

ABSTRACT

POST-FOUNDER SUSTAINABILITY:

BUILDING MINISTRIES THAT OUTLIVE THEIR FOUNDERS

By

William Stephen Murrell

The purpose of this study was to discover why some denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches achieve post-founder-generation sustainability and to determine next steps for succession planning and leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries.

The literature review revealed a three-part pattern in leadership transition that was confirmed by multiple sources, both in a ministry and business literature: 1) prepare new leaders to lead the organization, 2) prepare the organization for leadership by new leaders, and 3) prepare the outgoing leaders for the next phase of their lives.

The literature led to the identification of three research questions: 1) What factors contribute to the growth or decline of ministry organizations after the founder-generation is no longer leading? 2) What hinders successful senior leadership transition and post-founder-generation sustainability? 3) What are best practices to identify and develop new Every Nation global senior leaders that will replace the founder-generation?

Investigating these questions required a mixed-methods approach and utilized two instruments: a Leadership Questionnaire and a Leadership Interview. Fifteen current denomination, mission, and megachurch leaders received a Leadership Questionnaire (LQ). Nine former denomination, mission, and megachurch leaders received a Leadership Interview (LI). Findings from the surveys, interviews, and literature revealed

that leadership preparation, organizational preparation, heart preparation, financial preparation, spouse preparation, and timing were a central to successful leadership transition and post-founder sustainability.

This research will impact the practice of ministry by aiding in the development of senior leadership training tools and by identifying best practices for succession planning and leadership transition.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

**POST-FOUNDER SUSTAINABILITY:
BUILDING MINISTRIES THAT OUTLIVE THEIR FOUNDERS**

presented by

William Stephen Murrell

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

Asbury Theological Seminary

Dissertation Coach

Date

Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

Date

Dean of the Beeson Center

Date

POST-FOUNDER SUSTAINABILITY:
BUILDING MINISTRIES THAT OUTLIVE THEIR FOUNDERS

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
William Stephen Murrell

May 2019

© 2019

William Stephen Murrell

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM	1
Overview of the Chapter	1
Personal Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose Statement.....	6
Research Questions.....	7
Research Question #1	7
Research Question #2	7
Research Question #3	7
Rationale for the Project	7
Definition of Key Terms	10
Delimitations	12
Review of Relevant Literature	12
Research Methodology	16
Type of Research	17
Participants	17
Instrumentation	18
Data Collection	19
Data Analysis	20

Generalizability	20
Project Overview	21
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT.....	23
Overview of the Chapter.....	23
Biblical Foundations	26
Genesis: The Account of a Leader’s Life	27
The Importance of Mentoring: Moses to Joshua	28
The Spirituality of Planning: King Solomon to King David	29
The Multi-Generational Mindset: King Hezekiah’s Failure.....	31
The Importance of Decreasing: John the Baptist to Jesus	32
A Continual Process: John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve.....	34
Savage Wolves: Paul and the Ephesian Elders	35
Keeping Patterns, Guarding Deposits: Paul and Timothy	36
Summary of Biblical Foundations	37
Theological Foundations.....	37
A Theology of Calling	38
A Theology of Work.....	41
A Theology of Retirement	41
A Theology of Death	43
Preparing the Future Leaders	44
Spiritual Preparation	49
Theological Preparation	51
Leadership Preparation	53

Character Preparation.....	54
Relational Preparation.....	55
Patience Is Necessary.....	57
Preparing the Organization	58
Flexible Structures	60
Simple Systems	63
Healthy Culture.....	64
Preparing the Founders	65
Financial Preparation	67
Emotional Preparation	68
Summary of Preparing the Founders	70
Research Design Literature	71
Summary of Literature	72
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT.....	74
Overview of the Chapter.....	74
Nature and Purpose of the Project	74
Research Questions.....	75
Research Question #1	76
Research Question #2	76
Research Question #3	77
Ministry Context.....	77
Participants	78
Criteria for Selection	78

Description of Participants.....	79
Ethical Considerations	80
Instrumentation	81
Expert Review	81
Reliability & Validity of Project Design	82
Data Collection	84
Data Analysis	86
CHAPTER 4: EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT.....	90
Overview of the Chapter	90
Participants	90
Research Question #1	94
Research Question #2	98
Research Question #3	101
Summary of Major Findings.....	108
CHAPTER 5 LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT	117
Overview of the Chapter	117
Major Findings.....	117
Leadership Preparation	117
Organizational Preparation	120
Founder Preparation	123
Heart Preparation	125
Financial Preparation	127
Spouse Preparation	128

Timing.....	130
Ministry Implications of the Findings.....	131
Limitations of the Study.....	133
Unexpected Observations	134
Recommendations.....	135
Postscript	136
APPENDIXES	
A. Informed Consent Letter Templates	138
B. Survey/Interview/Questionnaire Schedule and Questions	140
WORKS CITED	146

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 2.1.	25
Table 4.1.	91
Table 4.2.	93
Table 4.3.	103

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 4.1 Global Demographics	91
Figure 4.2 Time in Organization before Promotion to Top Position	92
Figure 4.3 Age at the time of Assuming Top Leadership Position.....	93
Figure 4.4 Global Demographics	94
Figure 4.5 Growth Pattern Prior to Assuming Leadership	95
Figure 4.6 Growth Pattern after Assuming Leadership	96

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey started six years ago during a retreat with five close friends. After some time of prayer and reflection, we discussed how we wanted to finish well. I realized that to finish well, I would have to replace myself in the global organization I helped start and currently lead. I knew I needed major upgrades to get Every Nation ready to be led by the next generation and to get the next generation ready to lead Every Nation. I was unsure how to do either.

About a year later, Asbury representatives contacted me to discuss the possibility of partnering with Every Nation for graduate level leadership development. I promptly enrolled in Asbury and recruited seven Every Nation leaders to take the journey with me, knowing that I would be less likely to quit if I had them with me.

This D. Min program was everything it claimed to be and much more. I not only learned what I needed to learn, I also adopted new and better ways to learn. For that, I owe a debt of gratitude to the following people:

The team that drove to Nashville to explain how Asbury could serve Every Nation: Dr. Milton Lowe, Dr. Gregg Okesson, and Dr. Tom Tumblin.

My Legacy Group, aka Madagascar Tree Frogs, aka Asbury 8: Manny Carlos, David Houston, Chris Johnson, Noel Landicho, Nixon Ng, Delvin Pikes, and Brian Taylor.

My executive assistants who make the frantic craziness of my world seem a little less crazy: Gigi Landicho, Rachel Murrell, and Alyssa Tudor.

My dissertation coach who always makes complicated concepts (Chapters 3 & 4) simple to understand: Dr. Russell West.

My homiletics professor who taught me to practice the preaching life: Dr. Dave Ward.

Special thanks to Dr. Ellen “LN” Marmon for leading the Asbury D. Min program with grace, wisdom, and strength.

Extra special thanks to Deborah Murrell. That my name on this degree is ironic because we both know that our sons got their academic acumen from you not me. Thank you for always raising the academic standard in our family, and thank you for doing this journey with me, not only for the past three years, but for the past thirty-seven. We are an amazing team.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Overview of the Chapter

It is tragic and avoidable for denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches to experience momentum loss, growth plateaus, financial and numerical shrinkage, and unhealthy culture and values shifts after the founder-generation is no longer leading. This project seeks to discover best practices that will catalyze post-founder stability, sustainability, health, and growth in relatively new denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches.

Chapter One includes personal values, ministry context, project purpose, research questions, project rationale, definition of key terms, delimitations, relevant literature review, research methodology, and general project overview. The research introduced identifies best practices in leadership transition and organizational sustainability that will enable denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches to not only outlive their founders, but to grow larger and stronger in a way that is consistent with the original mission, values, and culture of the organization.

Personal Introduction

In 1984, my wife and I, along with sixty-five college students, flew to Manila, Philippines, for what was supposed to be a one-month summer mission trip. Our mission was to establish a student church in the middle of Manila's University Belt. At the time, we were serving as campus missionaries to Mississippi State University. We thought we would return to our assignment in time for the fall semester. After two weeks in Manila, I knew we were supposed to stay longer. I did not imagine that longer meant several

decades. I assumed it meant another couple of months, maybe six months, but certainly not years. I was wrong.

One month turned into two, then six, then twelve. At the two-year mark, my wife and I decided we should raise a proper mission partnership team and move some of our belongings to Manila. During those first two years, anytime we were asked how long we planned to stay, our answer was, “about two more months.” The student church we started slowly grew and by 1986, we started a second church site in another part of Metro Manila. In the following two years, we started churches in three other Philippine cities. Eventually we had three sons, all born in Manila.

By 1990, the mission organization that sent us to Manila did not exist. Because of relational discord and doctrinal disagreement, the board voted itself out of existence. While our church, Victory Manila, continued to grow and continued to plant churches all over the Philippine Islands and in Southeast Asia, we were increasingly uncomfortable being independent missionaries and leading an independent church.

In 1994, two of my longtime friends, Rice Broocks and Phil Bonasso, were flying through Manila on their way back to the United States after investigating church-planting opportunities in Singapore and Malaysia. At the time, Phil was pastoring a church in Los Angeles and Rice was an itinerate evangelist based in Nashville. During their stay in my Manila home, as we discussed the open doors in Singapore, Malaysia, and other parts of Asia, we all felt God was calling us to work together. That night we decided to join our ministries together for the purpose of campus ministry, church planting, and world mission—and Every Nation Churches & Ministries was born. In that moment, Every Nation consisted of Victory Manila’s three locations, Phil’s church in Los Angeles, a

church Phil had planted in Hawaii, plus churches Victory had planted in Bangladesh and Guam, and six Victory churches in the Philippine provinces. Over the next ten years, with Rice serving as our global president, we expanded from a dozen churches in three nations to over 500 churches in twenty-five nations.

At the ten-year-mark, we experienced some organizational growing pains that led to Rice passing the leadership baton to me. He returned to school, earned a D. Miss from Fuller Theological Seminary, and now serves Every Nation as an evangelist, apostolic leader, author, and “global ambassador.”

My new role as president required that I split time between Manila and Nashville, and although I began spending more time away from Manila, Victory Manila continued to grow and expand. To this date, Victory Manila has experienced thirty-four consecutive years of numerical growth and has planted churches in seventy-five Philippine cities and more than a dozen nations. Victory Manila currently conducts weekly worship services in twenty-nine Manila locations. It also has 10,000 Victory Groups (small discipleship groups) that meet in homes, coffee shops, offices, and university campuses every day of the week all over the city. Current weekend worship attendance in Victory Metro Manila is over 85,000 each week.

