming Leadership,* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 207.

It is important to reiterate the clear distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. United Methodist Bishop William Willimon points out that the transactional leader discerns the needs of the followers and performs leadership as a set of expectations to be met, and a series of jobs to be done. Leadership is thus a transaction between the expectations of the followers and the meeting of those expectations by the leader. Transformative leadership seeks more than merely managing the felt needs of followers. The transformative leader elevates followers to a higher level, refusing to be either trapped or driven by conventional expectations of followers, calling followers to a higher purpose—a higher moral commitment—thus transforming the organization and its members.[242]

Burns similarly asserts that through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders can inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work toward common goals. Burns also describes transformational leaders as those who can move followers up on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy, but also move them to go beyond their interests.[243]

Thus, an awareness of the distinctions between transactional and transformational leadership will be important in the potential design and implementation of a model for leadership as a part of this thesis project. Unlike the transactional approach to leadership, transformational leadership is not based on a "give and take" relationship, but on the

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[242] William Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 279.

[243] Burns, 207-208.

leader's traits, ability, and willingness to make changes through their leadership example, articulate a compelling vision, and develop challenging and fulfilling goals that move persons and organizations forward. Transformational leaders, then are exemplars of working toward the benefit of followers, the team, the organization, and the broader community.

CHAPTER FIVE

Data Treatment and Analysis

"When you look at a city, it's like reading the hopes, aspirations, and pride of everyone who built it." (Hugh Newell Jacobson)

Introduction

The research component of this thesis project was carried out using a qualitative research design. The data collection process was aimed at gleaning information from multiple sources—data streams or data points—to arrive at conclusions as to the need for, and approach to devising and implementing a model for transformational leadership development for lay and clergy persons serving in urban ministry contexts. The research was performed consistent with a case study approach focused on the three churches that comprise the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry in Baltimore, MD—Epworth Chapel United Methodist Church, Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial United Methodist Church.

Specifically, it was determined by the researcher that the qualitative research approach that would be used to gather data for the project would involve conducting one-on-one interviews with members of the BCCM Parish Action Team, conducting two focus groups with other identified leaders in the three BCCM churches, and conducting site visits with three additional churches in Baltimore.

The following are findings from the qualitative research conducted for this project, and a description of the five urban ministry training modules that were developed and taught as an outcome of the qualitative research and data gathering and analysis. It is

proposed that the five-module leadership training process presented at the end of this chapter can serve as a beginning framework for a comprehensive model for transformational leadership development for persons (lay and clergy) serving in urban ministry contexts.

<div align="center">*Findings*</div>

Finding One—One-on-One Interview Findings

In *Practical Research: Planning and Design,* Paul Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod state that a reason for conducting one-on-one interviews is that interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data.[244] The one-on-one interview instrument that was developed for this research contained ten questions, and each interview lasted approximately one hour. The questions were designed to glean information on several specific areas: (1) the individual interviewee's particular experience and understanding of transformational leadership; (2) the interviewee's perceptions of the state of leadership development among the BCCM churches; (3) the interviewee's perception of how transformational leadership might be developed, then multiplied/replicated in the BCCM churches; and (4) the interviewee's perception of particular needs for transformational leadership development training for urban ministry contexts. (See Appendix B for One-on-One Interview Questions)

With the launch of the BCCM in July 2020, leaders were selected to serve on the Parish Action Team based on the leadership roles and responsibilities that they currently

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[244] Leedy and Ormrod, 148.

had in the life of their respective church, and therefore the initial and ongoing expectations of the Parish Action Team members are that they will model servant-leadership in their ministry areas, among those they have been responsible for leading across the BCCM churches.

Because there was already a working relationship between those being interviewed for the project and the researcher, and because of the interviewees' current involvement in leadership in their churches and with the BCCM, the sense was that the interviews could yield valuable firsthand data/information that could give insight into the current state of leadership among the three BCCM churches, and point to potential approaches for developing a model for transformational leadership development that could serve the BCCM, and perhaps other urban ministries.

As was shared earlier in this thesis, Joseph Daniels asserts that "Relational 1:1" campaigns inside the congregation—one-on-one interviews—are an effective way of discovering the heartbreak of the congregation."[245] Similarly, Roger Gench proposes that one-on-one meetings are a foundational aspect of creating a covenant community and building relationships.[246] In the early development phase of the BCCM in 2020, Relational 1:1s were found to be extremely informative and a good tool for helping the researcher understand what issues are important to the life of the churches and community members, and where change is occurring inside the church walls and in the communities where the churches are located. During the early phases of the development

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[245] Daniels, 14.

[246] Gench, 29-44.

of the BCCM, the researcher conducted over 50 one-on-one interviews. The one-on-one

interviews that were conducted as a part of the qualitative research component of this

thesis project had the effect of providing evidence of where there was a heart—among

existing leaders—not only to grow their transformational leadership but to grow others,

and to connect the churches more fully with their respective communities.

From August 15 to August 30, 2022, one-on-one interviews were conducted on

ZOOM with 16 persons who are a part of the BCCM Parish Action Team—twelve lay

persons and four pastors. There were ten women and six men interviewed. As previously

stated, all 16 of these persons have clearly defined/identified leadership roles in their

respective churches, and as a part of the BCCM Parish Action Team, they have been

collectively responsible for providing leadership and direction to the BCCM in helping to

achieve the BCCM's 4 strategic objectives of (1) creating a culture of leadership through

leadership development; (2) developing youth through the Youth Action Team (YAT);

(3) engaging communities through social action, service, and education; and (4) creating

a parish culture of vital worship.

These strategic objectives were developed in light of the Mission, Vision, and

Purpose (MVP) statement that was developed by the BCCM Parish Action Team and

adopted by the BCCM in 2020:

- To leverage the social justice DNA and collaborative leadership and service of pastors and laity in three strategic ministry locations for the development of the Beloved Community

- To strengthen, equip, and deploy disciples of Jesus Christ who make, grow, serve, teach, and reach new and younger disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

- To foster a culture of call and intentionality around the development of next-level lay and clergy leadership.

Since July 2020, the members of the Parish Action Team (the interviewees) have been intricately involved in helping to implement the BCCM mission, vision, and purpose (MVP) and objectives, and therefore are familiar with the overarching vision for transformational leadership development that has emerged within the BCCM. Since July 2020, all of the sixteen members of the Parish Action Team have participated in monthly individual and group coaching, leadership development, and planning sessions led by the researcher (serving in the role of supervising pastor of the BCCM). Coaching and leadership development has been an integral and ongoing part of the researcher's work with BCCM leaders while in the Bethel Theological Seminary Transformational Leadership doctoral program since January 2019. During this time, some of the BCCM's leadership development work has focused on the areas of team-building, doing ministry "outside the box," and leading from our strengths.

Using Qualitative Data Collection which involved Purposive Samples[247] and Participatory Research,[248] all ten of the questions contained in the interview instrument were asked of each of the sixteen interviewees. Before the interviews, informed consent was obtained, using the Informed Consent form developed for this research. (See Appendix C)

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[247] Sensing, 83.

[248] Swinton and Mowat, 226.

The basic theoretical template that was used for the interview sessions was Mark McCloskey and Jim Louwsma's 4-Rs model—where *Relationships, Roles, Responsibilities, and Results* were explored.[249] These criteria were used as points of inquiry in guiding interviewees in stating and clarifying their understanding of their *roles, responsibilities, relationships, and expected results* within the context of their leadership in their respective churches. Follow-up questions involved more specific inquiry and discussion into how the respective leader (interviewee) feels that the 4-Rs are playing out in their specific area of leadership. In other words, where could they identify specific strengths and growing edges (challenges) in/with their leadership? Where did they see possibilities for transformation to occur in their leadership?

Here, John Maxwell's *Five Levels of Leadership* was also helpful, as the interviewees were invited to identify which level among the five— *Level One—Role (Position), Level Two—Relationship (People), Level Three—Result (Production), Level Four—Reproduction (Propagation), Level Five—Respect (Personhood)*—they consider their leadership to be at in the context of their church leadership, and how they might move forward toward becoming *Level Four (Reproducing) and Level Five (Respecting)* leaders if they were not already there, with the premise that *Level Four and Level Five l*eaders have the greatest potential to yield transformation, vitality, and sustained growth and flourishing in the churches.[250]

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[249] McCloskey and Louwsma, 36-44.

[250] John Maxwell, *Five Levels of Leadership* (New York: Center Street, 2011), 6-20.

As was previously stated, most of the one-on-one interviews lasted about an hour. Notes were taken during each interview session, and additional notes were recorded by the investigator/researcher after each interview session. Again, the overarching aim of the interviews was to glean perspectives from this group of 16 key BCCM leaders on their sense of their leadership effectiveness, understanding of transformational leadership, state of leadership in the BCCM churches, and insights on what a model for transformational leadership development could look like moving forward.

Through the 16 one-on-one interviews, there were three key findings. First, there was clarity regarding the leader's (interviewee's) respective roles, responsibilities, relationships, and expected results (the 4-Rs). This clarity was evident in the responses from the 16 interviewees, most of whom could describe their leadership roles and responsibility, and with whom they related in their respective leadership roles in the BCCM churches.

Second, there was clarity as to the need for ongoing leadership development and training for leaders in the BCCM. Sixteen of the 16 interviewees (100%) indicated a strong interest in there being an intentional training and development process for leaders that would include workshops provided internally by the BCCM, and access to training outside the BCCM which could include leadership training (conferences, seminars, webinars, and courses) in specific ministry areas that is provided by the United Methodist Church and other organizations. Sixteen interviewees (100%) identified specific ministry areas where leadership development and training could be conducted. While some of the areas identified as training interests and needs included training in administrative functions like financial and personnel management, many of the identified training

interests and needs pointed to determining ways of providing transformational leadership in key missional and programmatic areas in the churches—like missions, outreach, worship, discipleship, youth ministry, and Christian education.

Third, there was a stated need that additional training in transformational leadership and understanding the distinct nature of ministry in urban contexts would be helpful in further developing leaders and developing the BCCM churches. A majority of interviewees (14 of 16, 87.5%) shared that some leadership development and training should be specifically tailored to ministry in urban settings, although there was no consensus among interviewees as to specifically what such "tailoring" would entail. Two of the 16 respondents (12.5%) did not have a strong opinion on whether transformational leadership training in the BCCM needed to be tailored specifically toward a better understanding of the distinct nature of ministry in urban contexts, although both of these interviewees indicated that BCCM leaders would benefit from additional training. Two other areas identified as training needs for BCCM leaders were in helping understand the churches' vision for the future of the churches and communities, and in helping the churches better understand and connect with their communities. Ten of 16 interviewees (63%) expressed an interest in leadership training focused on visioning, and nine of 16 (56%) of interviewees expressed an interest in training focused on better understanding their respective communities.

There was a stated interest among several interviewees for training that would help churches and leaders move out of their comfort zones, and more effectively engage their respective communities. One interviewee stated that "We need more ministry that's

outside the box." While another stated, "We need to help the church go outside the four walls."

Three of the four interviewees from one of the three BCCM churches expressed a need for leaders who have a vision for the church and community. This need for visionary leadership, and for leaders who can help others see and realize was similarly expressed by several focus group and site visit participants.

Fourth, there was strong interest among those who were interviewed—15 of 16 interviewees (94%)—in participating in ongoing leadership development with the BCCM churches. When asked about how often leadership development training should be conducted with BCCM leaders, ten respondents stated that training offered in once-a-month intervals would be ideal. One interviewee cited other time commitments as a reason they are hesitant to commit to additional leadership training in the BCCM.

Finding Two—Focus Group Findings

The researcher decided to conduct two focus groups comprised of current leaders of the three BCCM churches who were not members of the BCCM Parish Action Team. Like the one-on-one interviews, the focus groups were designed and crafted based on Qualitative Data Collection which involved Purposive Samples[251] and Participatory Research.[252]

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[251] Sensing, 83.

[252] Swinton and Mowat, 226.

Focus group participants were selected based on their identified/defined leadership roles in one of the three BCCM churches. The two focus groups were comprised of a total of 19 other leaders from the BCCM churches. This group of leaders' insights was critical as the transformational leadership development process would potentially later move into the design and implementation/test/training phases. There were nine persons in the first focus group, and ten persons in the second focus group, with twelve women and seven men participating, and with ten leaders who were members of Epworth Chapel Church, six who were members of Sharp Street Memorial Church, and three who were members of Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Church. All of the members of the focus groups were lay persons, and, again, each participant had a clearly defined leadership role in their respective churches. Before the focus groups, informed consent was obtained, using the Informed Consent form developed for this thesis project. (See Appendix C)

The focus group instrument that was developed contained seven questions, and both focus group sessions lasted approximately one hour and thirty minutes. As was the case with the one-on-one interviews, the focus group questions were designed to glean information and data on several specific areas: (1) the focus group members' particular experience and understanding of transformational leadership; (2) the focus group members' perceptions on the state of leadership development in their respective church; (3) the focus group members' perceptions of particular needs for transformational leadership development in the BCCM churches; and (4) ways that transformational leadership development might be tailored to meet the specific needs of persons serving in urban ministry contexts. (See Appendix B for Focus Group Questions)

The two focus group sessions were conducted on ZOOM in late August 2022 (Aug. 25th and 27th), the sessions were recorded with the consent of participants, and additional written notes were recorded by the investigator/researcher after both focus group sessions.

Key findings from the two focus groups include the following: (1) Participants were clear about their roles and responsibilities in providing leadership in their respective churches, (2) participants shared that consistent and sustained leadership development programs and processes will serve the individual churches and the BCCM well in the short and longer term, (3) most focus group participants expressed a willingness to participate in ongoing leadership development programs, (4) several participants expressed a need to identify and develop younger leaders, and several focus group participants shared that they were "getting tired" in their respective leadership roles and responsibilities, and (5) several participants in both focus groups expressed a need for their respective churches to connect more fully with the communities where the churches are located.