Every Nation’s growing pangs mentioned above were primarily relational and organizational, and they should have been expected. It started when three friends felt led by the Lord to join their ministries together. After growing along relational lines, at the ten-year mark, Every Nation’s organizational systems and structures had not kept pace with its numerical and geographic growth. In *The Founder’s Mentality*, Chris Zook and James Allen describe three “predictable crises of growth.” Every Nation seemed at the

time to be experiencing the first crisis, “overload;” its leaders, staff, systems, budgets, and facilities were overburdened. If we hoped to avoid predictable crises two and three (“stall-out” and “free fall”), something had to change immediately (2-3). Fortunately, relational connections among key Every Nation global leaders were strong enough to sustain the ministry for the first ten years of rapid growth, despite inadequate organizational components, but even those strong relationships experienced stress. According to Ichak Adizes, one of the leading organizational management experts in the world, “an organization is without problems only when nothing is changing—when it is dead. To solve problems and have no new, increasingly complex problems emerge is equivalent to dying” (ch. 6). Based on this information, Every Nation was alive and well in its tenth year, with multiple complex problems to solve. The reality of complex problems in young, growing organizations is not unique to Every Nation. No matter the industry, “Growth creates complexity” (Zook and Allen 1). Since Every Nation was a young, rapidly growing organization, complexity should have been expected. My job as the new president was to continue expanding and growing in terms of campus ministry, church planting, and world mission, but also to build proper systems and structures to sustain, support, and accelerate healthy growth while dealing with complexity.

As we approach our twenty-fifth year in 2019, Every Nation includes more than five hundred churches in over eighty nations that conduct campus ministry, church planting, and world mission together. While we have diligently worked to professionalize our systems and structures, our spiritual and relational leadership still outpaces our organizational leadership. I am now sixty years old. I hope to have this organization ready for the next leader by our thirtieth anniversary in 2024, when I am sixty-five. After

that, I plan to spend my time writing, preaching, teaching, coaching younger leaders, riding my motorcycle, and enjoying my grandkids.

I know how to prepare the next generation of leaders for Every Nation. I am not so sure how to prepare Every Nation for the next generation of leaders. The purpose of me doing this Doctor of Ministry is to discover best practices for post-founder sustainability, health, and growth. The future health and survival of Every Nation Churches & Ministries depends on what this project reveals. Also, my job description for the next decade will be shaped by the results of this research.

Statement of the Problem

According to researcher Tom Adams, “founder transitions are particularly hazardous for nonprofit organizations” (5). While many types of organizations experience post-founder decline, it is especially tragic when denominations, mission organizations, and local churches grow stronger, larger, and more influential under the leadership of the founder and the founder-generation, but gradually or rapidly decline once the founder-generation is no longer leading. In my experience leading a multi-site megachurch and global mission organization, I have observed that second- or third-generation leaders sometimes experience mission, relational, or theological drift whether it is intentional or not. Post-founder leaders often add to the founder’s mission and values, inadvertently devaluing the original mission and values and causing mission drift. Other times, second- or third-generation leaders do not have relational depth, nor do they value relational unity the way the founder-generation did. If relational unity is not a high value, busyness can cause leaders to gradually drift apart. This unintentional relational drift can make what should be normal conflict seem insurmountable, resulting in

unnecessary disunity or division. Theological drift can happen because of ignorance, distraction, or compromise. No matter the reason, theological drift can be deadly if not arrested. The goal of this project was to uncover systems, structures, and best practices that enable denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches to continue the God-honoring global impact long after their founders are dead and gone.

Every Nation's global leaders are aging along with its founders with too few younger leaders ready to take their place. All Every Nation International Apostolic team members are over fifty, most are over sixty. Every regional director in the world is over fifty, with a few in their late forties. The irony of this is that each one of Every Nation's regional leaders undertook massive leadership responsibilities in their early twenties and thirties. Relational leadership is highly valued in Every Nation, especially in the founder-generation. The big question is: how do we foster healthy working relationships across six global regions with potential next-generation leaders? Relational leadership in the founder-generation has been a vital component to the growth and strength of Every Nation, but if Every Nation is to outlive its founders, the founder-generation must expand the leadership team to include multigenerational leaders.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research was to determine next steps for post-founder-generation leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries' International Apostolic Team (IAT) and Regional Leadership Teams (RLT) by identifying best practices for succession planning and leadership transition in organizations that have outlived their founders.

Research Questions

Three research questions were used to determine next steps and to identify the best practices that will help current Every Nation leaders develop functional structures, identify and equip new leaders, and preserve mission, values, and corporate culture. Question one focused on why some organizations decline or die after the founders are no longer leading and why others thrive. Question two investigated hindrances to successful founder-to-successor leadership transitions. Question three inquired about the successful identification and training of potential new leaders who eventually replaced the founders.

Research Question #1

What factors contribute to the growth or decline of a denomination, mission organization, or megachurch after the founder-generation no longer actively leads?

Research Question #2

What hinders successful senior leadership transition and post-founder-generation sustainability?

Research Question #3

What are best practices to identify and develop new Every Nation global senior leaders (IAT and RLT members) who will eventually replace the founder-generation?

Rationale for the Project

This research expects to empower multigenerational leadership continuity by discovering best practices in preparing future leaders for organizations and preparing organizations for future leaders. This is important for three main reasons: the temporary nature of leadership, the importance of organizational continuity, and the application of these principles to multiple organizations.

The first and most obvious reason for researching and determining next steps for post-founder organizational health and growth is the temporary nature of leadership. As no founder will live or lead forever, Every Nation Churches & Ministries must prepare for a future without its founders and their generation. Some founders will retire, then die, and others will die without retiring. Unfortunately, others will be fired for moral, ethical, or relational failures. Either way, at some point there will be a need for new leadership. The Bible is filled with examples of good and bad leadership transitions after the death of a leader. In order for the organization to not only survive, but to experience healthy growth, both the organization and the next-generation leaders will need preparation. It is the job of the founder and the founder-generation to prepare the next generation of leaders to lead the organization. It is also the job of the founder and founder-generation to prepare the organization for the new leadership. Some ministry organizations do a great job of preparing future leaders but fail to prepare the organization for the future. Other founders leave behind a great organization, but inadequately train future leaders. A sustainable organization or ministry requires a healthy organization and healthy leaders. This project will help organizations outlive their founders.

The second reason this research matters is because discovering best practices and creating proven leadership transition guidelines empowers organizational continuity. Rather than reinventing the wheel, best practices and guidelines enable new leaders to build on the foundation that was established by the founder and the founder-generation. Many organizations follow the bad example of Rehoboam by rejecting the proven wisdom of the older generation, and fully following the advice of their peers (*The English Standard Version Bible*, 1 Kings 12:8). In contrast to this, Paul exhorted Timothy to

“follow the pattern” of the older leaders and to “guard the good deposit” that had been entrusted to him by the older generation (2 Tim. 1:13-14). It is common for post founder-generation leaders to make unwise but well-meaning decisions that end up completely killing or negatively impacting the organization. Sometimes, these unwise decisions do not cause immediate harm, but set the organization on a slightly different pathway that eventually transforms it into something unrecognizable to the founder-generation. For post-founder-generation leaders who want to preserve the original mission, values, and culture of the founders, this research provides best practices from previous generations that can prevent the mistakes of Rehoboam.

The third reason this research is important is because the principles and best practices learned from denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches can be applied not only to similar organizations, but also to medium and small local churches and other types of ministries as well. Like the founders of national and global ministries, the founders of local churches eventually retire or die. This research could provide valuable guidelines to help them prepare for a healthy future.

By discovering best practices for post-founder health, growth, and sustainability, this research will provide a roadmap for Every Nation’s founders and the current leadership team to prepare the organization and its future leaders for the time when the founder-generation is no longer in active leadership. Steve Addison writes that, “Jesus founded the greatest movement this world has ever seen.” The movement he started resulted in “the multiplication of disciples and churches—everywhere” (15). Unfortunately, many of the subsequent movements, denominations, and churches that were birthed to honor God, serve humanity, and propagate the gospel did not fare as well.

Too many either died with their founders or a generation later. Sometimes, organizational death or decline seems unavoidable because it is the result of uncontrollable “earthquakes” and “seismic change” (Breen ch. 1). Organizational death can be immediate, or it can be gradual. Perhaps some denominations, mission organizations, and local churches are destined to die with their founders. This project is for the benefit of those organizations that are supposed to outlive their founders and still be actively furthering the mission of God one-hundred years from now.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, here are definitions for key terms:

Founder-generation

“Founder-generation” refers to Every Nation’s founders—Rice Broocks, Phil Bonasso, and Steve Murrell—and their close friends and peers who have served as Every Nation’s global leaders for over two decades. Broocks, Bonasso, and Murrell were all born in the late 1950s, as were their peers who serve in Every Nation leadership. The founder-generation currently refers to leaders who are approximately fifty-eight to sixty-five years old.

International Apostolic Team (IAT)

The IAT is Every Nation’s global leadership team. The IAT includes the three cofounders, six global regional directors (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America), as well as six at-large members appointed by the president. The IAT is engaged in ongoing talks to divide the Asia region into three or four regions, the Europe region into East and West Europe, and the Africa region into

Southern and Western divisions, thus greatly increasing the number of regional directors and IAT members.

Mission

Within this study, “mission” refers to Every Nation’s mission. Our mission statement clarifies that “Every Nation exists to honor God by establishing Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered, socially responsible churches and campus ministries in every nation.”

Values

“Values” refers to Every Nation’s five core values: the Lordship of Christ, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and family.

Senior Leaders

“Senior leaders” refers to Every Nation’s president, executive director, regional directors, and at-large IAT members.

Succession

This study will use the definition of succession that Warren Bird and William Vanderbloemen share in *Next*: Succession is when “one senior leader intentionally transitions and hands over leadership to another” (10).

Succession planning

Again, this study will use a definition shared by Vanderbloemen and Bird in *Next*. Succession planning is “creating a plan for what will happen once you need a new leader, something all organizations face” (10).

Leadership Transition

Depending on the context, sometimes “leadership transition” is used as a synonym of “succession.” Thus, “leadership transition” is when “one senior leader intentionally transitions and hands over leadership to another” (Vanderbloemen and Bird 10).

Delimitations

Every Nation Churches & Ministries is a relatively young organization (established in 1995). Therefore, this study included denominations, mission organizations, campus ministries, and megachurches less than one-hundred years old. The goal was to study organizations and leaders with relatively close proximity to the founder-generation, meaning older denominations such as certain Lutherans and Methodists were excluded since current leaders are far removed from Martin Luther and John Wesley. Since Every Nation is also a mission organization that specializes in church planting and campus ministry, church-planting organizations and campus ministries were considered while mission organizations that specialize in Bible translation or social justice were excluded. As Every Nation is a global ministry, an effort was made to gather information from leaders, ministries, denominations, and megachurches from different nations, not just the United States.

Review of Relevant Literature

The title of this dissertation, *Post-Founder Sustainability: Building Ministries that Outlive Their Founders* makes it obvious that the focus is on spiritual ministry, however despite the ecclesiastical context of this project, the literature review was not limited to spiritual or religious literature. Business, entrepreneurial, organizational, and general

leadership literature was also considered. Non-religious literature was considered for two reasons. First, there is limited literature available that speaks directly to post-founder sustainability from a strict ministry perspective. Second and more importantly, much of the literature written on the topic from a for-profit corporate context is easily applicable to a global ministry context. It would be irresponsible to ignore important literature just because it was not intended specifically for a religious application.

As literature was reviewed from the ministry world and the business world, a three-part pattern quickly emerged and was confirmed by multiple sources, both in a ministry and business context. The religious writers and the business writers essentially made the same three points about post-founder succession and sustainability. Different writers used varying vocabulary and established the three points in different order, but they presented essentially the same three components for successful transition. Whether in ministry or business, the big three non-negotiables for post-founder sustainability are: 1) prepare new leaders to lead the organization, 2) prepare the organization for leadership by new leaders, and 3) prepare the outgoing leaders for the next phase of their lives.

Before looking deeply into these three topics, biblical theological foundations were established. The primary source for biblical and theological foundations was the *ESV Bible*. Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology* and Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* proved helpful in researching theological themes. Craig Keener's *IVP Biblical Background Commentary* added valuable insight for biblical foundations for the broader themes of leadership development, character development, and general biblical knowledge. The Biblical and theological literature review was not limited to these

authors and books, but while other works were reviewed and consulted, Erickson, Grudem, and Keener provided the bulk of the information.

After establishing biblical and theological foundations, the literature review moved to the first of the three core themes. Both religious and secular authors were reviewed for insights and best practices for preparing new leaders. Much has been written about leadership development for application to secular for-profit organizations, and fortunately there is also much literature available specifically for churches and religious non-profit organizations. Significant works include *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company* by Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel, *The Making of a Leader* by J. R. Clinton, *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation* edited by Craig Van Gelder, *Transforming Theological Education* by Perry Shaw, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* by Peter Scazzero, and *The Making of a Leader* by Frank Damazio. Because of his research context, Steve Hobson's D. Min dissertation on "church-based leadership training" proved especially helpful for this project. Though Hobson was an Every Nation outsider, his research focused on leadership development in a particular EN megachurch, Victory Manila (planted and pastored by the author of this dissertation). Hobson imbedded himself in Victory Manila and its leadership school for twelve months with access to staff, classes, and documents, and his research was readily applicable to this project.

The second key to successful post-founder sustainability, preparing the organization for leadership by non-founders, had significantly less literature available that was specifically designed for ministry. However, there is much useful literature about healthy organizations, organizational lifecycles, leading change, the cycle of

leadership, and other topics that can be applied to ministry organizations as they attempt to prepare for new leadership. *Leading Kingdom Movements* by Mike Breen, *Pioneering Movements* by Steve Addison, and *Leading Leaders* by Aubrey Malphurs are key books informing the topic from a ministry and mission perspective. *Good to Great, Built to Last*, and *How the Mighty Fall* by Jim Collins address building healthy organizations that outlast founders. The principles in *Managing Corporate Lifecycles* by Ichak Adizes were applied to multiple ministry contexts with great success. *Harvard Business Review* had much to offer on seemingly every topic related to leading organizations, especially “Succession Planning: What the Research Says” by Eben Harrell. One final essential organizational resource was *The Cycle of Leadership* by Noel Tichy and Nancy Cardwell.

While the third key topic, preparing founders for their next phase of life, proved to have the least material available, especially in the context of ministry, two books seemed to be written for this project. *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Succession* by Carolyn Weese and J. R. Crabtree provided research and case studies specifically about ministry succession planning and leadership transitions. *The Founder’s Mentality: How to Overcome the Predictable Crisis of Growth* by Chris Zook and James Allen addressed founder’s syndrome from a positive and negative perspective. Though all the case studies involved for-profit corporations, the principles and lessons are universally applied to non-profit organizations.

Several works addressed all three of the above topics including *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* by William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird and *Succession: Are You Ready* by Marshall Goldsmith. These two books along with “Leadership Succession from Matthew: Passing the Baton of Leadership to the Next Generation” by

Allen Quist in the *Great Commission Research Journal*, spoke the most directly to post-founder sustainability in a ministry context. Additionally, these three works were most useful in answering the three research questions: What factors contribute to the growth or decline of a denomination, mission organization, or megachurch after the founder-generation no longer actively leads? What hinders successful senior leadership transition and post-founder-generation sustainability? What are best practices to identify and develop new Every Nation global senior leaders (IAT and RLT members) who will eventually replace the founder-generation?

Finally, multiple authors wrote specifically about succession planning and leadership transition in the context of churches and ministries. As mentioned above, *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Succession* by Carolyn Weese and J. R. Crabtree and *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* by William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird are cited often. Two books by former megachurch pastors, American Bob Russell and Australian Mark Conner were informative: *Transition Plan* by Bob Russell and *Pass the Baton* by Mark Conner. Leadership coach and church consultant Jim Ozier's *The Changeover Zone: Successful Pastoral Transition* also directly addressed succession planning and leadership transition from a ministry and church perspective.

Research Methodology

The research methodology section examines the instrumentation and research process used in this project. Information is organized under six headings: types of research, participants, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and generalizability. These six headings explain the choice of each specific instrumentation and participant.

The goal of this project was to discover and better understand next steps and best practices that lead to post-founder organizational sustainability and growth. The research considered leaders and leadership structures from different denominations, mission organizations, campus ministries, and megachurches. The research will help Every Nation Churches & Ministries as a whole, as well as individual EN local churches and local campus ministry chapters.

Type of Research

In order to discover best practices and next steps, this project used pre-intervention research design. The qualitative research employed a mixed-methods approach and utilized two instruments: Leadership Questionnaires (LQ) and Leadership Interviews (LI). The Leadership Questionnaires included current top leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches. The semi-structured Leadership Interviews included former top leaders in denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches.

Participants

This project included the following types of organizations: denominations, mission agencies, campus ministries, and megachurches. It should be noted that several of the “denominations” involved in this study do not consider themselves to be denominations. They prefer to be defined as a network, movement, or fellowship rather than denomination. Also, note that some multi-site churches with branches in multiple nations function more like a denomination than a typical multi-site megachurch. The study included the following types of people: current denominational leaders, former denominational leaders, current senior pastors of megachurches, former senior pastors of

megachurches, current ministry/mission leaders, and former ministry/mission leaders. Fifteen leaders who currently serve in the top position in a denomination, mission organization, or megachurch were invited to participate in the Leadership Questionnaire and twelve responded. Nine leaders who formerly served in the top position in a denomination, mission organization, or megachurch were invited to participate in the Leadership Interview. All nine participated. Because of the involvement of former and current leaders, the ages of participants varied by decades. All former and current leaders who participated were male. Participants live and minister in Australia, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, and the United States.

Because of the relative newness of Every Nation as a denomination and mission agency, only relatively new denominations, mission agencies, campus ministries, and megachurches were included. The reason for this was to gather information only from leaders who either replaced the founder-generation or at least had relatively close proximity to the founder or the founder-generation.

Instrumentation

Data collection for this project was accomplished through two instruments: interviews and questionnaires. The interviews were semi-structured and included former senior leaders who had recently transitioned their ministry to a new leader. All interviews with former leaders were one on one via Skype, Facetime, or video conferencing. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee. The questionnaire was conducted via email and was completed by leaders who replaced founders or other significant top leaders.

Data Collection

The mixed method data collection for this project covered four months and included three phases. The first month focused on instruments and participants. Two data collection instruments were developed: Leadership Questionnaires (LQ) and Leadership Interviews (LI). Expert reviews resulted in slight adjustments to the LQ and no changes in the LI. The LQ included twenty-five questions. The LI included nine questions. At the same time the instruments were being developed, two lists of potential participants were created and vetted. The first list included fifteen current leaders of denominations, megachurches, and mission organizations who replaced a founder or a founder-like leader who would be asked to answer an online LQ. The second list included nine founders and long-tenured leaders of denominations, megachurches, and mission organizations who are no longer in the top position in their organization who would be asked to participate in the LI. The second phase focused on sending and receiving the LQ. Participating leaders were asked to complete the online questionnaire within forty-eight hours. That timeline had to be stretched to three weeks as several leaders agreed to participate but failed to actually fill out and send the LQ. Follow-up encouragement was required to complete this phase. Eventually, twelve of fifteen LQs were returned via SurveyMonkey. The third phase focused on the LI. Since the nine participants live all over the world, scheduling the interviews proved to be a challenge. Also, because the participants live on three different continents, the interviews were conducted via Skype. This process, from the first interview until the last took about one month. Each interview was recorded, with the verbal permission of each interviewee. The recording was done via the interviewer's computer and his cell phone as a backup. Once the quality of the computer recording was

confirmed, the cell phone copies were deleted. The computer is owned by Every Nation and assigned to Steve Murrell. It is protected by a password and fingerprint security. No transcripts of the recordings were produced. At the completion of this dissertation the recording files on this computer will be erased.

Data Analysis

This project utilized a pre-intervention research design that included mixed-method qualitative research. The two data collection methods were semi-structured leadership interviews (LIs) and online leadership questionnaires (LQs). Because the purpose of this project was to determine next steps for leadership transitions, the interviews and questionnaires only addressed past or current top leaders in denominations, mission organizations, or megachurches. People who have never held top leadership positions were not included. Using a “preset protocol that correlates with the project’s problem and purpose statements,” the leadership interviews were semi-structured. Predetermined themes, issues, questions, and sequence were used, with spontaneous follow up questions in order to solicit the most applicable answers (Sensing 107). The leadership questionnaires utilize a combination of fixed (yes/no) questions, open-ended questions, demographic category questions, five-point Likert Scale questions, and four-point Likert Scale questions. The data analysis is qualitative.

Generalizability

The purpose of this study was to determine next steps for post-founder-generation leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries. To determine next steps, organizations who had outlived their founders were studied for leadership and succession planning best practices. A mixed design of questionnaires, interviews, and data analysis

was used to investigate best practices that might apply in the Every Nation context. The next steps that were discovered for post-founder-generation leadership transition can possibly be applied in different denominations, mission organizations, campus ministries, megachurches, and even in smaller churches and other non-religious organizations. Likewise, the leadership tools that emerge from this research could prove to be helpful in a broad range of ministries, churches, and non-religious organizations.

While many of the findings of this research have broad application beyond Every Nation, because of Every Nation's unique emphasis on church-based campus ministry, other denominations and megachurches might not have as many available and trainable next-generation leaders as it does. Every Nation's campus ministry provides a built-in pipeline for potential next-generation leaders, while other ministries without an emphasis on campus ministry might be less multigenerational. Additionally, Every Nation's emphasis on leadership development as one of its five core values adds to the abundance of potential next-generation leaders. While succession planning best practices and leadership development tools might have universal application, denominations with fewer young people and less emphasis on leadership development might find actually applying them difficult because of a lack of potential next-generation leaders.