The responses from the 19 focus group participants provided confirmation and were consistent with the responses from one-on-one interview participants as to the need for ongoing leadership development and training, and that BCCM church leaders would benefit from training that had some emphasis on providing leadership development training specifically tailored to those serving in urban ministry contexts.

Finding Three—Site Visit Findings

The third and final component of data collection as a part of the qualitative research for this project was site visits that were conducted at three churches in

Baltimore, MD. In determining the three churches at which to conduct site visits, the decision was made by the researcher to select churches in Baltimore City that were similar in demographic make-up to the three BCCM churches—Epworth Chapel United Methodist Church, Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial United Methodist Church.

With analysis of information regarding church size (membership and worship attendance) contained in the 2019 and 2020 Conference Journals of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church and with a review of MissionInsite information (ExecutiveInsite and MinistryInsite report) on several communities across Baltimore, the three Baltimore churches where site visits were conducted were Union Memorial United Methodist Church, Ames Memorial United Methodist Church, and John Wesley United Methodist Church.[253]

The three site visits were conducted in person in early-September 2020 (Sept. 3-4). A site visit questionnaire containing seven questions was used to guide the conversations and collect data on the site visits. (See Appendix B for Site Visit Questionnaire) Before the site visits, informed consent was obtained, using the Informed Consent form developed for this research. Each of the three churches where site visits were conducted and their respective pastors were also asked, and granted permission for their names to be used in this study. (See Appendix C for the Informed Consent Letter)

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[253] *Journals of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church* (Fulton, MD, 2019, 2020). Church statistical information on membership and church attendance was accessed in August 2022.

Site visit sessions were not recorded, but notes on each site visit were taken during and after the sessions and organized after each session. A total of 26 (nine, seven, and ten respectively) persons participated and shared information on their respective churches during the site visits. Most of the participants identified themselves as leaders in their church.

Again, similar to the one-on-one interviews and focus groups, the overarching objective of the three site visits was to glean perspectives from these groups of key leaders on (1) their understanding of transformational leadership, (2) their sense of their leadership effectiveness, (3) the state of leadership in their respective churches, (4) their insights on what a model of transformational leadership could look like moving forward, (5) whether they believed leaders in their respective churches would have an interest in participating in transformational leadership development training, and (6) if and how leadership development should be tailored for leaders serving in urban ministry contexts. The following is a summary of the findings from the three site visits.

Site Visit One—Union Memorial United Methodist Church. The first church at which a site visit was conducted was Union Memorial United Methodist Church, an inner-city congregation in west Baltimore. A total of nine persons participated in the site visit, including the pastor, Rev. Dr. Jason Jordan Griffin. Union Memorial is located in the Evergreen neighborhood of west Baltimore and is a historic church with a 125-plus-

year legacy of "being a powerful, spiritual presence in its community," according to Jordan-Griffin.[254]

Jordan-Griffin also shared that the church is steeped in Methodist tradition and has played a pivotal role in providing a Wesleyan (Methodist) presence in the community at large, particularly following a period of community gentrification (racially and economically) in the early 1900s.[255] He and several of those interviewed during the site visit shared that, historically, individuals who had achieved certain levels of prominence in Black society were the primary people who joined the church in its early years, which led to its growth in the early and mid-20th century. Site visit participants shared that in these early years, the church was filled with politicians, doctors, lawyers, educators, and business owners.

Union Memorial has been known for its strong pastoral leaders who were known for their preaching prowess, community engagement, and ability to attract an upwardly mobile membership. As a result, the church flourished through the late 20th century. Yet, according to Jordan-Griffin and several participants in the site visit, as persons moved out of the Evergreen neighborhood due to upward mobility and changing demographics of the neighborhood around the church, a somewhat insular ministry model began to adversely affect the church's growth and its ties to the community.

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[254] Jason O. Jordan-Griffin, "Seeing Many in our Mirrors: A Model for Transforming High Steeple Churches into Community Revitalization Centers," Doctor of Ministry Project Dissertation. United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, 2019, 19.

[255] Jordan-Griffin, 19.

Presently, Union Memorial is still a well-respected congregation in Baltimore, especially among United Methodist congregations, although it has experienced a decline in membership and worship attendance over the past 20 years. According to several site visit participants, the church, in many respects, is looking to reclaim the prominence it had in its earlier years. Jordan-Griffin shared that he believes that this is possible considering Union Memorial's location in Baltimore City, the commitment of existing members to the church's success, and his (along with other leaders) desire to revitalize the church, as it lives into what he is calling the "Harlem Renaissance" (based on the church's location on Harlem Avenue in west Baltimore).

Yet, according to several site visit participants, several factors must be taken into consideration over the next few years. It was shared that the congregation is experiencing significant aging and that one of the greatest congregational and leadership challenges is identifying, developing, and retaining younger leaders who will be able to lead the church into the future.

When asked about some of the qualities that effective leaders should possess, several of the responses were that leaders should be caring, community-oriented, and well-organized. When asked how they would describe a transformational leader, responses included leaders that help get the church outside the building and into the community and those who help the church grow and go to the next level of ministry.

Site visit participants, almost all of whom were older persons (over 60 years old, except for three persons), expressed a commitment to seeing the church live beyond their years. The three younger adults in the group (including Pastor Jordan-Griffin) expressed a need for the church to connect more fully with the surrounding Evergreen community

and saw such connections as being directly tied to the church's immediate existence, vitality, growth, and flourishing into the future.

Invariably, site visit participants at Union Memorial see their leadership as being critical to helping growth in the future be possible, and they expressed an openness to participating in transformational leadership training. Participants pointed to community organizing, connecting with the community, asset mapping, and resource (financial) identification and development as being among the greatest needs for leadership training.

Site Visit Two—Ames Memorial United Methodist Church. The second church where a site visit was conducted was Ames Memorial United Methodist Church, also in west Baltimore. A total of seven persons (five women and two men), most of whom self-identified as church leaders participated in the site visit.

Ames Memorial is in the inner city Sandtown-Winchester community of west Baltimore. The church was organized in 1872 and, according to its pastor, Rev. Rodney Hudson, and several site visit participants, Ames Memorial considers itself to be a "community-oriented family" church. Participants also shared that this is how they sense that they are perceived by many people in the Sandtown-Winchester community.

According to Hudson and site visit participants, several large families who have lived in the community for several generations have influenced the history and direction of Ames Memorial. Site visit participants identified the core strengths of the congregation as being the care, nurture, and love of its members, and outreach to the community. It was also shared that a high level of fellowship is something that distinguishes Ames Memorial from other churches in their immediate community.

Ames Memorial currently serves and ministers in their community in several ways. Much of this is done through the Ames Community of Shalom, a faith-based community development corporation (CDC), established in 1997. According to its mission statement, the Ames Community of Shalom is dedicated to "transforming lives and strengthening the fabric of the Sandtown-Winchester community." Some of the specific ways this is accomplished are by providing short-term emergency financial assistance, weekly food distributions, and ongoing assistance to individuals and families in poverty and crisis in the Sandtown-Winchester community.

When asked to identify key leadership strengths within the church, among those that were mentioned by site visit participants were the pastor's leadership and organizing over the past 14 years in helping the church focus its ministry on the community, the dedication of several older and newer leaders who consistently support the church and community, and several strategic partnerships that the church has developed over the past few years with the business community, Baltimore city government, philanthropic organizations, educational institutions, and with several larger suburban United Methodist churches. Identified challenges include difficulties in attracting newer, younger members, identifying leaders who can be developed for the longer-term vitality of the church, financial viability, and continuing to develop strong community partnerships.

When asked what qualities they consider to be important for transformational leaders, some that were mentioned included persons who are energetic, caring, and community-oriented. When asked whether they would be open to participating in a leadership development program/process, the response from several participants was

"yes" and when asked what would be some of the training topics that would be needed and of interest, participant responses included fund-raising, community ministry, and team ministry.

Site Visit Three—John Wesley United Methodist Church. The third church where a site visit was conducted was John Wesley United Methodist Church, located in west Baltimore. John Wesley Church is a 184-year-old African-American congregation located in Bloomington, one of the oldest communities in Baltimore. A total of ten persons participated in the site visit, all of whom had an identified leadership role in the church. Seven of the participants were women and three were men. According to the church's pastor, Rev. Dr. James Bishop, and other site visit participants, John Wesley Church was birthed with 25 persons as a "Methodist Praying Band" in the era of segregation to serve African-American community members and to be a center of spiritual and community uplift. The church was formed in 1838 in the Methodist tradition of Class Meetings and gatherings in worshippers' homes, then in south Baltimore. The original members represented several families whose descendants still comprise many of today's congregants.

According to site visit participants, John Wesley Church views itself as a center of community uplift in Bloomington, along with its role as a vital worship center. The church's ministries are reflective of the needs of its inner-city community. Site visit participants shared that, increasingly, those living in the community, who work mostly in the service-related industries surrounding the church, have household incomes that are insufficient to address the rising cost of living in west Baltimore. For lower-income, fixed-income, and unskilled persons in the community, prices for goods and services

often exceed their financial means. Therefore, several of John Wesley Church's ministries are designed to address poverty, violence, youth engagement, education, and services for the elderly.

When asked about the leadership strengths of the church, site visit participants' responses focused on the "seasoning" and experience of existing leaders, the emergence of a few newer and younger leaders, and the ongoing commitment of several leaders to connect the church with the surrounding community. Recent door-to-door surveys and canvassing campaigns, community assessments, and community asset mapping were cited as examples of the active involvement of current leadership in working to move John Wesley Church forward.

Site visit participants identified several leadership challenges facing John Wesley Church, including the need for more leaders who are skilled in community engagement and outreach, more leaders who are skilled in the use of technology, and more leaders who are younger who can begin to take on more responsibility for the sake of the church's future. Among site visit participants, there was an openness to participate in a leadership development program, and identified topics of training needs and interest included community canvassing, team-building, basic leadership skills, and understanding and engaging the community.

Key findings from the Site Visits. There were several key findings from the three site visits including the following: (1) Most participants were clear about their leadership roles and responsibilities in their respective churches, although there was a bit more stated unclarity and ambiguity than was found with participants in the 16 one-on-one interviews and two focus groups conducted with BCCM leaders. (2) Similar to the one-

on-one interviews and focus groups, there was a stated need from several participants

from each of the three churches for consistent and sustained leadership development

processes and programs. Participants from two of the three churches where site visits

were conducted (Ames Memorial and John Wesley) indicated that their churches had not

conducted leadership development training in the past three years. One of the reasons

cited for this lack of training was the COVID-19 pandemic. (3) There was a willingness

of leadership site visit participants to participate in ongoing leadership development

processes and programs, and several persons from each church stated that training should

be tailored to the needs of inner-city churches, and focused on developing effective urban

ministry leaders, especially with the laity. (4) Similar to participants in the one-on-one

interviews and focus groups, there was a strong sense of a need to identify and develop

younger leaders. (5) Similar to those who participated in one-on-one interviews and focus

groups, there was also a strong sense among site visit participants of a need to better

understand and connect more fully with the communities surrounding their respective

churches, and there was a stated need from several participants for training focused on

equipping leaders to better engage their respective urban communities.

   Summary of Findings from Qualitative Research. From the data/information

collected through 16 one-on-one interviews, and the conduct of two focus groups and

three site visits, several themes emerged that could serve as challenges to developing

transformational leaders and sustaining and scaling congregational growth and

community health. These themes/challenges include the following.

1. *There is a need for more leadership development and more highly-skilled leaders in the churches.* Fourteen of the 16 (87.5%) interviewees and a strong consensus among focus group and site visit participants stated that there is a

need in each of the churches for more leadership development, and more highly-skilled leaders.

2. *There are too few younger leaders in the respective churches. There is a need for younger leaders in each of the BCCM churches, and in the churches where site visits were conducted.* Data from one-on-one interviews indicates that ten interviewees identified a need to identify, nurture and develop younger leaders. In the researchers' notes from the focus groups and site visits, this sentiment was also shared by several focus group and site visit participants, as well as among several of the 46 respondents to the post-project questionnaire.

3. *Several leaders feel a high degree of fatigue and possible burnout.* A consistent theme in the researcher's notes from interviews, and among focus group and site visit participants is that "we're tired." This sentiment seems to have a direct correlation to the first two stated needs for more highly-skilled leaders and an increase in younger leaders.

4. *People in the churches do not see God's vision for their churches.* Ten of the interviewees and several focus group and site visit participants, when asked about some of the qualities that are important for church leaders stated that the churches need leaders who can help people in the churches and communities see and begin to live out God's vision more fully.

5. *There are not enough resources (including money) for the churches to develop highly effective leaders and (by extension) carry out effective ministry.* The researchers' notes indicate that scarcity of resources among the urban churches that were a part of this study (the BCCM churches and the three churches where site visits were conducted) was cited by numerous interviewees, and focus group and site visit participants as a significant challenge in the churches developing transformational leaders.

6. *Leaders and those they lead need to be equipped and encouraged to get out of their personal and group comfort zones.* A consistent theme among interviewees (9 of 16, 56%), and among focus group and site visit participants is that their church's leaders are unwilling or unable to move out of their comfort zones, and lead in ways that help those they lead move out of their comfort zones.

7. *There is a sense that the respective communities where the churches exist do not know the churches.* Another consistent theme among interviewees (9 of 16, 56%), and among focus group and site visit participants, based on the researcher's notes, was a need for the churches to better know and connect with their respective communities.

8. *There is a sense among participants that the challenges that the churches face seem too big to solve.* Nine of the 16 interviewees (56%) and several focus group and site visit participants, based on the researcher's notes, expressed concerns that the challenges confronting their respective churches—such as poverty in their communities, scarcity of financial resources, disconnects between the churches and communities—often feel too big for them to overcome with their current leadership and resources.

The following table of Obstacles and Opportunities provides a further summary of the findings from the 16 one-on-one interviews, two focus groups, and three site visits. The table points out eight obstacles as earlier discussed, and corollary opportunities for strengthening urban churches and their leadership.