Project Overview

The project focuses on post-founder-generation ministry sustainability, seeking to discover next steps for leadership transition and best practices for identifying and preparing next-generation leaders. Chapter 2 examines pertinent literature with an emphasis on leadership development, organizational lifecycles, succession planning, and leadership transition. Chapter 3 explains the instrumentation and process for answering

the three research questions presented in chapter 1. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the findings. Chapter 5 takes the project from analysis to application.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This literature review is organized into five major categories: 1) Theological Foundations, 2) Biblical Foundations, 3) Preparing the Future Leaders, 4) Preparing the Organization, and 5) Preparing the Founders. This chapter begins with biblical and theological foundational principles, with a specific focus on multigenerational leadership transition and succession planning. The goal is to conduct multigenerational succession planning and leadership transition in a way that enables the organization to grow stronger and larger once the founder-generation is no longer leading, while also providing a runway for the founder-generation to continue in meaningful ministry and leadership to the degree that they are able based on health, energy, and desire.

Building on biblical and theological foundations, three major categories of preparation are explored and analyzed—Preparing the Future Leaders, Preparing the Organization, and Preparing the Founders. These three categories are based on the threefold strategy for succession planning and leadership transition that is suggested by a variety of researchers and consultants including Allen H. Quist, Martin Goldsmith, William Vanderbloemen, Warren Bird, Mark Leach, J. Russell Crabtree, Carolyn Weese, and Richard Danielson. All eight of these executive coaches, leadership mentors, ministry consultants, and researchers use different vocabulary, write from different perspectives, and serve different industries, but they all present a threefold succession and transition model that addresses essentially the same three topics. According to Richard Danielson, “successful transition always depends on three parties—predecessor, people, and

successor” (22). Quist’s three succession steps include a “progression of honoring a heritage, engaging the present, and passing a legacy into the future” (53). Goldsmith makes the same three basic points when he coaches outgoing CEOs to “let go of leading the company” in order to “focus on developing your successor” and to “focus on creating a great rest of your life” (38). When Vanderbloemen and Bird describe three reasons that founder’s syndrome often derails good succession plans, they address the same three concepts as Goldsmith, but in the negative. Out of fear, Vanderbloemen and Bird suggest that leaders are “unwilling to face the emotional sense of loss,” “Fear that all they’ve done will be lost under the next person,” and “waiting on the right potential successor” (81-82). Leach insists that successful transition must address the founder, the organization, and the successor. “Mutual Success transitions are a high-wire act of devotion for all involved—devotion to the success of the founder, the successor, and most of all the mission of the organization” (7). Weese and Crabtree address these same three issues while focusing on the incoming leader. They explain leadership transition with “three Biblical principles from the life of Jesus” that every new leader should observe: “honor thy predecessor, build on health, and complete the past” (ch. 1).

Both Quist and Crabtree and Weese offer advice for the new leader. Goldsmith and Vanderbloemen and Bird offer advice for the outgoing leader. Leach directly addresses the outgoing founder, the incoming leader, and the organization. In summary, wise leadership transition in churches and ministries must prepare new leaders to lead while preparing the organization to be led by non-founder-generation leaders. At the same time, it must prepare founder-generation leaders for their next season of life (table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Threefold Transition Planning and Leadership Succession Process

AUTHOR	PREPARE THE NEW LEADERS	PREPARE THE ORGANIZATION	PREPARE THE FOUNDERS
DANIELSON	The successor	The people	The predecessor
QUIST	Pass the legacy to new leaders	Engage the present realities	Honor a heritage
GOLDSMITH	Develop a successor	Let go of leading	Create a great rest of your life
VANDERBLOEMEN & BIRD	Stop waiting for a successor	Stop fearing what will be lost	Face the emotional sense of loss
LEACH	Success of the successor	Success of the mission of the organization	Success of the founder
WEESE	Complete the past	Build on health	Honor thy predecessor

Major topics covered in this literature review include, but are not limited to, succession planning, leadership transition, organizational lifecycles, leadership pipelines, founder's syndrome, founder mentality, leadership development, leadership culture, multigenerational leadership, leading change, divine calling, Old Testament leadership succession, and New Testament leadership succession. All of these topics involve leaders, leadership, leadership development, and leadership transitions. Whether in a non-religious, for-profit company, a non-profit mission, or a church organization, there are common leadership principles that are applicable to both. It would be a mistake to assume that denominations, churches, and mission organizations cannot learn about leadership, leadership development, and leadership transitions from commercial, government, military, sports, and academic institutions. Therefore, literature was

considered from both a church and corporate context. Reviewed literature included journal articles, dissertations, and books about megachurches, mission agencies, church-planting movements, denominations, as well as the above listed topics.

Biblical Foundations

The Bible is filled with examples of multigenerational leadership development and transition. In *Called to Lead: Paul's Letters to Timothy for a New Day*, Anthony Robinson and Robert Wall argue that, not only was 2 Timothy a “letter of succession” written from one leader to another, but many other parts of the Bible also directly address leadership transition issues. In the Old Testament, the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles all include stories of good and bad leadership transition. In the New Testament, all four Gospels, Acts, and most of Paul's epistles consistently include leadership development and leadership transition as major or minor themes (Robinson and Wall 166-167). While leadership succession might be a one-time event for a particular leader, if a church or organization wants multigenerational longevity, then leadership succession must be seen as a continual process. In *The Leadership Pipeline*, authors Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel agree that succession planning must be approached as a continual process encompassing the whole organization, not just a periodic event to meet immediate needs at the top. Their list of three questions—designed to evaluate an organization's succession plan—includes one question that focuses on this idea of continuous planning: “Does it force you to work at succession continuously (rather than once a year)?” (209). The following paragraphs will show that the leadership succession narrated in the Book of Genesis and other parts of the Bible cover all three of Goldsmith, Vanderbloemen and

Bird, Quist, Weese, and Leech's ideas for successful succession: preparing future leaders, preparing the organization to be led by non-founders, and preparing founders for their future.

Genesis: The Account of a Leader's Life

God's perspective of leadership succession in the Old Testament is multigenerational and long-term. When leaders and organizations trade a multigenerational long-term approach to leadership for the individualistic short-term approach, the organization, the leader, and the mission suffer. The New International Version of the Book of Genesis repeats the phrase, "This is the account of" ten times. Each time the phrase appears in the text, it signals that a new topic is being introduced. The phrase and the topics introduced reveal God's perspective of multigenerational continuity. For example, Genesis 11:27 says, "This is the account of Terah." After reading that statement, one would expect to read about Terah. But only six verses are specifically about Terah, while thirteen chapters are about Terah's son, Abraham. In a similar fashion, Genesis 25:19 states: "This is the account of Abraham's son, Isaac." This is followed by three verses about Isaac and eleven chapters about his sons, Esau and Jacob. And finally, in Genesis 37:2, "This is the account of Jacob" is followed by one verse about Jacob and fourteen chapters about his sons, especially Joseph. When the Bible recorded the accounts of Terah, Abraham, and Jacob, very little was written about Terah, Abraham, and Jacob, but much was written about the generation that followed them. According to this principle, when God records the account of a person or ministry, He primarily records the next generation's accomplishments and failures. This means that what a denomination, mission organization, or a church does after the founders are no

longer leading is more important than what was accomplished in the first decade. It is possible for churches and ministries to appear strong, healthy, and successful while the founder is still leading, but to stray, shrink, or die under the post-founder leaders. This growth or death in the next generation is part of the account of the founders (Murrell and Murrell 248).

The Importance of Mentoring: Moses to Joshua

The above-mentioned leadership transitions in Genesis were all from father to son. That is not always the case. Moses and Joshua were not related, yet they successfully exchanged the leadership baton. Their success was in part because of the training and mentoring that happened long before Joshua actually had an official leadership position. Joshua was known as “the servant of Moses” throughout most of the Book of Exodus. Joshua was not called “the servant of Jehovah” until the Book of Joshua. Part of Joshua’s leadership training included accompanying Moses to Mount Sinai and to the Tabernacle. By serving Moses up close and personal, Joshua not only grew closer to God, he also learned valuable leadership lessons from one of the greatest leaders in Israel’s history. In a sense, Joshua was not only a servant of Moses, but also a coworker with Moses who was included in several significant leadership moments when others were excluded. An invitation to participate in higher levels of leadership is an important part of the leadership mentoring process (Damazio 136). This hands-on mentoring from Moses was a key ingredient in Joshua’s successful transition to his leadership role. Robert Clinton says mentoring happens when a leader identifies “leadership potential in a still-to-be developed person, the protégé, and is able to promote or otherwise significantly influence the protégé along in the realization of potential” (Damazio 130).

Outgoing leaders mentoring new leaders is not just a biblical concept, it is also vital in the corporate world. An extensive Stanford University research project entitled “Making Founder Successions Work” found that “transitions with an internal successor and a role for the founder tend to be the most successful” (Tuomala et al. 29). Executive Transition Management consultant, Tom Adams, believes that outgoing founders “have critical roles to play in transitions” (3). “Mentoring the successor” is one of the four suggested roles for founders who choose to remain engaged with the non-profit after their successor takes the top leadership position (Tuomala et al. 28). While personal integrity, professional skills, commitment, education, and intelligence are assumed to be at the highest level for a CEO, Goldsmith suggests that many incoming leaders need coaching and mentoring in the area of behavior (65). Behavioral coaching and mentoring are also needed in ministry leadership. It is assumed that future church and ministry leaders have biblical knowledge, theological training, Christian character, and communication skills that are foundational to ministry leadership, but often these potential future leaders do not know exactly how to behave in their new leadership context, thus the importance of leadership mentoring.

The Spirituality of Planning: King Solomon to King David

In *The Elephant in the Boardroom*, Crabtree and Weese made a case for the spirituality of organizational management writing that, “it would be a mistake to interpret the organizational and managerial tone of this book as dismissive of that spiritual work” (ch. 1). King David would agree with Crabtree and Weese that strategic planning and spiritual leadership are not mutually exclusive. The vision to build a house for the Lord was in David’s heart, but at some point, David realized that it was for the next generation

to accomplish (1 Kings 8, 1 Chron. 22). Like David, many church and mission leaders today have a vision that is too big to be accomplished in one generation. Some attempt it anyway and do more harm than good. Others, like David, accept that God's vision is often multigenerational and invest time and resources into the development of the next generation rather than attempting to accomplish everything in their lifetime. David not only prepared Solomon to lead, he also prepared the people to follow Solomon and made financial preparation for the upcoming building project (Russell 113). All of David's preparation involved planning. Vanderbloemen and Bird write that, "Planning for that day of succession may be the biggest leadership task a leader and church will ever face"; if this is true, then not planning for leadership succession must be one of the biggest leadership failures (Preface).