Obstacles and Opportunities Chart

Obstacles	Opportunities
A need for more leadership development, and more highly-skilled leaders	Develop a process of identifying and training leaders in specific transformational leadership and ministry skills
Too few younger leaders in respective churches	Develop and implement a process for identifying, nurturing, and developing high-impact younger leaders
Leaders feeling a high degree of fatigue and possible burnout	Develop and implement a process for developing teams and encouraging teamwork and collaboration in respective churches, and among churches
People don't see the vision	Develop a process for "Writing the vision and making it plain," and create opportunities for people to "run" with the vision (Habakkuk 2:2)
Not enough resources (including money)	Engage in intentional processes of community asset mapping, community engagement, and developing partnerships

Dealing with personal and group comfort zones	Encourage innovation, creativity, and doing ministry "outside the box"
The community doesn't know us	Develop a process for intentionally getting outside the church buildings, walking the community, and getting to better know the community
The challenges that we face seem too big to solve	Develop and implement skills in setting personal and group SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely), and developing Ministry Action Plans

Finding Four—The Need for a Transformational Leadership Model for Urban Ministry Leaders

The qualitative research and data collection in this thesis project—through conducting one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits—was designed to analyze the current state of leadership development among the three BCCM churches, along with three similar congregations in Baltimore, and determine the need for developing a model for sustaining and scaling transformational leadership in urban ministry contexts.

The biblical and theological research that was conducted helped to confirm that transformational leadership is both necessary and possible for leaders and organizations. For Nehemiah, when he, as a leader in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, realized that the people "had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6) he was able to organize people and processes to accomplish the mission that was set before him and the people. And again, Paul's encouragement in Rom. 12:2 is applicable, where he encouraged believers to "don't be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The findings of this research point to where the transformation of leaders can begin, and where breakthroughs are possible with the renewing of the minds of leaders.

This is to say that it is important that processes be enacted where leaders can be transformed to lead in transformational ways and then lead people and organizations toward transformation. This is essentially what happened with leaders like Nehemiah and Paul, which ultimately resulted in the impact that both had as transformational leaders in their respective urban ministry contexts.

Every leader and church needs transformation. Any church that is not transforming, within the context of the changes occurring in it, is on a path to decline and eventual death. And any leader who is not transforming, within the context of changes in their organization will not be as effective and impactful as they could be. Transformation in the church, as is the case with any organization, is driven by the quality of its leadership. This is to say that transformed church leaders are a key determinant in transforming churches and ministries. Transformational leaders lead in transforming churches.

The literature that was reviewed for this thesis project points to specific dynamics and needs in urban contexts, and thus the need for transformational leadership development tailored for leaders (lay and clergy) serving in urban ministry contexts. The biblical, theological, and theoretical literature and qualitative data from this research indicate that urban churches benefit from well-developed transformational leaders, with training specifically tailored to the unique needs and opportunities facing urban churches and communities.

The 16 one-on-one interviews and two focus group sessions that were conducted with BCCM leaders provided a context for participants to reflect on their leadership to better understand their leadership strengths and areas of potential growth, to give insight

on the ongoing needs for leadership development with the BCCM in the future, and to give insight into the need for a transformational leadership development model tailored specifically toward persons serving in urban ministry contexts.

As a part of continuing to grow the churches and build the leadership capacity of leaders in the BCCM, the research has served to verify the need for ongoing commitments and processes to strategically identify, nurture and develop transformational leaders to serve the BCCM churches. Among the tools and processes that will continue to be used as a framework in the BCCM for identifying, nurturing, and developing high-impact leaders to serve the churches is outlined in an article by the researcher, titled "Three Keys to Identify and Develop High-Impact Leaders."[256]

A finding of this research is that a framework for a transformational leadership development model to address the needs of urban ministry settings that is developed and tested with the three BCCM churches could serve as a foundation for the development of comprehensive, ongoing processes for transformational leadership development for leaders in the BCCM churches as well as other urban ministry settings and have a positive impact on church vitality and the communities in which urban churches exist.

Toward a Model for Transformational Leadership Development
in Urban Ministry Contexts

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[256] C. Anthony Hunt, "Three Keys to Identify and Develop High-Impact Leaders," *Leading Ideas* (Washington, DC: Lewis Center for Church Leadership, May 18, 2016), accessed September 5, 2022, https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/three-keys-to-identify-and-develop-high-impact-leaders/.

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Again, through conducting one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits, the data collection process indicated strong interest and consensus for developing a contextualized transformational leadership development model that focuses on lay and clergy leaders serving in urban ministry contexts. To continue to clarify and more fully develop the leadership development process and model, a decision was made by the researcher to use the BCCM Parish Action Team as a design and planning team for developing the leadership training modules that would be included in a model for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts.

Project Design and Planning

For project design, a design thinking process was used based upon work developed at Wesley Theological Seminary's Source Innovation Collaborative and its "Innovation Hub," a Lilly Endowment-funded project designed to strengthen congregations and leaders. Over the past two years, the researcher has worked as a Source Collaborative consultant/coach with three urban churches and their pastors in the Wilmington, Delaware area where design thinking has been used to help the churches' leadership teams arrive at new approaches to doing ministry and engaging their communities. The researcher has also used the design-thinking process in work as a part of the "Ministry in the City Hub" at City Seminary of New York, another Lilly Endowment-funded project.

According to Nigel Cross, design thinking is a set of strategic and practical processes by which design concepts (proposals for products, buildings, machines, communications, etc.) are developed. Many of the key concepts and aspects of design

thinking have been identified through studies, across different design domains, of design cognition and design activity in both laboratory and natural contexts.[257] Design thinking is inherent within human cognition; it is a part of what makes us human. It is an iterative, non-linear process, and includes activities such as context analysis, user testing, problem finding and framing, ideation and solution generating, creative thinking, sketching and drawing, prototyping, and evaluating.[258]

Some of the core features of design thinking include: (1) resolving ill-defined or (wicked) problems, (2) adopting solution-focused strategies, (3) using abductive and productive reasoning, and (4) employing non-verbal, graphic/spatial modeling media, for example, sketching and prototyping.[259] For this project, the ill-defined (wicked) problem was the need for a focused transformational leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. And each of the above four features of design thinking were used to arrive at a framework for the model.

An intentional, contextualized approach to leadership development is important because urban churches are in constant need of transformational leaders. The presence of COVID-19 in 2020-23 has forced many churches, including the BCCM churches, to

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[257] Nigel Cross, "Design Cognition: Results from Protocol and other Empirical Studies of Design Activity," *Design Knowing and Learning: Cognition in Design Education*, eds. C. Eastman, M. McCracken and W. Newstatter (Oxford: Elsevier, 2001), 79-103.

[258] Nigel Cross, *Design Thinking: Understanding How Designers Think and Work* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 3-4.

[259] Cross, "Design Cognition," 79-103.

address their approaches to transformational leadership development in new and adaptive ways that will embrace the "next normals" that are ahead. The findings of this research point to urban churches needing to go beyond conventional approaches to leadership development and needing to engage in intentional, creative approaches to identifying, nurturing, and developing transformational urban leaders.

The BCCM Parish Action Team (design team) met on three occasions in late August and early September 2022 to analyze the results of the data collected through the research, and to help develop a framework for the modules that would comprise the transformational leadership development training component of this project. Several questions emerged from the one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits that helped inform the design thinking process, leading to the design of the modules that emerged as a framework for transformational leadership development in urban ministry contexts. These questions include: (1) How might transformational leadership be developed among those in leadership positions? (2) As it regards results, what is a healthy balance between spiritual transformation/renewal and physical/material/empirical evidence of transformation? In other words, how can transformed and transformational church leadership be measured? (3) How can transformational leadership be sustained, developed, multiplied, scaled, and replicated in the church/organization over time?

Through the design thinking process, a five-part transformational leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry contexts was designed by the researcher, with input from the design team. The five-module transformational leadership development model that was developed provides a foundation for understanding urban contexts and urban ministry/theology (Module One—Understanding the Urban Context

and Urban Ministry), and then, in the following four modules, focuses on four core areas/practices of transformational leadership—Transformational Leadership, Developing Teams, Leading Change, and Turning Vision into Action.

Project Implementation

Project implementation involved developing and conducting a five-module transformational leadership development training series aimed at strengthening urban ministry leaders (laity and clergy) in the five identified areas of urban context/ministry and leadership development as indicated above. To better ensure the validity and efficacy of the modeling process, a trained coach/consultant/author in church leadership development, Rev. Dr. Rodney Smothers was asked by the researcher to review and give feedback on the model in its design/developmental stages. Three meetings with Smothers, and the feedback and suggestions he provided, helped to provide further clarity and specificity on the approach that was used to develop the five transformational leadership development modules.

Again, the design of this project sought to address core areas that were identified through data collection, as foundational/essential for transformational leadership in urban ministry contexts. All five of the training modules were conducted synchronously online using ZOOM video technology due to ongoing concerns with COVID-19 transmission in the greater Baltimore area in the summer/fall of 2022, and due to the 18 square-mile distance separating the three BCCM churches.

The project was enhanced with the use of innovative and creative approaches to pedagogical delivery, which when applied to the urban context, encouraged participant engagement and creative learning, and did not simply expect participants to be

receptacles of module content. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Paulo Freire provided

teaching strategies that involve participants moving away from only listening to the

teacher as if the information is static, immovable, and centralized around the teacher's

expertise.[260] This type of learning devalues the experience of participants and becomes a

means of providing information with little critical thinking, exchange, and feedback.[261]

Freire encouraged a form of pedagogy that involves co-intentional learning where

the teacher and participants work together to explore and critically engage the topic at

hand, valuing the experiences of participants.[262] This pedagogical approach was

incorporated into the five modules of this transformational leadership development model

with the overarching objective of encouraging the contextualized application of the

material in the leadership of participants. After each session, participants were

encouraged to write thoughts and notes in a journal and share their thoughts with other

participants and persons with whom they work in their respective churches. The hope was

that this would be helpful to participants in developing Ministry Action Plans and

SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) at the end of the

five-module training series.

The goal of the transformational leadership development training component of

this thesis project was to have at least 60 identified leaders from the three churches of the

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[260] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1970), 57.

[261] Freire, 58.

[262] Freire, 56.

Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry participate in the five modules. The project ended up having a total of 66 participants, with an average attendance of 47 persons for each of the five modules. The participants involved in the training modules were both women and men, with 48 women and 18 men, ranging in age from 28-74 years.

The five transformational leadership training modules were conducted over six weeks in September-October 2022. The structure of each lesson consisted of one hour and 30 minutes of instruction on a specific topic related to the urban context, urban ministry and theology, and transformational leadership and change. Each session concluded with 30 minutes of group reflections and addressing participant questions. During the instruction segments, participants were encouraged to ask questions and share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences, and apply the content of the modules to their leadership in their respective churches and communities. In conducting this training, it was important to encourage participants to reflect and envision ways to continue to grow as transformational leaders and apply learning to their ongoing leadership. It was also important to offer opportunities during each of the five training modules to integrate and connect aspects of personal and community faith, spirituality, and discipleship, and to address specific contextualized urban concerns such as poverty, violence, health and employment disparities, and lived experiences with trauma among participants. Finally, it was important to spend time hearing of the ways God was at work in people, the churches, and communities, and what hopes participants have for the future of their churches and communities. Below is a summary of the five leadership training modules. (See Appendix D for an outline of the training modules)

Module One—Understanding the Urban Context and Urban Ministry. The first module was designed to introduce participants to urban concepts and urban ministry and help participants reflect on the unique characteristics of urban communities and urban ministry. The objective was also for participants to be able to identify and discuss major theological and biblical considerations for ministry in urban settings. And the module also provided a foundation for the application of best practices in urban ministry, with a particular focus on the impact of urban ministry on congregational and community vitality and community-building.

One objective of strengthening leaders in their service in urban ministry settings is to strengthen communities. Frank Maddison Reid, formerly the pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, MD, and now a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, asserts that as this was the case for Nehemiah, it is the case today.

> We see in Nehemiah that God is giving us insight into the local church and our purpose within the church. We find that the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down before Nehemiah's day. The walls are symbolic of the fact that the family structure and the spirit of the people have been destroyed. After Nehemiah had shared with them the plan to rebuild the walls, the people said, "Let us rise and build." Next, we find that they have moved to the reality of actually building.[263]

Warren Dennis asserts that one of the greatest needs in urban communities is to understand the socio-political dynamics that define how land is used in urban settings. He proposes that the place to start with addressing matters such as this is with grassroots

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[263] Frank Madison Reid, III, *The Nehemiah Plan: Preparing the Church to Rebuild Broken Lives* (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1993), 64.

dialogues among people from various sectors of the community and that together, lay and

clergy address issues of community-building.[264]

The objective of this module was also for participants to gain competencies in the

practice of urban ministry through in-class study, and reflective analysis. Specifically,

this module included several components, including (1) a discussion of biblical texts

from Jeremiah 29, the book of Nehemiah, and the Pauline Epistles, (2) defining the urban

context, urban ministry, and urbanization, (3) a study of core values for urban ministry,

and (4) a study of five typologies for doing urban ministry.

Module Two—Understanding Transformational Leadership. In the second

module, participants were introduced to the principles and practices of transformational

leadership. Participants were invited to reflect on their leadership, and then reflect on

ways that their leadership could grow in light of the principles that were presented.

Among numerous dimensions of leadership, this module included a discussion of

definitions and characteristics of leadership and transformational leadership and a

discussion of the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership.

Additionally, Lovett Weems' ten observations about leadership were presented

and reflected on.[265] Weems proposes that (1) Leadership needs to be demythologized. (2)

Leadership is not simple. (3) Leadership is spiritual. (4) Leadership is about group

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[264] Warren Dennis, "Challenges of Africentric Ministry for Urban Theological Education," *Africentric Approaches to Christian Ministry: Strengthening Urban Congregations in African-American Communities,* eds. Ronald Peters and Marsha Haney (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006), 138.

[265] Weems, 13-18.

process. (5) Leadership is chaotic. (6) Leadership is funny. (7) Most research on leadership is not taking place in the church. (8) Any learning about leadership is only the beginning. (9) Leadership is an art. (10) Leadership is never an end in itself.

Module Three—Building Effective Teams. The overarching objectives of the third module were to introduce participants to a team approach to leadership and ministry and to explore the importance of collaboration and building effective teams, with a specific focus on the leader's role in team-building.

Three premises explored in this module were: (1) developing highly effective teams is critical for growth within an organization, (2) the leader plays a critical role in developing teams, and (3) there are numerous factors involved in how teams develop from when they start to the point of maturity and high effectiveness.

A considerable amount of leadership literature points to the impact of collaboration on the vitality and growth of organizations. Teams are necessary for all settings—religious, non-profit, for-profit, governmental, and educational—given the challenges that organizations face today, and given the rate at which change is occurring. The complexity and pace of organizational change demand responsiveness, nimbleness, fluidity, speed, and quality that is often difficult for individuals to accomplish when working alone.

Creating an environment for collaboration is a key aspect and benefit of team development. Jason Carthen states that "Corporations such as Google, General Electric, and Apple also point to healthy team-based cultures that bolster progress and promote

shared thinking for consistent goal achievement."[266] He further states that "Teams offer the greatest opportunity for synergy, a positive organizational climate, and an immediate increase in productivity."[267] With synergy and collaboration, teams can often address challenging tasks with speed and quality that individuals might not be able to achieve alone.

Several functions of teams were explored in this module, including: (1) a focus on building cohesion, (2) the ability of team members to work interdependently and cross-functionally, (3) developing a clear sense of where team members and their functions fit within the organization's overall mission, vision, and purpose, and (4) the careful selection of team members, based on their talent/skills, ability to work collaboratively and with flexibility, creativity, passion, commitment and openness to ongoing learning/coaching.

Finally, the role of leaders in developing teams was explored. Effective leaders play key roles in establishing and developing highly effective teams. Greg Stewart, Charles Manz, and Henry Sims, in *Teamwork and Group Dynamics*, offer a continuum of team development where teams move from being externally managed and led to becoming internally managed and led and thus eventually becoming self-led teams.[268] On

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[266] Jason Carthen, *52 Ways to Tackle Leadership for Your Success* (Charlotte, NC: I Speak Life, Publishing, 2016), 66.

[267] Carthen, 65.

[268] Greg Stewart, Charles Manz, and Henry Sims, *Teamwork and Group Dynamics* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1999), 81-107.

this continuum, Stewart, Manz, and Sims contend that the leader plays a key role in teams becoming self-led, and thus having the capacity to function in a highly effective manner.

Module Four—Leading Change. In the fourth module, the objective was to help participants reflect on how to devise innovative and adaptive strategies to addressing change in their respective churches and communities. The importance of community engagement was addressed considering the dynamics of change.

In his video presentation, "Why Community Engagement Matters" Lovett Weems states that, "…the longer a church exists the less knowledgeable it tends to be about its community and the less connected it is with its community…"[269] This video was used in the module. For the three BCCM churches and the three churches where site visits were conducted, while each has had a history of being a vibrant church, Weems' assessment applies to each of the six churches to varying degrees regarding challenges to adapting and engaging the changes in their respective communities.

One of the matters that was addressed in this module was identifying some of the things that serve as obstacles to engaging change. Several obstacles that were identified and discussed were (1) traditions, (2) habits, (3) comfort, (4) values, (5) beliefs, and (5) myopic vision. Bill Easum's *Unfreezing Moves* was considered. Easum asserts that there are two kinds of churches – those that are stuck and frozen, and those that are unstuck and unfrozen.[270]

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[269] Lovett H. Weems, Jr., "Why Community Engagement Matters," Lewis Center for Church Leadership, October 26, 2018, YouTube video of the lecture, accessed September 7, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=CNm1O0nyYU0&feature=youtu.be.

[270] Bill Easum, *Unfreezing Moves: Following Jesus into the Mission Field* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 10.

According to Easum, stuck/frozen churches are (1) stagnant, (2) irrelevant, (3) resistant to change, (4) more interested in institutional maintenance than fulfilling God's mission, and (5) more apt to have top-down, controlling leadership structures. Unstuck/unfrozen churches (1) are permission-giving, (2) encourage people to discover, try, and live out their God-given gifts, (3) equip people for ministry through developing them, (4) tend to be team-focused and less top-down, and (5) are comfortable being out of control at times, and willing to learn from mistakes. Participants in this module were invited to reflect on the ways that the characteristics of stuck and unstuck leadership and churches are reflected in their leadership and their respective churches.

Module Five—Turning Vision into Action. The fifth and final module focused on the visioning process, writing the vision, and developing Ministry Action Plans and SMART Goals. Three dimensions of vision were explored— (1) *Hindsight*—What has happened in the past? (2) *Insight*—What is happening in the present? and (3) *Foresight*—What is perceived as that which is to occur in the future?

Lovett Weems' ten characteristics of vision were also discussed— (1) A vision is related to the mission but different. (2) A vision is unique. (3) A vision focuses on the future. (4) A vision is for others. (5) A vision is realistic. (6) A vision is lofty. (7) A vision is inviting. (8) A vision is a group vision. (9) A vision is good news and bad news. (10) A vision is a sign of hope.[271]

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[271] Weems, *Church Leadership*, 25-29

The *SOWwithPH* visioning model was introduced in this module. This five-part

model/process draws on the agrarian image of sowing and reaping in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

Identified by the acronym *SOWwithPH*: (*See it. Own it. Work it. Pray it. Help it.*), the

model helps church leaders and stakeholders engage in ministry discernment and

implementation. Originally designed by the General Board of Global Ministries of the

United Methodist Church in the 1990s to help new church pastors and leaders,

SOWwithPH is also helpful for leading existing churches, religious, and non-profit

organizations through processes of turnaround and revitalization. In the article, "5 Steps

to Church Vitality and Turnaround," the researcher offers a detailed narrative on the

SOWwithPH process.[272]

The final two parts of module five were designed to introduce participants to

ministry action planning and setting SMART goals, with the objective of participants

leaving module five, and the six-week training process with a concrete Ministry Action

Plan, and a set of workable SMART goals for leadership and ministry engagement in

their respective church and community. Regarding the importance of SMART goals that

consider the realities of both the church and community, Lovett Weems points out that:

> An analysis of environmental Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
> is a needed complement to a similar analysis of the congregation. It is the
> environmental assessment that will tend often to get less consideration if any at
> all when planning decisions are made. Churches invariably tend to underestimate

[272] C. Anthony Hunt, "5 Steps to Church Vitality and Turnaround," *Leading Ideas* (Washington, DC: Lewis Center for Church Leadership, October 11, 2017), accessed September 5, 2022, https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/5-steps-church-vitality-turnaround/.

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the influence of contextual issues upon them, as if they alone will be the one institution not affected by clear trends and issues in the larger, surrounding environment.

The hope and expectation are that by establishing Ministry Action Plans and SMART goals, leaders across the BCCM will continue to become more intentional about how they intend to grow their leadership and the persons they lead, and it is also hoped that this will have a positive impact on the overall effectiveness and vitality of the BCCM churches.

Summary

The qualitative research conducted as a part of this thesis project provided valuable and verifiable data and insight into the need for a transformational leadership development model that is specifically focused on developing transformational leaders in urban ministry contexts. The resultant five-module transformational leadership training series served as a means of (1) beginning to develop a framework for a comprehensive transformational leadership development model, (2) testing the model with leaders from the three BCCM churches, and (3) beginning to determine what should be included in a comprehensive model for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts moving forward.

Most of the participants in the training modules (59 of 66, 89.4%) were members of one of the three Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry churches and included five clergypersons, including four who serve the three BCCM churches. Thirty-three of the 66 total participants (50%) participated in one-to-one interviews or one of the two focus groups and thus were identified as leaders in the BCCM churches.

Almost all of the 66 participants (58, 87.8%) in the five training modules indicated that they had served or were currently serving in at least one key leadership role in the life of their respective churches—in one of the core ministry areas of worship, discipleship, fellowship, mission, evangelism, or administration. Most of the interviewees and focus group participants (33 of 35, 94%) attended some or all of the training sessions, and most of the interviewees and focus group participants (32 of 35, 91%) stated that they believed that they were adequately trained to lead in the particular area they were serving in the church, but the majority of the interviewees and focus group participants (34 of 35, 97%) also indicated that they believed that they and others would benefit from ongoing training specifically tailored to leading in urban ministry contexts. This is an indication of the openness and interest of many BCCM leaders to develop and grow in their leadership.

The findings of the data indicate that there is (1) a strong level of interest and participation across the BCCM churches in the transformational leadership development training that was offered in this project, (2) participants and leaders believe that they are well-prepared to serve and lead in their current leadership roles, and (3) leaders across BCCM believe that they would benefit from ongoing transformational leadership development training focused on leading in urban ministry contexts.

Based on the data that was collected and feedback from participants in the five-module training process, there is evidence of a need for and interest in ongoing training in transformational leadership development that is particularly focused on persons serving in urban ministry contexts.

CHAPTER SIX

Project Evaluation

Technical problems can be resolved through the application of authoritative expertise and through the organization's current structures, procedures, and ways of doing things. Adaptive problem changes can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties. (Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky)

Project Summary

This project thesis was designed to investigate whether a model for developing transformational leaders for urban ministry contexts is needed, and, if so, what such a model should entail. The qualitative research and implementation phases of the project were from early August-early October 2022. The project is foundationally rooted in developing and testing a framework for a transformational leadership development model with leaders from the three congregations of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry that could be further developed, refined, and used to train leaders in the BCCM and potentially in various other urban ministry settings.

The project was informed by the study of interdisciplinary work in urban studies and leadership across various fields—including sociology, business, leadership, and organizational development. In their book, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky suggest that two types of problems impact organizational change. The first is a technical problem, where current knowledge can be applied to resolve a concern. The second is an adaptive problem, where new behaviors must be adopted to resolve an issue. Technical problems can be resolved through the application

of authoritative expertise and through an organization's current structures, procedures, and ways of doing things. Adaptive problems can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties.[273] The condition and hypothesis of this thesis project addressed the adaptive problem of the need for a transformational leadership development model for leaders serving in urban ministry contexts.

This research has ignited a deeper personal passion in me to work toward devising models and processes for developing transformational leaders to serve in urban ministry contexts. This passion has evolved from serving, leading, and teaching in urban ministry settings and a deep-rooted concern, from an early age, for the well-being of urban communities like the ones where I was born, raised, and educated in Washington, DC, and now teach and do ministry in Baltimore, MD. This passion exists amidst the challenges facing many urban communities and churches in cities like Baltimore today.

Additionally, this research has confirmed, for me, God's intent for the well-being of cities and the people who live in them and the critical role that churches must play in continuing to bring hope and foster vitality in urban communities. As was previously stated, several questions served as the impetus for the thesis project: (1) Is there a need for transformational leadership development models specifically tailored for leaders serving un urban ministry contexts? (2) How can transformational leadership be developed, sustained, and scaled in individuals and communities over time? (3) As it

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[273] Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 69-89.

regards results, what is a healthy balance between spiritual transformation/renewal and physical/material/empirical evidence of transformation?

The biblical foundations of this research were based on the Book of Nehemiah and Paul's life and writings. The Nehemiah text and Pauline writings indicate that both Nehemiah and Paul possessed qualities that inform how transformational leadership is carried out in churches today. Scripture informs the work of transformed and transforming leadership in Rom. 12:2, as Paul encouraged persons to "don't be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of (your) minds." The transformed, transformational leader's task then is to lead in fostering change wherever it is needed in the church and community.

The theological foundations of this thesis project are found in ways that the Trinity is an expression of the lived theology of collaboration, and valuing the gifts of all people. In Eph. 4:11-13, Paul points to the diversity of gifts that are found in the body of Christ:

> So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The qualitative research conducted for this thesis project—one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits—and the five transformational leadership development training modules that were developed and conducted opened avenues for deeper reflection and inquiry, where participants have begun to better understand their strengths and areas of potential growth.

Through one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visit interviews—it became clear that an ongoing process of leadership development, specifically tailored to persons serving in urban ministry contexts could help in sustaining and scaling transformational leadership in urban ministry settings over time. Such training could help to build and reinforce leadership skills and result in healthier, more vital churches and communities. It also became clear that this type of training should be an ongoing part of the leadership development processes of the BCCM churches.

In addressing the thesis project's hypothesis and my accompanying interests in developing a transformational leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry settings, I have determined that in light of the research and project findings through data collection, the development and conduct of five transformational leadership development modules, and several follow-up conversations with leaders in the three BCCM churches, along with several follow-up conversations with other church and community leaders in Baltimore and other cities that there is a need for models that comprehensively address the contextualized needs and opportunities for transformational leadership development for those serving in urban ministry settings.

Questions remain as to how urban churches and ministries can most proactively identify, nurture, and develop leadership, and how excellence in urban ministry leaders can be sustained and scaled to most effectively impact and transform churches and communities for the sake of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Among the churches that were a part of this project, there is clear evidence that these are critical questions to address.

How could the effectiveness and impact of this project be qualitatively assessed? The tangible impact of this project is evidenced in the majority of participants' growing understanding of the nature of the urban context, urban theology, and urban ministry, a clearer understanding of transformational leadership across the BCCM, a clearer understanding of their leadership, and the ability of participants to develop Ministry Action Plans and SMART Goals for how they will lead in the future, and a clearer sense of how they will continue to seek out ways to grow as transformational leaders. As the transformational leadership development modules were conducted, data and information were gathered from each session that can be used for the development of comprehensive transformational leadership development processes in the future.

The outcomes of the qualitative research and the framework for a transformational leadership development model not only indicate empowerment and growth but greater interest, ownership, and active participation in the ongoing transformational leadership practices among leaders in each of the BCCM churches.