Author and business advisor, Ram Charan teaches that neglecting succession planning or creating an inadequate plan often leads to the wrong leader being installed at the top of an organization. When the wrong leader is selected no amount of "mentoring, coaching, [or] senior team special help" will compensate. "The misses are devastating—and very public" (Charan, "Secrets" 54). Unfortunately, some ministry leaders do not plan because they see planning as less than spiritual. This is the result of a poor understanding of both planning and Scripture. Hearing God's voice, knowing God's will, being led by the Spirit, having a supernatural open door, and other forms of God's leading do not exempt one from planning, rather they demand detailed planning (Dudgeon 104-105; Crabtree and Weese, ch. 1). Pastor and author, Peter Scazzero sees no conflict between spirituality and organizational planning. In fact, he believes that greater spirituality will lead to better, not worse, organizational leadership. Scazzero

writes, “deeper inner life should lead to good organizational practices” (174). He admits that this is often not the case because many leaders embrace either the organizational or the spiritual side of leadership as if they are not compatible. He points out the fallacy of this either/or thinking: “There is a disconnect when we fail to apply our spirituality with Jesus to such leadership tasks as planning, team building, boundaries, endings, and new beginnings” (Scazzero 174). There was no such “disconnect” in King David. He was deeply spiritual man after God’s heart and at the same time, he was a strategic planner. He set Solomon up for success by diligently formulating and working a “succession plan” that included preparing people, finances, facilities, and other necessary ingredients for successful leadership transition to the next generation. David planned, therefore Solomon succeeded (Murrell and Murrell 200-204).

The Multi-Generational Mindset: King Hezekiah’s Failure

Hezekiah was one of the few Old Testament kings who did right in the eyes of God, yet he failed miserably in the area of succession planning and leadership transition. His son and successor, Manasseh, was one of the most wicked kings in Israel’s history. How did a good man who was a righteous king reproduce a bad son who became an evil king? The answer to that question is complicated, but the part that pertains to succession planning is rather obvious from the text. Toward the end of Hezekiah’s reign, the king of Babylon sent envoys to visit Hezekiah, who foolishly allowed them to spy on his palace, royal treasury, armory, and storehouses. Isaiah the prophet immediately issued a strong rebuke that included a warning of a Babylonian attack that would result in everything they owned being stolen and taken to Babylon. Worse than losing their possessions, Isaiah also prophesied that their sons would be taken as prisoners to Babylon. Hezekiah’s

response to the prophetic warning explains why he failed to prepare his successor. “Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good.’ For he thought, ‘Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?’” (2 Kings 20:19). How could anyone think that poverty and captivity for the next generation is good? Hezekiah only thought about his leadership and his generation. If he experienced peace and prosperity, then all was well.

This is the exact opposite of the multigenerational leadership-succession mentality presented in Genesis. God repeated the phrase, “To your offspring I will give this land” was to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:15, 15:18, 17:7, and 17:8). Though he was a good leader for most of his life, Hezekiah failed the next generation because he did not share God’s multigenerational leadership vision (Murrell and Murrell 249-251). Since church consultants and Wall Street executive coaches agree that healthy leadership transition is an important leadership task, they would therefore also agree that King Hezekiah failed in one of his greatest leadership tasks (Vanderbloemen and Bird Preface; Goldsmith 41; Charan, “Secrets” 52-59).

The Importance of Decreasing: John the Baptist to Jesus

Research indicates that founder successions in non-profit organizations are more successful when founders stay involved and are “willing to play a different role.” That different role is always a lesser role in support of the new leader (Tuomala et al. 29). John the Baptist was certainly willing to play a lesser role as Jesus began his public ministry. However, John’s disciples seemed troubled that Jesus was beginning to attract a larger crowd than them. John’s response clarified his role as “a friend who attends the

bridegroom” and pointed his disciples to Jesus. “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:22-30). According to Craig Keener, “the ‘friend of the bridegroom’ refers to the Jewish custom of the *shoshbin*, who was much like the best man in weddings today” (*The IVP Bible* 257). The best man at a wedding is not the star of the show; his role is to support the groom and the bride. Likewise, healthy leaders accept that their leadership is temporary, that someday they will be replaced, and that they will have to decrease as new leaders emerge. When an established leader chooses to decrease so an emerging leader can increase, it creates a situation that is better for the organization, the new leader, and the departing leader. When an established leader holds on too long, it is not good for the organization, the new leader, or the older leader. It is common for young leaders to suddenly display a higher level of leadership ability when senior leaders simply empower, give new responsibilities, and get out of the way so young leaders can sink or swim. Oswald Sanders explained the power of new responsibility to help leaders emerge: “The departure of a strong and dominating leader makes room for others to emerge and develop. Often when the weight of responsibility falls suddenly upon his shoulders, a subordinate develops abilities and qualities he and others had not suspected he had.” (145). When new leaders have the “room” and “responsibility” to lead, they tend to lead. But when young potential leaders do not have the room or responsibility to lead, then they tend to not act like leaders. The primary reason some ministry leaders refuse to decrease is different than the reason many corporate leaders hold on too long. Letting go and passing the corporate CEO baton to the next in line sounds simple, but because of the intoxicating nature of leadership, it is extremely difficult to do. While few admit it, studies show that high-level CEOs “have a higher need for power than most other human

beings. Incredible power can be hard to give away” (Goldsmith 21). On the other hand, “the primary reason many pastors hang on to their job too long is a lack of finances for retirement.” When pastors and ministers do not have adequate retirement finances, they will naturally hold on to the only means of support that they know (Vanderbloemen and Bird. 2). This does not imply that all retiring corporate CEOs have plenty of money or that retiring ministers never have enough money—only that these are the most common reasons corporate and ministry leaders hold on to. It is better for all if founding leaders would follow the example of John the Baptist and discern the time to decrease so the next leader can increase.

A Continual Process: John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve

Most succession planning focuses on a leadership baton exchange between an established leader and an emerging leader. However, unless the established leader is the founder of the organization, he or she will actually experience two leadership transitions. In the first transition, the previous generation receives the leadership baton, and in the second transition, they pass it to the next generation. Jesus experienced both. As John the Baptist decreased, he passed his leadership influence to Jesus, who was increasing. That was the first, but not the last, leadership transition for Jesus. As soon as he selected his twelve disciples, he was starting his own succession plan that eventually led to him passing the mission to them. Crabtree and Weese, Quist, and Charan all agree that leadership transition is more of a continual process than a one-time event (Crabtree and Weese ch. 1; Quist 50-53; Charan et al. 209). Once a leadership team accepts this continual process idea, then the succession plan will have to include three leadership generations and beyond, rather than just two. Those who receive the leadership baton

from the previous leader will one day pass it to the next leader. A close look at the leadership transitions in the life of Jesus reveals the difficulty of the task. His most challenging circumstances happened during leadership succession. His transition from carpenter to preacher included time in the wilderness and intense demonic attacks. As he was preparing to pass the leadership baton to his disciples he experienced the agony of Gethsemane and the pain of betrayal (Weese ch. 1). Hopefully, this will not scare leaders away from the necessity of succession planning but prepare them for the spiritual battle that often accompanies the process.

Savage Wolves: Paul and the Ephesian Elders

Just as Jesus experienced increased spiritual battles during the leadership transition from John the Baptist and as he transitioned leadership to his disciples, Paul warned the Ephesian elders that “savage wolves” would attack the church during their leadership transition. Whether the wolves emerge from within or attack from the outside, Bible commentators Craig Keener and Mikeal Parsons both mention that the probability of wolves causing harm to the Ephesian congregation heightened as Paul transitioned out. In other words, the most likely time for wolves to attack sheep is during the season when an established leader is passing the leadership baton to an emerging leader (Keener, *Acts* 3040; Parsons 294). Experiencing difficult leadership transitions because of “savage wolves” is not unique to ancient Ephesus. It is quite common in churches, mission organizations, and businesses today for problems to arise during transition seasons. Writing about modern ministry, Robert Clinton says that transitions are “hard and complex times” filled with special “problems and opportunities” that can “make or break” the ministry (Clinton, *Titus* 137; Weese, ch. 1). Ideally, this paper will provide

help for churches and ministries to avoid common mistakes during the succession planning and leadership transition process.

Keeping Patterns, Guarding Deposits: Paul and Timothy

In *Called to Lead*, Robinson and Wall describe Paul's letters to Timothy as succession letters from an older leader to a younger leader. If this is the case, then Paul's instructions to Timothy should be taken seriously in leadership succession planning today. It should be noted that Paul never outlined a step-by-step succession strategy for Timothy to follow, instead his succession letter focused on the character qualities expected of new church leaders and the importance of preserving "patterns" and "deposits" (167-169). "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. But the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you" (2 Tim. 1:13-14). Paul's final words to Timothy included this admonition to "follow the pattern" and to "guard the deposit." Timothy was not to make up a new "pattern of sound words," a new teaching, or new doctrines. He was to continue in the patterns, teachings, and doctrines that he learned from Paul. Also, he was expected to guard the deposit he received from Paul. We only guard things that are valuable and at risk of being stolen. Paul does not state exactly what these deposits might be, but it is assumed that Timothy knew what he was supposed to guard. It is important in leadership transition for the new generation to follow at least some of the patterns and guard some of the deposits of the previous generation—rather than starting over as if there had been no previous leadership.

Summary of Biblical Foundations

Succession planning and multigenerational leadership transition is not just a secular corporate idea; rather, the concepts are thoroughly spiritual and part of the biblical narrative beginning with Genesis and ending with Paul's epistles and John's Revelation. As we review what the Bible says about succession planning and leadership transition, we learn that the biblical measure of a person's life is multigenerational. We also see the importance of mentoring, planning, thinking, and decreasing so that the next generation can succeed. We learn that "savage wolves" tend to show up during or immediately after a leadership transition, and we learn that new leaders must follow the patterns and guard the deposits of the previous leaders. Perhaps the most important lesson is to recognize that leadership transition and succession planning is a continual process, not a one-time event. And finally, it is important to recognize the spiritual nature of succession planning and passing the leadership baton from founders to next-generation leaders. Using best practices and learning from the corporate world does not mean the activity is not spiritual. The best leadership transitions include prayer, faith, hope, love, grace, confession, forgiveness, and a long list of other spiritual activities and values (Crabtree and Weese ch. 1).

Theological Foundations

While there is much that churches and mission organizations can learn from non-religious organizations, there are nevertheless biblical and theological foundations and principles that should be considered. Four basic theological concepts that impact church and mission work will be addressed in the following paragraphs: a theology of calling, a theology of work, a theology of retirement, and a theology of death. When viewed from a

uniquely Christian perspective, each of these four broad concepts produce a motivation that tends to be quite different in a secular non-religious organization. For example, it is common to hear pastors, missionaries, and denominational leaders speak of obeying a divine calling rather than choosing a career path. While the idea of calling is not completely foreign to the non-religious world, it is certainly more common in ministry contexts. Also, a biblically informed theology of death that includes an afterlife and a judgement day certainly impacts how one approaches leadership.

A Theology of Calling

Exponential founder and director, Todd Wilson, teaches that every Christian has a primary calling and a secondary calling, also known as a common calling and an individual calling. All primary or common callings are exactly the same: to pick up a cross and follow Christ as a disciple. All secondary or individual callings are unique to each individual. Wilson refers to the secondary or individual calling as the “sweet spot” and offers three questions to help a leader find it. The first question, “Who am I created to be?” addresses the idea of design. The second question, “What am I created to do?” addresses purpose. The third question, “Where am I created to go?” deals with place and position. According to Wilson, when a leader figures out the answer to question number one, the next two answers follow naturally. Once a leader knows who God created him or her to be and to do, question three can be answered with multiple places and different positions. This understanding of calling enables a founder and senior leader to let go of a position without retiring. Letting go of the position does not change the answers to the first two questions (Wilson 75-80). A founder can still be who God created him or her to

be and can still do what God called him or her to do without functioning in the organizational position.