During the data collection process and the conduct of the five leadership development modules, I was impressed with the number of leaders who have an interest in further developing their leadership to more effectively serve the churches and communities where the BCCM churches exist, and I was also impressed with the number of leaders who expressed hopes that the BCCM churches would become more intentional in engaging their surrounding communities as well as being more involved with charitable, missional, and evangelistic work in Baltimore and beyond. Many of the BCCM leaders are aware of the widening socio-economic gaps that exist among many of those in our churches and many persons in our communities and agree that there is a need

for churches to be more intentional in carrying out Jesus' Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

As a part of the post-course assessment, a questionnaire was sent out by email to all of the 66 participants in the five leadership training modules (see Appendix E), and 46 of the participants (70%) responded to the questionnaire. In the post-course questionnaire, a large majority of the respondents (43 of 46, 93%) agree that local churches, particularly those in urban communities, need to have intentional, ongoing processes to help in developing transformational leaders who are better equipped to address the complex needs of urban communities.

In the article "Church Involvement in Community Organizations," Kimberly Bobo asserts that "Although churches have always been the heart of community life, they have not always worked closely with other denominational or faith bodies, let alone with other institutions in the community.[274] Many of the participants in this project expressed sentiments that resonate with Bobo's assertion.

One of the major positive outcomes of this thesis project and the Bethel Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry program in Transformational Leadership for me has been that it has afforded me the opportunity as supervising pastor of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry and senior pastor of Epworth Chapel United Methodist

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[274] Kimberly Bobo, "Church Involvement in Community Organizations." *Review & Expositor* 92, no. 1 (February 1995): 31–38, accessed August 28, 2022, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/003463739509200104?journalCode=raeb#:~:text=Churches%20join%20with%20community%20organizations,by%20an%20individual%20congregation%20alone.&text=recognize%20that%20the%20problems%20are,which%20the%20churches%20are%20unfamiliar.

Church to work in intentional one-on-one and small group settings with key leaders

serving in various aspects of the leadership of the BCCM churches as paid staff, and as

volunteers in administrative and programmatic leadership roles. This one-on-one and

small group work has helped us continue to strengthen relationships, clarify roles and

responsibilities, and look at results and outcomes (using Mark McCloskey and Jim

Louwsma's 4-Rs)[275], while also serving to help leaders continue to identify strengths,

gifts, and passions, perceived challenges/growing edges, and to then develop Ministry

Action Plans and SMART goals focused on becoming more effective transformational

leaders.

Again, one of the themes of the feedback received from the participants who were

a part of the three qualitative research components (one-on-one interviews, focus groups,

and site visits) and five leadership training modules (as indicated in the post-course

questionnaire) is a need to do additional leadership development training, and that this

should be part of the ongoing strategic planning and development for the BCCM

churches. While this is a hope, and a part of a long-term strategy for leadership

development, one of the challenges that came to light during this thesis project is the time

commitment necessary for intensive and intentional leadership development, given the

multiple other ministry demands in the churches and communities, particularly in this

post-COVID-19 period.

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[275] McCloskey and Louwsma, 33-44.

The six-week, five-module leadership development process entailed the use of about 3-4 full weeks' worth of ministry time (about 120-150 hours) for the development and delivery of the leadership training modules and follow-up with participants. What is being considered for implementation in the next phase of this work is doing more multi-church, cluster-level, and regional training in collaboration with other churches and trainers in the greater Baltimore area.

This qualitative research and leadership development process also allowed for time to assess and reflect on how BCCM leaders individually align with the mission, vision, and purpose (MVP) of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry, and the MVP of their respective churches. This is a matter of critical importance as the churches move further into strategic planning and ministry development processes and become more intentionally engaged with their respective communities.

In this research, it also became clear that there is a need to do more teaching with BCCM leaders on mission, vision, and purpose, and the nature of transformational leadership as means of effecting strategic change and realizing individual and organizational goals and objectives. The intent is to use annual BCCM Vision, Leadership, and Planning retreats over the next several years as opportunities to go deeper into the study and reflection of transformational leadership, using Nehemiah and Paul as biblical models of how we can move toward "building/rebuilding" walls (spiritual and physical), and being transformed to lead into the future. Two components that are currently in development with the intent that they will be offered to persons throughout the BCCM over the next two years are Bible Studies and Sermon Series on Nehemiah and Paul. In the fall of 2022, I began a sermon series on the Book of Romans, titled

"Transformed" at Epworth Chapel UMC and also developed and began teaching a BCCM Bible study on the book of Nehemiah in the fall of 2022.

One modification that came about during the implementation of the project was due to a shift that the training design team realized needed to be made early in the project design thinking process to ground the project in a study of leadership and change, especially as it relates to leading in the post-Covid-19 pandemic period. This shift helped to sharpen the focus of the project modules toward the changing dynamics of the BCCM congregations and communities, and then focus on training leaders to be equipped to lead amidst and through the precipitous change that we are experiencing. So, there was a heavier leaning than was originally planned on the research of Lovett Weems (*Church Leadership*), Robert Quinn (*Building the Bridge as You Walk on It*) and John Kotter (*Leading Change*) in helping to inform ways of arriving at constructs of leadership and organizational change, what these can look like in the BCCM now, and what they might look like moving forward.

Another key learning for project participants and me is a verification of the importance of and need for intentional leadership development aimed at effectiveness and results. Several participants mentioned that the leadership development training modules not only helped them clarify how they understood their *role, responsibility, and relationships* within their respective churches, but how, even for those who are volunteers, seeking and measuring *results* in their area(s) of responsibility is important to the overall effectiveness, vitality, thriving, and growth of the BCCM churches in our collective efforts to meet annual ministry objectives, move toward accomplishing our strategic goals, and realize God's vision for us. Several participants also mentioned that

leadership development is something they have experienced in their secular work settings and shared that it is a tool that should be used more fully among other leaders within the churches.

A final learning relates to an earlier stated learning. Five leadership development modules only served as an entrée into the ongoing leadership development that is needed to effect the transformation of leaders across the BCCM over time. This project would have been better served if at least seven to ten training modules could have been developed and conducted. Five modules only served to touch the surface of the transformational leadership development that is needed for BCCM leaders. What is in play for the BCCM is exploring transformational leadership within the context of what Robert Quinn calls "deep change" about the ways that the overall leadership climate of the churches needs to be transformed.[276] In other words, what might adaptive change look like for us when it is occurring from the inside-out, at the fundamental state of leadership across the BCCM? How does such "deep change" in individual leaders qualitatively and quantitatively impact "deep change" across the churches and in our communities?

Recommendations and Next Steps

Given the findings of this research and congregational and community trends as identified through MissionInsite data and Baltimore area census data, the following three recommendations are offered for developing a comprehensive model for transformational

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[276] Robert Quinn, *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 3-30.

leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. These recommendations focus on three areas: *training, leadership coaching, and resourcing.*

Recommendation One: Training

Further Develop the Transformational Leadership Development Curriculum

Through information gleaned from the data collection process, the development and conduct of five leadership development modules, a post-course questionnaire, and additional feedback from project participants, there is a collective sense that the five training modules that were a part of the project offered an important foundation and framework for developing transformational leaders to serve in urban ministry contexts. These five modules were:

1. Understanding the Urban Context and Urban Ministry
2. Understanding Transformational Leadership
3. Building Effective Teams
4. Leading through Change
5. Turning Vision into Action

Through feedback from project participants, several additional areas were identified that should be included in a comprehensive transformational leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. These additional areas/topics include:

1. Ministry Outside the Box (Creativity, Innovation, Media, and Community Ministry)
2. Understanding Community
3. Organizing for Community Change/Principles of Community Organizing
4. Developing a Coach Approach to Developing Leaders
5. Asset Mapping
6. Resource Identification and Development
7. Developing Ministry Action Plans and SMART Goals

In the next phase of the development of this transformational leadership development model for persons serving in urban ministry contexts, the intent is that the seven additional modules listed above will be added, making this a twelve-module transformational leadership development curriculum/course. It will be important to continue to integrate and connect aspects of faith, spirituality, and discipleship, and give attention to addressing contextualized urban concerns such as poverty, violence, and health and employment disparities, and lived experiences with trauma into each of the modules as they are developed and taught in the future.

Recommendation Two: Leadership Coaching

Use Leadership Coaching as a Transformational Leadership Development Tool

Some of my ongoing leadership development work with leaders at Epworth Chapel United Methodist Church since 2011, and with the three churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry since 2020 has involved performing individual and group leadership coaching for identified leaders and groups in the churches. This leadership coaching was a part of my earlier transformational leadership development work in the Bethel Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry program. In one of my seminar projects in the doctoral program, "Developing and Enacting a Model for Coaching Transformational Leaders in a Congregational Setting" (Summer 2019), leaders were selected for coaching based on the leadership roles and responsibilities that they have in the BCCM churches, and therefore the expectations are that they will model transformational leadership in their ministry areas, among those they are responsible for leading in the BCCM churches.

As previously shared in this thesis project, I am a certified leadership and life coach, with training and certifications through two International Coach Federation-accredited training programs. Madeline McNeely, the lead instructor with the Harvard University Extension School's Leadership Coaching Strategies course that I completed in 2019, states that "Coaching is a one-to-one or group development process between a coach, an organization, and a client, designed to increase the client's leadership and/or managerial performance using feedback processes."[277] Leadership coaching begins with the premise that there are already leadership qualities that lie within the person who is being coached. In *The Art of Coaching Clergy: A Handbook for Church Leaders, Clergy, and Coaches,* Chris Holmes states that in coaching, "We begin with an individual's amazing resilience, believing each person is capable, wonderfully insightful, gifted, and competent.[278]

The objective of leadership coaching, then, is to help not only the leader become more effective but to improve the effectiveness of the church/organization as a whole. The premise is that when leaders improve their performance, such benefits spread throughout the organization.

I have found leadership coaching to be helpful in efforts to strengthen leadership in the BCCM churches. Several project participants in the post-project questionnaire for this thesis project and follow-up conversations shared that leadership coaching should be

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[277] Madeline McNeely, "Leadership Coaching Strategies" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Extension School, 2019), see course notes.

[278] Chris Holmes, *The Art of Coaching Clergy: A Handbook for Church Leaders, Clergy and Coaches* (Annapolis, MD: Chris Holmes, 2018), xxii.

used more fully among persons on teams they (and others) are leading within the churches. One of the learnings from this project is that given the ongoing need and interest in leadership coaching—both for individuals and groups—this is something that should be incorporated into the ongoing transformational leadership development processes and model for the BCCM, and it will be beneficial to develop a coaching culture and process for coaching and training leaders to coach persons on the teams they are leading as an integral part of the overall transformational leadership development model for the BCCM.

In the next phase of the development of the transformational leadership development model for the BCCM, and as means of complementing the twelve-week/module transformational leadership development course, the plan is to work with the BCCM Parish Action Team and other key leaders to develop and enact an ongoing leadership coaching process, using Mark McCloskey and Jim Louwsma's DICE+1 to delve deeper into virtue-based attributes of leadership, and how BCCM leaders and the churches are continuing to be transformed through the five aspects of DICE+1 - *Dynamic Determination, Intellectual Flexibility, Courageous Character, Emotional Maturity, and Collaborative Quotient.*[279]

Recommendation Three: Resourcing

Develop an Urban Leadership Handbook

Feedback from project participants, and several other clergy and lay leaders was that there is a need for print and electronic media resources that are specifically tailored

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[279] McCloskey and Louwsma, 38-49.

to transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry settings. While there are resources available that generally address leadership development for church leaders, few of these resources speak to the specific needs and challenges of ministry leaders (lay and clergy) serving in urban settings. The final recommendation is to develop an *Urban Leadership Handbook* that could be used as a tool for developing transformational leadership among those serving in urban ministry settings. Along with leadership coaching, this handbook would also serve as a complement to the twelve-week transformational leadership development course, and could be offered in print and electronic media formats. Based on participant feedback and input, some of the projected areas to be included in the handbook are:

1. Understanding the Urban Context and Urban Ministry
2. Understanding Transformational Leadership
3. Developing Effective Teams
4. Visioning
5. Delegating Responsibility
6. Goal-Setting/Action Planning
7. Facilitating Change
8. Managing Conflict
9. Conducting Effective Meetings
10. Dealing with Trauma and Grief
11. Understanding Community/Asset Mapping
12. Community Engagement and Organizing

Conclusion

The findings and outcomes of this thesis project indicate that when churches become more intentional in developing ongoing processes for transformational leadership development, there is the potential for spurring additional interest in leaders to participate in leadership development, and these processes have a potentially positive impact on churches' organizational effectiveness, vitality, thriving, and growth, as well as having a

positive impact on the communities in which they exist. With transformational leadership

development models that are specifically tailored for leaders serving in urban ministry

settings, leaders in these settings will be better equipped to serve and lead their churches

and communities.

This thesis project has confirmed that the work of transformational leadership

development is an ongoing process, and that transformation for leaders and churches is

more like a marathon than a sprint. In *Traveling Light,* Eugene Peterson intimates that –

> The person who looks for quick results in the seed planting of well-doing will be
> disappointed. If I want potatoes for dinner tomorrow, it will do me little good to
> go out and plant potatoes in my garden tonight. There are long stretches of
> darkness and invisibility and silence that separate planting and reaping. During
> the stretches of waiting, there is cultivating and weeding and nurturing and
> planting still other seeds."[280]

Since inviting leaders in the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry to engage

in this transformational leadership development process, we have seen evidence of

favorable results as persons are becoming more aware, intentional, and interested in their

growth as church leaders, more persons are willing to step into leadership positions, and

more persons are saying they are clearer and more confident in their leadership abilities.

Nevertheless, a lesson from this thesis project is that not all church leaders are as quick to

adapt and adopt new practices of leadership development and some continue to feel that

the churches are fine as they are. In light of this, it is important to clearly and consistently

communicate to BCCM leaders (and church members in general) about the importance of

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[280] Eugene Peterson, *Traveling Light: Modern Meditations on Paul's Letter of Freedom* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers and Howard, 1988), 180.

leadership development and its potential impact on their leadership and on the vitality of the churches now and into the future.

A goal for the BCCM is to move the transformational leadership development process beyond early adaptors and adopters, and to encourage more BCCM leaders to engage in the transformational leadership practices and we are developing and enacting through *training, coaching, and resourcing.*

Beyond exploring approaches for developing transformational leaders, this project thesis, and the four-year Doctor of Ministry program in Transformational Leadership at Bethel Theological Seminary and University has also been a walk of faith for me, Epworth Chapel United Methodist Church, and the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry. Through this work, we have been stretched in terms of our collective understanding and practice of leadership.

The doctoral program and thesis project have pushed me and the BCCM congregations to points of deeper introspection and inquiry about what God is calling us to be and do as disciples of Jesus Christ, and as leaders in Christ's church, and what it means for us to engage in the mission, vision, and purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our communities. Through these processes, again, we have also been pushed on several occasions to ask ourselves the question that Joseph Daniels raises in *Walking with Nehemiah,* "What is it in our (respective) communities that breaks our hearts?"[281] The work of this thesis project has led us to the place, as

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[281] Daniels, 14.

Robert Quinn images, of building the bridges of congregational and community vitality and strengthened transformational leadership while we walk on them. This continues to be a walk of faith, a movement into an unseen and unknown space that calls for letting go of some former practices and trusting that God will lead us in ministry and transformation in the future.

This act of letting go implies a movement from placing our trust solely in our abilities to putting our trust in God to lead us into God's vision and preferred future for us. It is trusting that God will transform us as leaders and transform the BCCM churches as processes are adapted and adopted to meet the changing needs of our urban communities now and in the future. It is believing that God's possibilities for us are unlimited and that indeed, God's plan for us is a future with hope (Jer. 29:11).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Personal Reflections

Personal Insights

God is calling the church to do more to prepare transformational leaders and this must start by understanding the mission of God (*Missio Dei*), and the specific mission God has for the church in its community. Connected to its mission—what God calls the church to be and do—is the church then having a clear sense of how it must engage in calling, equipping, and supporting leaders to serve the church and its community. In this regard, the church is called to be consistently introspective and reflective on exactly who it is, and where it is, and then determine where God is leading it into the future. The church and community must be willing to meet at the intersections of healing and hope—especially in urban ministry contexts—and the church must see itself in every person it encounters and work together in the community until transformation occurs.

Since the Church's founding by Christ, churches have served as centers of community life—engaged in tasks/functions that are both theological and sociological. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer intimated in the 1920s, "The church is Christ existing as community."[282] In Bonhoeffer's statement, there is an essential, indelible sociality—a connection of the church with the community and Christ. A question here, then, is how might churches in urban contexts become, again, centers of community vitality and transformation. A premise of this thesis project has been that the development of

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[282] Bonhoeffer, *Communion of Saints*, 134.

transformational leadership is essential to sustaining and scaling vitality, thriving, and growth in churches and the communities where they exist.

The question that this thesis project has addressed has centered on a fundamental epistemological and investigatory concern about the existence of transformational leadership development models for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. This involved qualitative research and employed a case study approach focused on the three BCCM churches to identify the areas of existing strength among leaders, and opportunities to develop transformational leaders more comprehensively in the future. Essentially, the research asked and addressed two concerns: Are there currently processes and programs in place to adequately develop transformational leaders to serve in urban ministry settings? And what model(s) can be devised to further develop transformational leaders to serve in the BCCM and other urban ministry settings in the future?

The success of the five-module leadership development training model/framework that was developed and presented in this thesis project is due in part to the fact that the participants entered this process with at least two shared characteristics: they are all Christians, and they all share an interest in the leadership climate in their respective churches. There was an inherent belief among participants in the *imago Dei*— that we have all been created in God's image as we seek to live out God's mission (the *Missio Dei*) in the world, and that God desires that we continue to be perfected in our service to God, Christ's church, and our communities.

The outcomes of this research not only indicate the empowerment of participants as transformational leaders but also ownership and active interest in the ongoing work of transformational leadership development in the Beloved Community Cooperative

Ministry. Acknowledgment of the need for transformational leadership development as a means of transforming our churches and communities, and a willingness to commit to a leadership development process became apparent through the research findings and training process. The commitments made by leaders in the three BCCM congregations to participate in the research gathering components (one-on-one interviews and focus groups), as well as the training, and to offer input and feedback through the various phases of this project speak to the empowering and transformational impact of the process. Equipped with new information and skills in leadership, a shared response (mutuality) that speaks to the need to continue to act and grow our leadership capacity is evolving.

The research also indicates that the leadership development model allowed for differences of perspective and opinions, yet individuals and groups found commonality in their ability to articulate hopes for ongoing processes directed at strengthening leadership in the BCCM churches. Additionally, the research indicates that differences can be aired without impacting the ability of BCCM leaders to remain focused on fulfilling the mission, vision, and purpose of the BCCM collectively and in the three churches individually, and to remain hopeful for the future.

While in the zip codes where the three churches of the BCCM are located—20207 and 21217—we have more churches in our communities than ever before—the impact of churches has diminished over time. Many of these churches have turned their focus inward and continue to rationalize their continued existence only through the lens of the persons who worship on Sundays, and how these persons' needs and desires are fulfilled, often forgetting that there is a community they must also engage. In many

instances, people in these communities see churches as irrelevant and distant relics, having little impact, making no real connections to those in their communities, and providing no real assistance with those living in their communities. The hope, then, is for churches to reconnect with their communities, and for churches to be intentional about developing transformational leaders who are called, convicted, connected, and committed to courageously helping bring about transformation in churches and communities.

About fifty years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. preached a sermon entitled, "Transformed Nonconformist."[283] King based his message on Paul's encouragement in Rom. 12:2 to "don't be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The context for King's message on transformed nonconformity was the American Civil Rights movement of the mid-20th century and the need for leadership in the church and society that would stay the course in seeking to transform society and deliver America from the racial division, economic disparity, and other social maladies that plagued the nation.

King's message comes to mind as I continue to think about what it means to be a transformed and transformational leader in the church today, and as I now move toward the completion of this doctoral thesis project and the doctoral program in Transformational Leadership at Bethel Theological Seminary and University. King's notion of transformed nonconformity leads to reflection on what it means to be a

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[283] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Transformed Nonconformist," *Strength to Love* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2010), 11-20.

transformational and adaptive leader today, and what such leadership needs to look like in the future.

King wrote that "Success, recognition, and conformity are the bywords of the modern world where everyone seems to crave the anesthetizing security of being identified with the majority… Despite the prevailing tendency to conform, we as Christians have the mandate to be nonconformists."[284] Transformed non-conformity is a primary challenge for the 21st century church and its leaders, particularly in the post-COVID-19 period in which we now find ourselves. In this nano-second, drive-through, instant message, instant gratification, instant everything world in which we live, it is the leader's challenge to lead in changing the realities in our churches and communities in ways that make sense for today. Today's leaders must lead in ways where they are not subsumed by every fad, quick-fix, management guru, consultant, program, seminar, workshop, conference, webinar, podcast, and new idea that comes along.

Transformational church leaders today must be prayerful and discerning, discreet and strategic, sober, and wise in determining what will be needed to lead churches and communities toward the specific vision—the preferred future—that God intends. They must resist the temptation to copy, mimic, and imitate every successful mega-church or corporate leader who comes along. They must be pastoral and theological, love everybody while listening to them and leading them, and stay true to the Gospel while relating (not conforming) to an ever-changing world. The transformational leader's life

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[284] King, 2.

must be one of changing, growing, improvising, adapting, and transforming—but never conforming.

Suggestions for Further Research

As was shared earlier in this thesis project, from 2004-12, I served as the United Methodist district superintendent for the Baltimore area (the Baltimore-Harford and Baltimore Metropolitan Districts). In that role, I provided strategic, missional, and administrative leadership with 88 pastors and urban churches of various sizes, in the various communities in the greater Baltimore area. In that role, I was also responsible for leading a project team in developing and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan aimed at strengthening churches and communities in Baltimore.

The strategic ministry plan that emerged and was implemented in 2008 was entitled "Hope for the City," a ten-point ministry plan that was to include the "Hope Academy," which was to be designed to train and develop urban lay and clergy leaders across the Baltimore region, and was expected to be a model that could be replicated in United Methodist urban ministry contexts across the United States, and perhaps in other nations where United Methodist Churches exist, and in other denominations.

This thesis project sought to address the ongoing leadership development need that the "Hope for the City" ministry plan was intended to address in 2008. How can the outcomes of this thesis project be enhanced, sustained, and scaled? What could be added? I believe that several things will enhance the work that was begun in this research. With identified needs to revitalize the BCCM churches, and strategically position them to effectively engage the needs of their broader communities in the future, there needs to be a concerted, sustained effort to strengthen processes across the churches directed at

identifying, nurturing, and developing transformational leaders to serve in each of the existing and future ministries of the BCCM churches.

The hope is that this thesis project will serve as the foundation of a model for well-developed, sustainable, scalable transformational leadership development for persons serving as leaders in the churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry. This transformational leadership development model could also be useful in local and judicatory urban contexts across the United Methodist Church, and perhaps in other denominations.

In summary, given the findings of this thesis project and congregational and community trends as identified through MissionInsite data and Baltimore area census data, the following three recommendations are encouraged for developing comprehensive a model of transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. These recommendations focus on three areas: *training, coaching, and resourcing.*

Training should occur through a more fully developed (twelve-module) leadership training process/program as discussed in Chapter 6. Several project participants shared that the work of this project could be enhanced by adding several modules to the leadership development training course. Given that all of the training for this thesis project was conducted in a virtual learning environment using ZOOM technology, there is also a sense among participants that shifting to an in-person or hybrid (in-person and online) learning modality and environment would enhance learning and relationships among leaders in the BCCM. While virtual presentations via ZOOM were convenient and necessary due to COVID-19, many participants shared in post project

questionnaires and conversations that in-person classes would have offered better engagement and opportunities for collaboration among group participants. Moving forward, the expectation is that a shift will likely be made to a hybrid model for content delivery, with a combination of in-person and virtual learning, which could offer maximum flexibility for participants, and could enhance content delivery. The intent is to develop and implement the training program, "Hope for the City: Transforming Urban Leaders," with the first cohort of up to 25 participants anticipated to start in in fall 2023.

Leadership Coaching would occur through regularly scheduled ongoing individual and group leadership coaching sessions with key BCCM leaders. Leadership coaching would also involve training leaders on how to coach those that are a part of the ministries and teams that they lead, using a "coach-the-coach" approach.

Resourcing would involve the development and publication of an *Urban Leadership Handbook* aimed at resourcing persons serving in urban ministry contexts (as outlined in Chapter 6) that could be produced in print and electronic formats.

This thesis project sought to build on existing academic research and literature in the fields of biblical studies, urban studies, urban ministry, and leadership, and should serve as the impetus for further research for me and other investigators, and should also serve as a useful tool for pastors, community organizers, trainers, and teachers in various settings in the areas of church leadership and urban ministry.

Future academic research in the area of transformational leadership directed toward persons serving in urban ministry contexts may focus on more comprehensively qualifying and quantifying the correlation between transformational leadership modeling and church vitality and growth in urban contexts. Robust sampling and research using

qualitative research methodologies similar to those used in this thesis project which are conducted in urban ministry settings outside of Baltimore could provide a clearer indication of the validity of the findings of this thesis project and whether there is a need for transformational leadership development models tailored to the particular needs of persons serving in urban ministry contexts, what such models should entail and how they should be implemented.

Again, there is an observable lack of literature about the application of transformational leadership in urban ministry contexts, and there is a lack of transformational leadership models for urban ministry leaders. It is hoped that a model for transformational leadership development arrived at through expanding this thesis project could be used in seminary practical theology courses and programs in Urban Ministry and Community Engagement. Finally, the intent is that this thesis project will serve as the basis of a book on transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry contexts. The tentative title of the book is *Hope for the City: Transformational Leadership Development for Urban Ministries*.

EPILOGUE

A Prayer for Cities

God, "you're the God of this city. You're the King of these people. You're the Lord of the nation. You are… You're the light in this darkness. You're the hope to the hopeless. You're the peace to the restless. You are."[285]

O God, you see all and know all—and amidst the various vicissitudes of our lives, we are mindful that you are in control of all that is and is to be. We thank you for your grace and mercy toward us. We are a people of divergent perspectives, with a diversity of hopes, dreams, and visions. But we come before you acknowledging the commonality that all persons share in you, the creator of the universe.

We give you thanks for cities across America and the world, and we take this opportunity to offer prayers for each. We pray that you will bless every home and every community—every school and every place where your people gather for work and leisure.

Bless those persons who are older and those who are younger. We pray for peace and safety for all of us who live and move throughout every city across our nation, and we pray likewise for those like us around the world.

Lord God, we pray especially for your blessings on those persons who bear the burdens of want and disparity among us—whether it be for lack of food or shelter,

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[285] Chris Tomlin, "God of this City" (song) (Santa Monica, CA: Capitol Christian Music, 2008).

inadequate healthcare, or inadequate education. We pray for those and their loved ones who have been victimized by violence.

We ask for your blessings on those who serve and lead our cities in elective and appointive office, and those who will do so in the future. Bless them with a portion of your wisdom, patience, integrity, justice, and compassion.

We pray for churches and other religious and community institutions that seek to promote good and provide for the spiritual and social well-being of your people.

And we pray that we would realize the promise that you, O God, made through the prophet Jeremiah that you have a future filled with hope in store for each of us (Jer. 29:11). May it be so.

Indeed, "you're the God of this city. You're the King of these people. You're the Lord of the nation. You are… You're the light in this darkness. You're the hope to the hopeless. You're the peace to the restless. You are."[286]

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[286] Tomlin, "God of this City," song published in 2008.