Author and pastor Darren Patrick stated the obvious when he wrote, “Ministry is more than hard. Ministry is impossible. And unless we have a fire inside our bones compelling us, we simply will not survive. Pastoral ministry is a calling, not a career.” Most leaders are in ministry because of a sense of the call of God that ignited a fire inside their bones. Some leave ministry when fire burns out or the sense of calling fades away. Sometimes, leaders stay in a particular ministry role too long because the fire still burns strong and they misunderstand their calling. The idea of divine calling can sometimes simplify and sometimes complicate succession planning and leadership transition. The complication happens when we wrongly assume that because there is a “fire inside our bones compelling us,” then we should continue in a ministry position indefinitely rather than transitioning the leadership to another. In this case, one person’s calling can hinder the fulfillment of another person’s calling (Patrick 15).

The Old Testament is filled with examples of leaders who were called by God with seemingly little or no human appointment or confirmation. A system where God speaks and a person obeys is as simple as it gets. However, in the New Testament, an individual sense of calling is only the beginning of the process. At some point, there was usually a confirmation, an appointment, or a sending from an apostolic team, a congregation, or a group of elders. Every Nation cofounder Rice Brooks refers to this as “leadership affirmation” of the calling. He asserts that if leadership does not affirm, then perhaps the person is mistaken about the calling or maybe the timing is wrong. According to Brooks, the confirmation or affirmation often occurs after close observation during a

season of internship (Broocks, *Every Nation* 113-114). Even though Paul had a divine calling to the Gentiles and a revelation of the gospel of grace, he still felt the need to have human confirmation for his direction and his message. He submitted his calling to the Jerusalem elders “in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain” (Gal. 2:2). Whether the church or ministry governmental structure is episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational, theologians Wayne Grudem and Millard Erickson agree with pastor Jack Hayford that the call to leadership must be confirmed before the person is given an official position. When a bishop, a presbytery, or a congregation ordains, calls, or sends a person, they are only confirming what the Lord has already done, but that public confirmation is important. There are many who think God called them, yet they are not ordained or sent because the authority structure does not agree. Human and organizational confirmation of calling is good for churches and mission organizations (Grudem 905, 923-925; Erickson 1085-1087; Hayford 20). The majority of men and women in ministry are there because they were “called by God.” The sense of a divine calling is a great way to start, but it can also complicate the transition process when a leader assumes that a call is for life. Many have adopted a theology of calling that is summarized by the often repeated saying, “If man didn’t hire you, then man can’t fire you.” If man did not hire and cannot fire a called person, then succession planning done by a team has no authority. In order for succession planning and leadership transition to work, our theology of calling must begin with divine direction and end with human and institutional confirmation. Author Os Guinness writes that the calling not only empowers people to start the leadership journey, but also empowers them “to the very end” (228).

A Theology of Work

The idea of work as a sacred calling started in the Book of Genesis: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). In his Genesis commentary on this verse, David Atkinson writes that, “Work is part of the responsibility laid on human beings here at the beginning, even before things to wrong” (60). In other words, this call to work in the Garden of Eden was before the fall—debunking the idea that work is part of the curse. On the contrary, work was part of the blessing and call of God. Atkinson elaborates on this idea of the blessing of work: “Human fulfillment includes the human creativity of work, and the Garden is the place or mankind to find that fulfillment” (60). The problem comes when leaders feel called to church or ministry work, but do not seriously consider a theology of retirement or death. Instead, they assume they will work until they die, and worse, act like they will live forever. Therefore, they see no need for succession planning. The fact is, all leaders will eventually leave office, “yet research has long shown that most organizations are ill-prepared to preplace them” (Harrell 71). A theology of work that is multigenerational will include faithful and fruitful work for leaders of one generation and also lay the groundwork for future leaders to participate in it.

A Theology of Retirement

According to Vanderbloemen and Bird, most modern pastors and ministry leaders have given little thought to retirement planning, with 27% saying they will never retire (12). This could explain the gap between the average age of senior leader retirement in the corporate world and the ministry world. For outgoing CEOs at S&P 500 companies the average age is fifty-eight (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 4). A quick look at the

“Succession Ages for Prominent Large Church Pastors” chart in Appendix 1 in *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* reveals that it is common for founders and long-tenured megachurch pastors to hold their positions well into their late seventies and often into their eighties. According to Vanderbloemen and Bird, the average retirement age of for American megachurch senior pastors is sixty-five, which is seven years older than in the corporate world (Appendix 1). For some pastors, this is because their theology allows zero room for retirement. Churches and ministries all over the world can learn from Otto Lui’s research about leadership in the Chinese church. According to Lui, the majority of older Chinese pastors did not plan to retire. This created several problems in the church including no succession plans, a lack of clearly identified successors, and inadequate preparation for potential successors. Many of the most influential Chinese pastors are now octogenarians who no longer have the mental acuity or physical energy to lead. But they lead on, and the church and next-generation leaders suffer. Tragically, the lack of a succession plan sometimes leads to a church split when the senior leader finally dies, as younger leaders fight for position and power (Lui 4-5). Though the modern concept of retirement is not specifically outlined in the Bible as mentioned earlier, the idea of multigenerational leadership transition is. Abraham blessed the next generation before he died. At the very least, modern leaders must do what Abraham did and speak their blessing to the leaders who will follow them. Beyond speaking a blessing to the next leaders, according to retired megachurch pastor Bob Roberts, David did the following: specified his successor, prepared the temple construction plan, recruited workers to help his successor, made financial preparations for his successor, and helped cast his successor’s vision. “Then David stepped aside at the appropriate time” (Russell 114). If a

leader is unable or unwilling to see a future with someone else leading the church or mission, then he or she is unlikely to take the time to prepare the person or the organization for the future. But if some type of retirement is part of the future, succession planning is more likely to happen.

A Theology of Death

In his book *Transition Plan*, Bob Russell lists “five obvious reasons why every leader needs to think about transitioning.” At the top of his list is the fact that “we are all going to die” (42). Even if the Bible says little or nothing about retirement, it says much about death. For the Christian leader, death is nothing to fear. In the New Testament times, Jewish writers referred to death as a dread enemy, perhaps the judgment of God, while contemporary philosophers neither grieved death nor saw it as an enemy. Contrary to these ideas, the Apostle Paul saw death not simply as an enemy, but as “the final enemy to be subdued.” Of course, death was subdued by the resurrection of Christ, and eventually would be subdued again by “the resurrection of believers” which would be “the final event preceding Christ’s kingdom” (Keener, *The IVP Bible* 493). Paul’s view of death as “the last enemy to be destroyed” (1 Cor. 15:26) logically led to his idea that, “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). How can anyone possibly see death as gain? John Stott answers that question. Since Paul’s life was all about Christ, “it is truly logical that he should want to die because death would bring gain, namely more of Christ.” Lest we misunderstand that Stott is advocating Christian suicide, he continues explaining Paul’s view of death: “Nevertheless he knew he would remain a while longer because there was more work for him to do on earth” (130-131). The writer of Hebrews states that, “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb.

9:27). With the exceptions of Elijah—who was taken to heaven in a chariot before he had a chance to die—and Enoch—who “walked with God, and he was not, for God took him,” (2 Kings 2:11; Gen. 5:24)—every person mentioned in the Bible died. Several were raised from the dead, but they eventually died again. Millard Erickson’s comment on Hebrews 9:27 is a good starting point for a biblical theology of death: “An undeniable fact about the future of every person is the inevitability of death.” Erickson’s summary of 1 Corinthians 15 is that “the universality of death” has been defeated by the resurrection of Christ (1172). Even if a ministry leader’s theology leaves no room for retirement, he or she will eventually die, and therefore the organization must deal with succession planning sooner than later. When a ministry leader realizes that “finishing well” is the goal, hopefully, they will realize the necessity of developing younger leaders.

Preparing the Future Leaders

As previously mentioned in the chart on page 25, Quist, Goldsmith, Vanderbloemen, Leach, Weese, and Danielson all present their own threefold succession planning and leadership-transition process. While they all use different languages, their threefold models independently identify three areas that must be addressed for successful succession planning and leadership transition: 1) Preparing the future leaders to lead the organization, 2) Preparing the organization to be led by its future leaders, and 3) Preparing the founders for their future. Of the three, the preparation of the future leaders is perhaps the most obvious part of the process. Since every leadership position is temporary, it is not a question of if succession planning needs to happen, but when and how it needs to happen. Because of this reality, church consultants and corporate executive coaches agree that constant leadership development is essential (Crabtree and

Weese ch. 3; Harrell 70-74). In *The Elephant in the Boardroom*, Crabtree and Weese stress the importance of developing leaders. As important as succession planning is, they believe it is only “the second most important need” in a church. They are emphatic that “well-trained and committed pastoral and lay leadership” is number one. Without well-trained and committed leadership, the succession plan simply will not succeed (Crabtree and Weese Introduction). Business professor and leadership advisor Noel M. Tichy agrees with Crabtree and Weese’s emphasis on leadership development. “Building a pipeline to develop the abilities of future generations of senior management” is not optional, rather it is “critical to long-term corporate survival” (151–152). Tichy holds no punches when emphasizing the importance of internal leadership development. He writes that an outgoing leader has “flunked an essential leadership test” when there is not “at least one strong internal candidate for succession” (152). In Tichy’s opinion, no matter what else has been accomplished, a lack of potential top leaders is a “clear sign of leadership failure” (151-152). Vanderbloemen and Bird mirror Tichy’s ideas about the importance of the leadership pipeline and recommend that senior ministry leaders intentionally invest a significant amount of time in “developing the strength of their bench to create a potential leadership pipeline for every major leadership position” in the organization (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 9). While “lifelong learning” and “leadership development” have become common buzzwords, not all training efforts actually achieve the intended results. Professors Mihnea Moldoveanu and Das Narayandas claim that “more than 50% of senior leaders believe that their talent development efforts don’t adequately build critical skills and organizational capabilities” (42-43) . Two of the missing “critical skills and organizational capabilities” mentioned in the article include

communication and collaboration skills (42-43) . A Harvard Business Review article titled “Learn from People Not Classes” offered a possible solution to ineffective traditional leadership development. “The most successful leaders we know learn in a different way: by tapping into what we call *network intelligence*.” The authors contrast their “network intelligence” model with traditional “picking courses out of a catalog” and argue that leadership development is better achieved when individuals network with other leaders who are experts in their field; in other words, when they attempt to learn from people not classes (Hoffman et al. 51).