APPENDIX A

Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry Alignment
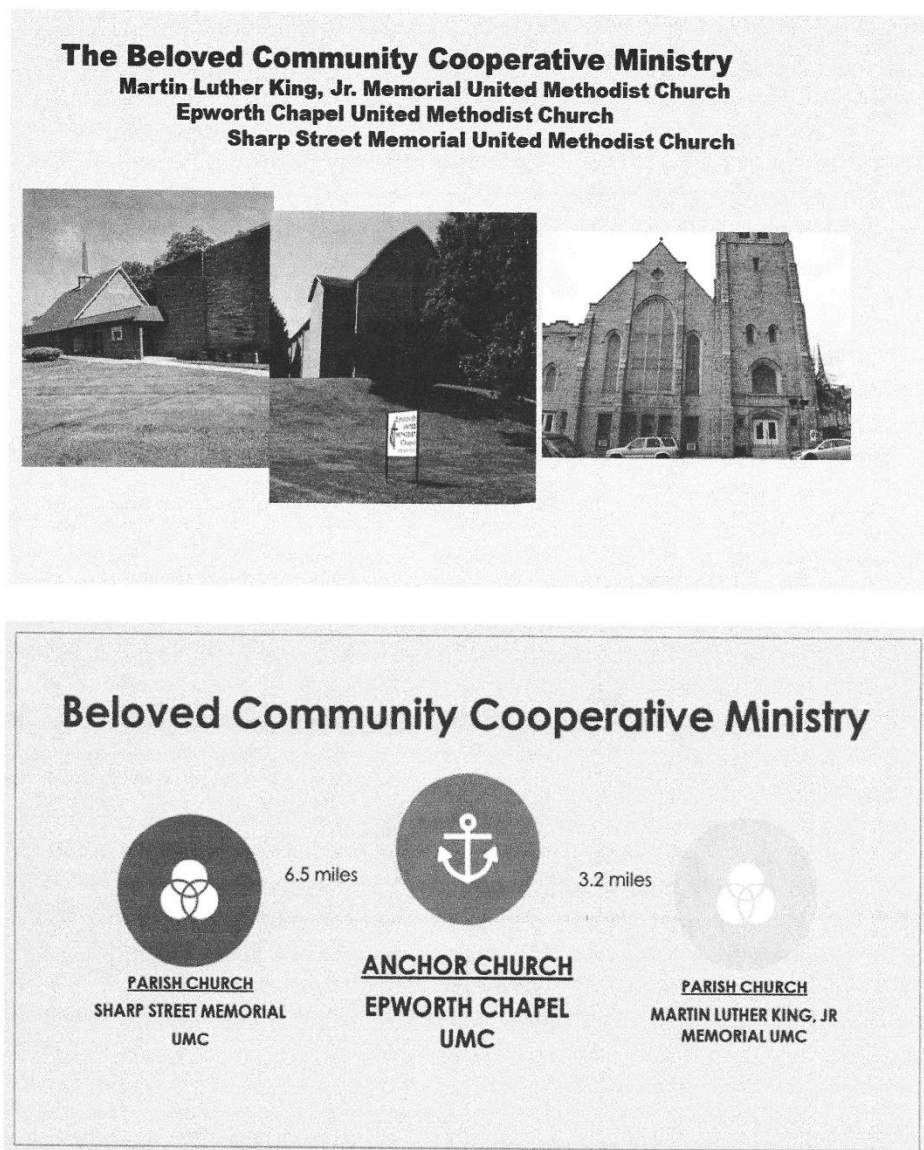
These graphics offer a depiction of the alignment of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry located in Baltimore, MD.

APPENDIX B

Research Instruments

Overview of Research Instruments

The qualitative research approach employed in this project is a case study involving the three churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry in Baltimore, Maryland (Epworth Chapel UMC, Sharp Street Memorial UMC, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial UMC). As described by John Creswell, "a 'case study' is a design of inquiry from sociology in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction based on the experiences of participants."[287] The primary data collection instruments used in the case study will be one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Consent for Human Subject research will be obtained from participants in the data collection process in accordance with Bethel Theological Seminary and University requirements (please see the Consent Form for Human Subject Research below).

The project asserts that there is a need for a focused leadership development model aimed at developing transformational leaders to serve in urban ministry contexts. The research seeks to test this assertion, and then arrive at a framework/model for developing clergy and lay leaders to serve in urban ministry contexts.

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[287] Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (2014), 14.

The research instruments designed for the conduct of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits will seek to collect data that (1) gives an indication and provides evidence of participants' understanding of leadership, and specifically, transformational leadership, (2) gives an indication and provides evidence of the participant's perceptions of their leadership effectiveness, (3) gives an indication and provides evidence of the participant's perceptions of the overall quality and climate of leadership and leadership development in their respective churches, (4) gives an indication and provides insight as to the need for a focused transformational leadership development model aimed at strengthening leadership in urban ministry contexts, and (5) gives an indication and provides insight as to what might be entailed in a model for transformational leadership development for lay and clergy persons serving in urban ministry contexts.

The research and data analysis approach will involve triangulating the three data collection sources (interviews, focus groups, and site visits) and drawing comparisons, contrasts, and conclusions from the three data collection sources that might be used to inform the development of a model for transformational leadership development for persons serving in urban ministry settings.

Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN
A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry
Contexts
Doctor of Ministry Research Project
C. Anthony Hunt, Investigator

One-on-One Interview Questions

Name_____ Church_____ Date_____

1. How long have you been a member of your church?

2. What key leadership roles have you held?

3. What key leadership role/roles do you currently have?

4. How would you define leadership? Transformational leadership?

5. What would you consider to be three key qualities of an effective leader?

6. What kind of training have you had to prepare you for your current church leadership role(s)?

7. How effective has the training been in preparing you for your current church leadership role(s)?

8. What are some of the primary training needs for leaders in the church? Name 3.

9. Are there any specific training needs that would be important for ministry leaders (lay and clergy) serving in urban churches? If yes, what are some of these needs?

10. What three leadership workshop topics would you be interested in?

Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN
A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry
Contexts
Doctor of Ministry Research Project
C. Anthony Hunt, Investigator

Focus Group Questions – Location _____   **Date** _____
Number of Participants_____

1. How do you define leadership? Transformational leadership?

2. What are the key qualities of effective leaders (especially church leaders)?

3. Describe the leadership development program/processes that have prepared you for your current leadership role(s) in the church?

4. How effective have these processes/programs been?

5. What are some of the primary training needs for leaders in the church?

6. Are there any specific training needs that would be important for ministry leaders (lay and clergy) in urban churches? If so, what are they?

7. What leadership workshop topics would you be interested in?

Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN
A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry
Contexts
Doctor of Ministry Project
C. Anthony Hunt, Investigator

Site Visit Questions

Church Name _____ **Date** _____
Number of Participants _____

1. How do you define leadership? Transformational leadership?

2. What are the key qualities of effective leaders (especially church leaders)?

3. Describe the current leadership development program/process in your church.

4. How effective has the leadership training been in preparing you (and others) for your current church leadership role(s)?

5. What are some of the primary training needs for leaders in your church?

6. Are there any specific training needs that would be important for ministry leaders (lay and clergy) in urban churches?

7. What leadership workshop topics would you be interested in?

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Human Subject Research

C. Anthony Hunt, Investigator

You are invited to participate in a study of "A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Urban Ministry Settings." Through this study, I hope to develop a model for effectively developing leadership among laity and clergy serving in urban ministry settings. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are one of the identified leaders in one of the three churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry (BCCM) or in one of the churches where site visits will be conducted. This research is a part of my thesis project for the Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Leadership degree program that I am completing at Bethel Theological Seminary and University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

If you decide to participate, I will be conducting one-on-one interviews, focus group sessions (comprised of 7-10 persons each) and site visits in August-September 2022. You will be asked to participate in one interview, one of two focus groups, or a site visit that I will conduct. Sessions will last for approximately one hour each. There are no identified risks with your participation and there will be no compensatory benefits for participants.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented.

Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your future relations with the churches of the Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry or the investigator. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by Bethel Theological Seminary and University's Levels of Review for Human Subject Research. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact Bethel Theological Seminary and University's Office of Institutional Review.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

You are deciding whether to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____ _____
Signature   Date

_____
Signature of Investigator

APPENDIX D
Transformational Leadership Development for Urban Ministry Contexts (Modules)

Beloved Community Cooperative Ministry

HOPE FOR THE CITY TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR URBAN MINISTRY CONTEXTS

A Five-Module Leadership Development Course

Rev. Dr. C. Anthony Hunt

Saturdays, Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24, Oct. 1
9:00 am-12:00 Noon
Zoom Video

MODULE ONE

Understanding the Urban Context and Urban Ministry

Module Objective

Participants will be able to identify and discuss major theological and biblical

considerations for ministry in urban settings.

Scripture

*But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the
Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

*For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare
(shalom) and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.* (Jer. 29: 7, 11)

Defining Urban Ministry and Urbanization

Urban Ministry: A way of understanding God, based upon the dynamics of the

city, and involves a theological praxis that seeks to enhance the quality of life for all

creation.[288]

Urbanization: Typically understood as the process of interlocking social, cultural,

economic, political, religious, and spatial characteristics that reflect the environment and

ethos of the city.[289]

Biblical and Theological Perspectives

- Nehemiah as a Model of Transformational Urban Leader

- Paul as a Model of Transformational Urban Leader

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[288]   Ronald E. Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 8.

[289]   Peters, 26.

Bridging Chasms in Urban Ministry (Ronald Peters)

At least four chasms must be bridged—

1. Urban Ministry and Christian Ministry—this artificial barrier must be removed.

2. The Urban and Rural Chasm—there's a failure to see the fundamental unity that exists here.

3. The Ethics and Evangelism Chasm—there needs to be a recognition of urban ministry's roots in justice advocacy (ethical agency) and evangelistic mission.

4. The Urban as a code word and Urban as theological symbol Chasm— "urban" is often a code word of "Black," "Brown," "those people," "poor," "or non-mainstream." As a theological symbol—urban is an eschatological paradigm, and symbol of hope.

Core Values for Urban Ministry (Ron Peters)

Core values are "those ideals or principles that form(s) the essence of Christian ministry. They are basic, central, nonnegotiable beliefs that motivate and energize ministry."[290] According to Ronald Peters, they are—

- Theism
- Love
- Community
- Creativity
- Reconciliation
- Hope[291]

Urban Ministry Typologies

In the preface to *Transforming the City Reframing Education for Urban Ministry,* Robert M. Franklin details five types of ministries engaging the urban context[292]:

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[290] Peters, 110.

[291] Peters, 112-134.

[292] Robert M. Franklin, in eds. Eldin Villafane, Bruce Jackson, Robert Evans, Alice Frazier, *Transforming the City,* xxii.

1. *Ministries of Charity and Mercy***.** Provides direct relief to people who suffer. Most of our churches participate in some form of this type of ministry.
2. *Ministry of Nurture.* Offers sustained support to assist people in becoming self-reliant. This demands a greater commitment of time and resources.
3. *Ministries that Provide Human Services*. These reflect the way the church structures itself (often through the creation of private, nonprofit organizations) to provide services such as child care, job training, etc.
4. *Ministry of Justice*. Provide a prophetic, public witness of social activism. In this way, the church becomes a voice for the voiceless and a forum for the powerless.
5. *Ministry of Comprehensive Community Transformation*. Develop and announce a vision of the "good community." Churches thus engaged, take a leading role in acquiring vacant land, organizing capital, incubating micro-enterprises, and directing public and private resources.

Action/Reflection

Which of these urban ministry typologies most appropriately fits your church? How has your church shifted in its typology over the last few years? Where do you see the need for your church to shift over the next few years?

Take-home Assignment

Talk with 3-5 persons in your church about the type of urban ministry that your church is engaged in. See if these people agree with your opinion. Be prepared to share your findings with the class when we meet the next time.

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MODULE TWO

Understanding Transformational Leadership

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Module Objectives

1. Understand major theoretical models of transformational leadership
2. Gain a sense of the dynamics of leadership trends for the 21st century
3. Understand personal leadership styles, and the nature of adaptive leadership, and be able to articulate a personal vision for leadership within the context of the church, ministry, and community

Leadership Defined

- *"*Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less." (John Maxwell)

- "It is an influenced relationship between leaders and followers who intend real changes which reflect their mutual purposes." (Joseph Rost)

Transformational Leadership Defined

Transformational leadership is how transformation in persons is influenced by a leader or group of leaders. Distinctions can be made between transactional and transformational leadership. Regarding these distinctions, several things can be pointed out: (1) The relationships of most leaders and followers are transactional in nature. (2) The transactional leader seeks to make a deal. (3) By contrast, the transformational leader seeks to engage followers in a relationship. (Peter Northouse)

Thoughts on Leadership

- Leadership is a *process* that any person can perform; it is not limited by position, title, or circumstance.
- Leadership involves a set of attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are learned, not inherent.
- Leadership means working cooperatively with others to accomplish agreed-upon goals. It is a shared responsibility.
- Leadership does not reside in a person or a position; leadership is a process that anyone in any organization or community can and should be a part of.
- Leadership is the ability to influence the behavior of other people.
- Every person can develop and demonstrate leadership skills.

- Leaders focus on what they want team members and the organization to achieve.
- Leaders are learners, teachers, and developers of people.
- Effective leaders value the differences in people.

Leadership is Service

Leading is not something that just elected or officially designated leaders do. The leader shares the responsibility of leadership with all members. Leadership happens when anybody in the group does or says something that moves a person or group further toward any of these three areas:

1. The accomplishment of the task
2. The resolution of internal issues
3. The ability of the members to work together as a group.

Because the leader believes in the responsibility and ability of the group members to reach decisions, the leader helps members maintain and develop the group as well as encourages them to be more effective individual participants. A leader actively promotes the involvement of all members. The effective leader sees the group as a whole, not just a collection of individuals. He or she should be aware of how morale, feelings, or satisfaction can change the dynamics of the group.

The Four Movements of Leadership (Edward Dayton and Ted Engstrom)

- Planning
- Activating
- Motivating
- Evaluating

Ten Observations about Leadership (Lovett Weems)

1. Leadership needs to be demythologized
2. Leadership is not simple
3. Leadership is spiritual

4. Leadership is about group process
5. Leadership is chaotic
6. Leadership is funny
7. Most research on leadership is not taking place in the church
8. Any learning about leadership is only a beginning
9. Leadership is an art
10. Leadership is never an end in itself

Perspectives on Leadership

- Leadership isn't the opposite of following; it's part of it.
- Leadership isn't overseeing; it's understanding.
- Leadership isn't being above or being in front; it's being involved.
- Leadership isn't just authority; it's responsibility.
- Leadership isn't being in command; it's being in relationship.
- Leadership isn't using power; it's sharing power.
- Leadership isn't being the best; it's helping bring out the best in others.
- Leadership isn't taking credit; it's giving credit where credit is due.
- Leadership isn't just doing things right; it's doing the right things right.

Qualities of Leadership

- Concern—showing care for group members, as much as for his/her goals.
- Confidence—believing in yourself and your goals
- Courage—the boldness to implement a vision despite opposition, criticism, and the chance of failure
- Determination—tenacity or persistence that refuses to quit or become discouraged because of hardships, difficulties, or opposition.
- Energy—is an example of a hard worker. Hard work is a key to success.
- Humility—confidence must be balanced with humility. One must not be so confident that he/she ignores the counsel of others.
- Organizational ability—adeptness at organizing tasks and people.
- Vision—the ability to see beyond today

A successful leader will… *CARE*

Communicate with competence their confidence in group members.

Always be accessible for the tasks, meetings, and programs of the organization.

Remember to be responsible and responsive to group members and other stakeholders.

Energize their group by being enthusiastic about others' ideas and efforts.

Take Home Assignment

Reflect on your leadership. How have you been effective as a leader? What are some of your growing edges as a leader? What do you see as key characteristics of a transformational leader?

MODULE THREE

Building Effective Teams

Module Objectives

1. Understand the importance of teams and why building highly effective teams is critical for organizational growth
2. Understand the role of leaders in developing teams
3. Understand the factors involved in building highly effective teams

Overview

In any organizational setting today, teams are necessary due to the complex performance challenges that organizations face. These challenges demand dexterity, speed, and quality which are difficult for individuals to accomplish working alone. Effective leaders exert great effort in team-building. They understand the importance of being both a leader and a servant of the team, and they willingly and often acknowledge indebtedness and gratitude to team members.

The Importance of Developing Teams

Linda Gratton and Tamara J. Erickson ("Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams") assert that the only way to assemble the knowledge and breadth required to pull off many of the complex tasks that organizations face today is to assemble highly collaborative teams, with highly skilled team members. Thus, they offer eight ways to build collaborative teams:

1. Investing in signature relationship practices
2. Modeling collaborative behavior
3. Creating a "gift culture" through mentoring and coaching
4. Ensuring the requisite skills among team members
5. Supporting a strong sense of community
6. Assigning team leaders that are both task-oriented and relationship-oriented
7. Building on heritage relationships
8. Understanding role clarity and task ambiguity

Why a Leader should Set Up Teams

- It sparks participation.
- It brings about clarity of direction.
- It trains group members.
- It encourages the sharing of ideas.
- It encourages collaboration
- It initiates constructive criticism.

The Role of Leaders in Developing Teams

Joseph Folkman ("5 Ways to Build a High-performance Team") asserts that team

leaders play the following roles in team-building:

1. They inspire more than they drive.
2. They resolve conflict and increase cooperation.
3. They set stretch goals.
4. They communicate.
5. They are trusted.

In developing teams, leaders:

- Create a climate that is conducive to team learning and growth.
- Create an environment that allows information to be shared and actions to be synchronized.
- Encourage team members to adapt to uncertainty and difficult situations.
- Involve team members in the decision-making process and, as a result, team members become more committed to the team goals and performance.

Factors involved in Developing Highly Effective Teams

(Martin Haas and Mark Mortensen, *The Secrets of Great Teamwork*)

- Compelling direction
- Strong structure
- Supportive context
- Shared mindset

Developing Highly Effective Teams

According to Patrick Lencioni (*Five Dysfunctions of a Team*), several factors can lead to the dysfunction of teams. Five pitfalls (dysfunctions) to effective teams are:

1. Absence of trust—unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group
2. Fear of conflict—where team members may seek artificial harmony over constructive passionate debate
3. Lack of commitment—where the appearance of group buy-in for decisions creates ambiguity in organizations
4. Avoidance of accountability—when avoiding responsibility to call peers on counterproductive behavior leads to low expectations within the team
5. Inattention to results—as team members focus on personal success, status, and ego at the expense of team success.

Factors involved in Developing Highly Effective Teams

- They tend to have the right people performing the right roles.
- Team members tend to play integral roles in achieving the team's goals.
- Leaders foster a supportive environment and a culture that encourages teamwork.
- Team members have the appropriate skills to perform their assigned tasks.
- There are high levels of commitment to the team's and organization's vision.
- There are means by which team performance is measured in light of mutual accountability.
- There is a focus on building cohesion
- There is an ability of team members to work interdependently and cross-functionally
- There is clarity about the organization's mission, vision, and purpose, and a heightened sense of where team members and their functions fit within the overall organization
- There is a careful selection of team members, based on their gifts/talents/skills, passion, commitment, ability to work collaboratively and with flexibility, creativity, and openness to ongoing learning/coaching.

Take Home Assignment

Reflect on the importance of teams and how you've experienced teams working in the context of your leadership and church/organization.

MODULE FOUR

Leading Change

Module Objectives

1. Understand the nature and dynamics of change in churches and other organizations
2. Understand the role of leaders in leading through change
3. Understand the factors involved in developing strategies to effectively address organizational change

Overview

Change is the process of the shifting dynamics of people and processes within an organization or system. Change has many faces and can derive from many different sources such as loss, separation, relocation, a change in a relationship(s), a change in direction, a change in health, and/or personal growth. All people deal with change differently. People may resist, embrace, run away from, seek out, and/or facilitate change. It can transform us to new dimensions and levels of thinking, believing, and understanding.

Leading Change

Leaders are people who make things happen, and are often called to facilitate, manage, and lead through change. They lead people toward the achievement of group and individual goals. Leaders must learn to deal with personal and environmental changes and understand the resistance to change they will often face in working with different groups.

An Eight-step Change Management Process (From John Kotter's *Leading Change*)

Leading change involves:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating a coalition
3. Forming a strategic vision and initiative
4. Enlisting a volunteer army
5. Enabling action by removing barriers
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Sustaining acceleration
8. Instituting change

According to Ken Cochrum's *VUCA Prime Skills model*, change involves moving

from:

- *Volatility to Vision*
- *Uncertainty to Understanding*
- *Complexity to Clarity*
- *Ambiguity to Agility*

A Three-step Model for Leading Change (Kurt Lewin)

1. *Unfreezing*—identifying and addressing the areas where the organization is stuck
2. *Implementing change*
3. *Refreezing*—establishing a new normal

Ways to Lead through Resistance to Change

- A key to leading through change is timing. Be sure to facilitate change at the appropriate time that change becomes necessary.
- Keep organizational members and stakeholders informed of possible changes. Avoid surprise.
- Know and be able to explain the reasons why change is necessary.
- Explain what change will mean to the organization.
- Know how change will affect leadership structure, organizational costs, etc.
- Ask for advice and invite participation from organization members.
- Be attentive to possible chain reactions within the organization.
- Seek to ensure that change will result in progress and growth.
- Allow time and space for dialogue. Don't be afraid to say, "Let's wait."
- Evaluate the short-term and long-term impact of change.

Nine Critical Steps for Leading Organizational Change

1. Recognize the need for change.

2. Include as many group members as possible at the beginning stages of the change process.
3. Carefully diagnose the problem, identify issues, and clarify the need for change.
4. Identify alternative methods and approaches.
5. Select a method or strategy.
6. Organize the necessary resources to address the change that is to occur (people, processes, place)
7. Implement the change.
8. Evaluate the change.
9. Re-evaluate and re-calibrate as adjustments to the change process need to occur.

Take home assignment

Reflect on the dynamics of change and how change has impacted (is impacting) your leadership.

MODULE FIVE

Turning Vision into Action

Module Objectives

1. Develop working definitions of church mission and vision
2. Understand how to engage in a process of discernment as it pertains to the mission and vision of respective churches and ministries
3. Understand how to engage in a process of developing Ministry Action Plans, and SMART Goals

Overview

Vision is defined as a clear view of a desired future state. Many organizations find themselves at the point of myopia. Myopia is the state of being shortsighted or having a narrow vision. For organizations, this essentially means adhering to practices, behaviors, habits, values, and fears that result in shortsightedness, narrowness, and the unwillingness to take risks for the sake of a better future. Vision is how organizations move out of myopia and most fully into their best future.

Ten Characteristics of Vision (Lovett Weems, *Church Leadership*)

1. A vision is related to the mission, but different.
2. A vision is unique.
3. A vision focuses on the future.
4. A vision is for others.
5. A vision is realistic.
6. A vision is lofty.
7. A vision is inviting.
8. A vision is a group vision.
9. A vision is good news and bad news.
10. A vision is a sign of hope.

Three Dimensions of Vision (Three Questions)

1. *Hindsight*—What has happened in the past?
2. *Insight*—What is happening in the present?
3. *Foresight*—What do you perceive as that which should occur in the future?
(Note that foresight is largely determined by hindsight and insight.)

The Visionary Leader

The visionary leader is a change agent and is effectively engaged in the task of "building the bridge" as she/he walks on it.

Eight Steps *to Building the Bridge as You Walk on It* **(Robert Quinn)**

1. Reflective Action
2. Authentic Engagement
3. Appreciative Inquiry
4. Grounded Vision
5. Adaptive Confidence
6. Detached Interdependence
7. Responsible Freedom
8. Tough Love

Twelve Principles for Visionary Leadership

1. Proper planning and organization are essential for effective visioning and vision implementation.
2. Keep stakeholders informed.
3. Visioning is a messy, and non-linear process.
4. The leader is central to the vision-casting and buy-in process.
5. The organization sees the person before they see the vision.
6. Competing visions and voices within the organization can make it difficult for stakeholders to see and hear the vision.
7. Vision, by nature, is often difficult for many persons to conceptualize.
8. Vision-casting implies necessary change.
9. The visionary leader must avoid distractions.
10. Vision-casting takes time.
11. The organization is ultimately responsible for carrying forth the vision.
12. The realization of a vision is invariably a new beginning, and not an end.

A 5 Step Process for Vision-casting and Implementation

SOWwithPH—an agrarian metaphor for vision-casting and implementation

(based on 2 Cor. 9:6-8, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church)

- *SEE IT*—Pertains to vision, which is critical to any organization's vitality, growth, and best future.
- *OWN IT*—Speaks to the way that vision is shared, and the buy-in process that is necessary for stakeholders across the organization and beyond to embrace vision.
- *WORK IT*—Speaks to ways that vision is activated and implemented.
- *PRAY IT*—Speaks to the ongoing spiritual and communal work needed to sustain and scale vision.
- *HELP IT*—Addresses the types of internal and external support/help, consultants, coaches, technical assistance, and resources needed to continue to move the vision forward.

DEVELOPING A MINISTRY ACTION PLAN

(Worksheet)

1. What is the current vision for your church? Does this align with God's vision?

2. What is your vision as a leader for your church? Does this align with God's vision?

3. What investments will you personally make in developing your leadership skills, and those of others with whom you work and lead?

4. What challenges to growth and vitality can be found in your church? How do you and others in the church seek to address these challenges?

5. What resources do you need to move forward in the casting and realization of God's vision for your church?

6. What resources are presently available (people, processes, and places) to you?

CREATING S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely

Specific

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To help you set a specific goal, consider these six "W" questions:

- Who: Who is involved and who will the goal target?
- What: What is it that is intended to be accomplished?
  When: What is the timeframe for accomplishing the goal?
- Where: What is the location for accomplishing the goal?
- Which: What are the specific requirements and limitations?
- Why: What are the specific reasons, purposes, or benefits of accomplishing the goal?

Measurable

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the satisfaction of achievement that spurs you on to the continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as......How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable

The goals you set should be reachable and should stretch you; they should be beyond the scope of your daily work. Your goals should cause you to grow into the next stage or to the next level. For example, "Continue the ongoing community outreach program" is not a stretch goal, but "Double the number of people served in the

community outreach program by December 1" is a stretch goal. Set goals that have a

stretch quality to them.

Realistic

To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both

willing and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who

can decide just how high your goal should be. A high goal is frequently easier to reach

than a low one because a low goal exerts a low motivational force. Your goal is probably

realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished.

Timely

A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it,

there's no sense of urgency. If you want to begin a new project, by when do you want to

begin it? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by May 1st",

then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

List three SMART goals you are committing to in your leadership for 2022-23. Your SMART goals may grow out of your leadership role and responsibilities and should reflect what is uniquely needed for you as a transforming and transformational leader.

1.

2.

3.

Name: _____ **Date:**_____

APPENDIX E

Course Evaluation/Post-Course Questionnaire

1. What was your primary reason for deciding to participate in the Hope for the City Transformational Leadership Development course?

2. What can you identify as some of the strengths of this course?

3. What would you identify as some of the areas where we could enhance the course?

4. What topics/areas of interest would you suggest we might focus on in future courses? What facilitators/speakers would you suggest?

5. Would you be willing to participate in future courses?

6. Would you prefer that the course be conducted in-person, online, or hybrid (online and in-person)?

7. What locations might you suggest for future in-person courses?

8. What times of the year do you think would be best to hold the course?

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