According to former megachurch pastor, turned church consultant, Mark Conner, “There is no success without a successor and Christianity is always one generation away from extinction. These two sobering facts highlight the urgent need for successful leadership transition” (ch. 1). This is why building a leadership pipeline is so vital to successful succession planning and leadership transition. Ram Charan’s “leadership pipeline” concept gives a solution to Conner’s warning. Charan offers what he calls his “alternate definition” for succession planning: “Succession planning is perpetuating the enterprise by filling the pipeline with high-performing people” (207). Of course, a strong leadership bench does not just happen organically. It must be intentional. According to author and pastor Peter Scazzero, healthy leadership development requires energy, effort, mentors, books, conferences, counseling, and other resources. All these resources require “a nice developmental budget” (Long 76). The idea of leadership development begs the question of whether leaders are born or made. If there are “natural-born leaders” then we simply need to find them and empower them to lead. But if leaders are made, then we need to invest time developing them. Rather than viewing leadership as something that is

hardwired in a person from birth, it is more realistic to see leadership as “a constellation of skills that can be learned and capacities that can be nurtured over time” (*Harvard Business Review* 11). Authors Eddie Gibbs and Christian Schwarz both agree that many great leaders in the Bible and in real life often did not seem to have any leadership potential in the beginning. However, as these potential leaders were identified, mentored, equipped, and empowered, they eventually functioned as if they were “natural” leaders all along. The fact that they once had seemingly little or no obvious leadership ability is usually forgotten (Gibbs 25; Schwarz 22).

In the business classic, *Built to Last*, Collins and Porras consider homegrown leadership as one of the “Successful Habits of Visionary Companies.” In fact, they have a whole chapter titled “Home-Grown Management” (Collins and Porras 169-182). Steve Hobson’s research about developing Filipino ministry leaders echoes the same conclusion about the value of training “in house” leaders (3). While not ruling out imported leaders, retired megachurch pastor Bob Russell suggests that leadership transitions require less time when the “successor comes from within the church and is familiar with its culture” (23). Nine years before his planned retirement from General Electric, Jack Welch said that choosing his successor was the “most important decision” that he would make as GE’s CEO, and that finding the right leader consumed “a considerable amount of thought almost every day” (Collins and Porras 172). In light of this, it would be wise for ministry leaders to invest a considerable amount of time thinking about their potential successors. Choosing the right successor is only the beginning, not the end. Once the right person is selected, he or she must be prepared for the position. The preparation of Welch was relatively simple since he had worked at GE for twenty consecutive years. In fact, GE

was his first and only fulltime job after he finished graduate school (170-171). Hobson believes that an important factor in the success of Victory Manila (founded in 1984 by the author of this dissertation), one of the largest Evangelical churches in the Philippines, lies in the fact that most of the leaders are developed from within rather than recruited from the outside (Hobson 3). Not everyone is on the homegrown leader bandwagon. The December 2016 *Harvard Business Review* states that, rather than training insiders, “Increasingly, CEO vacancies are being filled by external candidates” (Harrell 73-74). The same article goes on to admit that this idea of importing leaders rather than promoting them from within has not always produced good results, and it has plenty of critics. Rakesh Khurana strongly criticized the “cult of the outsider” trend in his book, *Searching for a Corporate Savior* (Harrell 73-74). Part of his criticism was the fact that imported leaders are often overpaid, while homegrown leaders are by comparison underpaid (Harrell 73-74). It should be noted that while homegrown leaders are more knowledgeable of organizational values and culture than outsiders, this does not mean they do not need further preparation to function at an advanced leadership level.

Many researchers agree that when identifying potential senior leaders, it can be a mistake for both ministries and multinational corporations to overemphasize charismatic personality and to favor extroverts over introverts (Botelho et al. 72; Gibbs 26; Hobson 114; Broocks, *Every Nation* 122-123). Angel D. Newton noted that while “charismatic leaders can motivate followers by a sense of belonging” there is also a dark side to charismatic leadership (24). Newton identified that dark side as the lack of empowerment. Worse than a lack of empowerment, Newton also asserts that at times “charismatic leadership makes followers susceptible to abuse” (24). A charismatic leader

is not necessarily needed for a successful succession plan. Whether charismatic extroverts or non-charismatic introverts are hired from outside or promoted from within, one fact remains: the more senior leaders invest in developing future senior leaders, the better the leadership transition (Hobson 133-134). This is not random and general leadership development, but leadership development specifically for senior leadership roles and positions in a ministry context. Preparation for senior ministry positions should include, but not be limited to, spiritual preparation, theological preparation, leadership preparation, character preparation, and relational preparation. In a ministry context, no matter the curriculum or format of leadership development, “relational trust” is an essential element of the process in a ministry that truly values people (Hobson 133-134). Carolyn Weese summarized leadership development in the context of succession planning as “the process of moving expertise from leader to people” (Weese ch. 1).

Spiritual Preparation

In *The Elephant in the Boardroom*, Crabtree and Weese address the spiritual nature of leadership transition in ministries while not diminishing the organizational aspects: “It would be a mistake to interpret the organizational and managerial tone of this book as dismissive of that spiritual work” (ch. 1). While much of their book addresses strategic, organizational, and communication issues connected with effective succession planning in a church context, Crabtree and Weese add that “the entire pastoral-transition enterprise needs to include the spiritual components of prayer, Scripture reading, personal reflection, confession, and nurture of faith” (Crabtree and Weese ch. 1). In summary, succession planning and leadership transition is not a choice between being spiritual or strategic, it must be both. Private prayer, devotional Bible study, congregational worship,

and other means of grace that catalyze spiritual formation are not necessarily required of the new CEO who is replacing the founding CEO in the corporate world. However, becoming the senior leader of a church or ministry requires that we give attention to these and other habits that sustain ministry.

Brian Edgar writes that spiritual preparation in the context of a theological seminary can be described by and divided into two poles: Athens and Berlin. In the Athens model, “the goals and methods of theological education are derived from classical Greek philosophical educational methodology” (Edgar 2). The ultimate outcome of the Athens education model is personal “transformation,” not the increase of information. In other words, Athens education is all about character formation and knowing God. On the other hand, “Berlin” refers to a theological education philosophy that is more concerned with the theoretical and practical preparation for a vocational ministry position than with personal transformation and spiritual formation (Edgar 208-217). This does not have to be a mutually exclusive either/or situation. It should be both/and, emphasizing internal spiritual transformation and practical organizational and ministry skills. Eugene Peterson recognized both the practical and spiritual aspects of ministry, then pointed out that it is common to enter ministry as a “spiritual director” only to wake up one day as a “program director.” In *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*, Peterson wrote that the “program-director pastor is dominated by the social-economic mind-set of Darwinism: market-orientation, competitiveness, survival of the fittest.” On the contrary, the “spiritual-director pastor is shaped by the biblical mind-set of Jesus: worship-orientation, a servant life, sacrifice” (Peterson 175). In other words, while top level ministry leadership requires both spiritual and organizational preparation, the

practical daily demands of ministry tends to push leaders towards an organizational focus to the neglect of a spiritual focus.

At its core, ministry leadership requires spiritual leadership as well as organizational leadership. Greater spiritual leadership responsibility demands spiritual preparation. Jesus set an example of spiritual preparation that church and ministry leaders should follow. Before beginning his public ministry, he spent forty days in the wilderness fasting, fighting temptation, and engaging in spiritual warfare. Here's Luke's account: "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days." After successfully defeating temptation by speaking God's word, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee" (Luke 4:1-2,14). Here's the summary: Jesus was *full of the Spirit*, he was *led by the Spirit* to the wilderness, then he returned in *the power of the Spirit* to begin his public ministry. Church and ministry leaders who want to have a spirit-empowered ministry would do well to follow the example of Jesus and make spiritual preparation a priority.

Theological Preparation

Historically, formal theological preparation sought to "shape both the minds and the hearts of those being prepared for ministry." But at times in history, it has focused more on shaping the mind while ignoring the heart. At other times, it focused almost exclusively on the heart and did little to promote scholarship. These two targets of theological education should be treated as twin outcomes rather than as competing goals (Van Gelder ch. 1). While theological training is a vital part of the ministry leadership preparation process, it should not be assumed that formal accredited theological

education is the only option. In many situations, church-based informal non-accredited leadership preparation can have equal or better results than formal accredited traditional theological education (Hobson 1-2). Seminary professor Perry Shaw recognized that theological education does not necessarily provide adequate training for ministry leaders. In his book, *Transforming Theological Education*, he wrote about the “fragmentation and contextual irrelevance of most ministerial training programmes” (Preface). He wrote about his own experience of seeing “student after student entering college passionate for ministry and leaving passionate for academia with little idea” how to lead a church or ministry, some even having lost the desire for ministry (Shaw Preface). Like Shaw, researcher Anita Palmer recognizes the inadequacies of the traditional seminary classroom approach to leadership development. She reports that some traditional seminaries are reshaping their programs, adding “feet-on-the-ground mentoring” to the traditional classroom courses (“Training the Next Generation”). Whether formal or informal, accredited or not, what every senior leader of a church or ministry needs is theological training that goes beyond the basics. Depending on the organization, theological preparation might include graduate degrees from accredited theological institutions, or it might simply require a general grasp of theology that can be obtained through self-study. Whether theological preparation is accredited or not, and whether it focuses on character formation or scholastic research or developing ministry skills or a combination of the three, the outgoing founder-generation leadership team is in the best position to determine the suggested or required level of theological preparation for incoming senior leaders. Rather than assuming that there can only be one purpose of theological education—either ministry skills, “holistic formation,” or “research and

scholarship”—the wiser choice might be to intentionally develop everything the future leader might need for ministry (Van Gelder Section 1). Shaw concluded that for theological education to succeed it must be “built on the assumption that the Holy Spirit is at work in students’ lives and is their ultimate teacher” (Shaw 11).

Leadership Preparation

Ultimately, the organization needs a leader with strong theological foundations, not necessarily a theologian who may or may not know how to lead. Therefore, leadership preparation must be added to theological preparation in order to ensure the success of next generation leaders. If a leader is a person who “makes things happen,” rather than a person who “occupies a position,” then potential leaders must be trained to be decisive and action-oriented (Addison 95). Leadership preparation should include spiritual leadership, organizational leadership, and relational leadership. Spiritual leadership includes prayer, fasting, vision-casting, discernment, faith, forgiveness, and other qualities and activities that might be required in a ministry context. The senior leader of a ministry is not necessarily the pastor or chaplain of every employee or member, but he or she still needs to know how to be a spiritual leader. It is not uncommon for a spiritual leader, lacking basic organization skills, to lead a ministry in a way that hinders its productivity and longevity. Organizational leadership preparation includes training and upgrading the new leader in areas such as strategic planning, budgeting, branding, communication, staff development, and succession planning. And finally, because of the nature of ministry, relational leadership skills must be added to spiritual leadership and organizational leadership in order to achieve maximum productivity.

Character Preparation

According to Edwin Friedman, the reason people follow a particular leader has “far more to do with their presence than with their actions” (ch. 8). While Friedman does not use the word “character,” his description of a leader’s “power” and “presence” clearly points to the importance of character. He writes that leader’s power flows from “the nature of his or her own being,” not from physical stature or economic status. For Friedman, leadership is “ultimately the nature of their presence” and a leader’s nature, or character, “is the source of their real strength” (ch. 8). Like Friedman, Kouzes and Posner write about the importance of a leader’s character without mentioning the word. “Leadership practices per se are amoral. But leaders—the men and women who use the practices—are moral or immoral.” Kouzes and Posner also stress the importance of leadership ethics, which require character (393). In *Leading Across Cultures*, James Plueddemann identifies the heart of the character issue for leaders, no matter what industry or nation. “Leaders in every culture tend toward the sin of pride” (65). Since God promises to resist the proud and give grace to the humble in James 4:6, character development—especially the character quality of humility—is vital for next-generation leaders to succeed at the highest level. According to Jim Collins, the difference in a level 1 through 4 leader and a level 5 leader is not only technical training, work ethic, communication skills, relational intelligence, and vision casting; it also has to do with character, especially the character trait of humility. A level 5 executive “builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will” (*Good to Great* 20). If the leaders who follow the founder-generation are to succeed, they will have to understand the importance of character, especially humility. They will have to

embrace the level 5 leadership tension of being “modest and willful, humble and fearless” (Collins, *Good to Great* 22). Robert Greenleaf makes essentially the same point as Collins, but with different vocabulary. Where Collins writes about the importance of humility, Greenleaf writes about the importance of serving, which always flows out of true humility. The basic theme of Greenleaf’s writing is that serving is the foundation of leading. Many, especially in a ministry context, interpret this to mean that serving is a means to a higher leadership position. Unfortunately, for many, serving is the means and leadership position is the end. Greenleaf taught the opposite that, “the servant-leader is servant first” (x). In *How the Mighty Fall*, Collins addresses the importance of humility, not just for individual leaders, but for corporate culture as a whole. In studying how and why some previously great organizations fell, Collins identified the first step toward failure as “Hubris Born of Success” (28). When Collins wrote about humility and Greenleaf about serving, whether they knew it or not, they were echoing what Jesus taught as the character foundations of leadership. If next-generation leaders are to lead the church or ministry to the next level of effectiveness after the founders are no longer leading, then an emphasis on character formation, especially humility and a servant attitude, is essential.

Relational Preparation

While new leaders certainly need to develop organizational leadership skills, and spiritual leadership skills, ultimately leading a church or ministry is about leading people, and leading people is relational. Robert Kaylor writes in *Your Best Move: Effective Leadership Transition for the Local Church* that “more than 40 percent of new leaders will fail within the first eighteen months of entering a new leadership role.” One of the

main reasons is “failing to build key relationships and credibility with stakeholders” (Introduction). Walter C. Wright describes leadership as a relationship with God and a relationship with people (Preface). Russell Richey highlighted the importance of relationships in the early formation and continuity of American Methodism by offering three words to describe early Methodism: community, fraternity, and order. Two of Richey’s three descriptive words were relational (13-15). For a new leader to succeed, he or she will have to develop relationships with key people inside and outside the organization. Insiders include board members, executive staff, field staff, and others. Key outside relationships essential for success might include major donors, leaders of other ministries or churches, lawyers and financial advisors, government officials, and university officials. Relational preparation means working on these key relationships before the first day on the job as the top leader. According to an article published in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, research indicates that a “clean break” by founders is not always the best formula for a good leadership transition. It also indicated that “transitions that extend the role of a nonprofit founder yield the best results” (Tuomala et al. 26). In organizations where the outgoing founder retained some position, but not the top position, “Seventy-five percent thought the benefits of a continuing founder role justified the complexity” (Tuomala et al. 28). If the outgoing founder retains a role in the organization, the new leader’s relationship with the founder can be a key to successful transition. In *Amplified Leadership*, Dan Reiland writes that leaders are better when they have a community of ongoing relationships with other leaders. Leadership relationships enable a leader “to be yourself,” to get “honest and healthy feedback,” and to increase self-awareness (14-15).

Patience is Necessary

Leadership succession coach William Vanderbloemen warns that “succession typically takes longer than most would guess.” He explains that churches and pastors often underestimate the time needed for successful transition and quotes a Harvard professor who advised business leaders that they “need ten years to develop a great CEO” (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 9). Spiritual, theological, leadership, character, and relational preparation takes time. When senior leaders fail to invest adequate time in the identification and preparation of future senior leaders, serious and long-lasting mistakes often result. Legendary GE leader, Jack Welch and former Pepsi CEO, Wayne Calloway both claimed that their most important task each day was the assessment and development of people. For Welch, people development included 500 GE leaders. For Calloway, it included 250 Pepsi leaders (Collins and Poras 151). It is problematic when the right leader is selected and installed without investing enough time to thoroughly train that leader for the new position. It is worse when the wrong person is selected and installed because of a rushed process. Jennifer and Gianpiero Petriglieri argue that “future leaders” who are identified as potential corporate stars and “fast learners” are often put on a leadership “fast track” to their own detriment. Rather than upgrading their leadership abilities, the “fast track” often stalls the leadership development progress. The unintended consequence of fast-tracking future leaders is that their leadership development is actually slowed down. In the worst cases, the fast-tracked leaders often end up leaving the organization (Petriglieri and Petriglieri 90-94). Along with the patience required to develop new leaders and to implement a succession plan, the new leaders would be wise to exercise patience as they assume their new role. Former professor Fred Craddock

advises new pastors to use patience when making changes. According to Craddock, “You don’t rearrange the furniture in a room of a disoriented person.” He then explains that, “too much change too fast creates an atmosphere of instability in a world that’s unstable” (Russell 67).

Preparing the Organization

In *To Change the World*, James Hunter makes the case that as important as individuals are to the mission to change the world for the glory of God, individuals are nevertheless inadequate. The organizations and institutions that individuals develop are essential to the mission. “The passion to engage the world, to shape it and finally to change it for the better” requires “individual and corporate, public and private” engagement (4). In the leadership classic, *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders wrote, “The true test of a person’s leadership is the health of the organization when the organizer is gone.” Once their founders are no longer leading, some churches and ministries grow stronger and larger, others grow smaller and weaker. To ensure that the organization continues to grow in strength and health, founders and senior leaders must shape future leaders to lead and prepare the organization to be led by a new generation (Sanders 143). Harvard professor Michael Watkins writes that “transition represents a time of acute vulnerability for both the new leader and the organization.” This season of organizational vulnerability demands wise succession planning (1). Unfortunately, according to Peter Bunton’s research, there are few succession studies specifically focusing on Christian organizations, and even fewer focused on founder succession in Christian organizations. However, Bunton found that while there are “large gaps of understanding” in applying corporate succession studies to churches and ministries, there

are nevertheless principles from the corporate world that readily apply to ministry contexts (9). According to Quist, “leadership succession is an event of the whole organization” not an isolated departmental project. Because of the organizational magnitude of leadership transition and because “leadership succession draws the focus away from leadership and onto the values,” Quist insists that the whole organization must take responsibility to steward the values (57).

Ideally the new leaders who replace founders will be “Level 5” leaders who will be following Level 5 leaders who not only led well, but also prepare the next leaders and prepare the organization for the next leaders. Collins and Porras describe Level 5 leaders as people who “want to see the company even more successful in the next generation, comfortable with the idea that most people won’t even know that the roots of that success trace back to their efforts” (26). In other words, Level 5 leaders prepare the organization, not only to survive, but also to achieve greater success with each succeeding generation. Vanderbloemen and Bird point out that, “In corporate settings, it is not uncommon for a CEO’s first board meeting to be one that focuses on succession.” They then ask, “What would happen if a new pastor at his or her first board meeting asked, ‘Let’s talk about my last months or years here. What needs to be in place at that point, and what should happen to both the church and to me after my time is over?’” (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 3). Therefore, in order to prepare the organization for future success, the incoming leader should start preparing for his succession right from the beginning. Besides succession planning, an understanding of corporate life cycles will help prepare the organization for its future. According to German philosopher Max Weber, religious movements are often founded by charismatic leaders. In order for those movements to

thrive post-founder, that charisma must be “routinised” in the organizational bureaucracy. Therefore, in order to prepare an organization for success after the charismatic founder no longer leads, systems and structures must be established to carry on the founder’s mission and vision (Newton 24).

Author and church consultants Don Cousins and Bruce Bugbee argue that churches and ministries need spiritual leaders who are also “organization builders” (28). There are many valid reasons for succession planning and leadership transition, but according to Bob Russell, “the most important reason for transitioning is for the good of the organization” (45). Unfortunately, while they might be godly and effective spiritual leaders, many pastors and ministry leaders do not know how to build an organization and do not necessarily know what is good for the organization. According to Cousins and Bugbee, preparing an organization for long-term health and growth requires the leader to build staff, formulate strategies, design structures, and create systems (28). Aubrey Malphurs agrees with Cousins and adds that good preparation and “advanced strategic planning” can help a church or ministry clarify and codify core values, vision, mission, direction, and even the discipleship process (99). The above-referenced items on Cousin and Malphur’s lists will be grouped in three broad categories: flexible structures, simple systems, and healthy culture.

Flexible Structures

“Organizations are in a constant state of change” and according to researcher Duane Brown, organizations that “expect change” and organize for change will “develop along a more optimal path” (36). Paul Nunes and Tim Breene accept the idea of constant change and add that “high-performance” organizations have a different view of “change”

than their competitors. They view change as a “continuous process,” not a one-time event (97). They embrace flexibility as part of the organizational culture. This acceptance of change and embracing of flexibility enables certain organizations to “jump the S-curve” when others in the same industry are on a downward spiral. The concept of the S-curve has been around since the late 1800s but resurfaced in the 1960s and has continued to be studied and applied to different types of organizations. As described by Nunes and Breene, jumping the S-curve is not about achieving organizational greatness, but empowering “recurring greatness.” It is not about success, but about “continually repeating success” (97). It is possible and common for a business to become successful and to be seen as great, only to get stuck in time and either be gradually passed by the competition or to suddenly crash as times change. The same happens in the ministry world. Flexible structures enable post-founder leaders to make the organizational changes necessary to “jump the S-curve” rather than getting stuck in the inertia of tradition.

Gene Getz believes that institutionalization is inevitable: “People, plus structure, plus age more often than not, equal institutionalism.” However, he does not believe that structure and institutionalization is necessarily detrimental to the original mission. Organizations and institutions have at times contributed to human flourishing and helped preserve theological orthodoxy. At other times, they have helped perpetuate sinful atrocities (Getz 259). The issue is not whether an institution, structure, organization should be built, but what type of institution, structure, and organization is capable of preserving and continuing the good that the founders intended. In the book, *Managing Corporate Lifecycles*, Ichak Adizes sets “Prime” as the pinnacle of organizational productivity. When an organization reaches Prime, it experiences continual tension

between flexibility and self-control. How this tension is managed determines how long an organization remains in Prime. Both flexibility and control are necessary for organizational health. Lose one or the other and Prime is lost (Adizes ch. 6). While Adizes was primarily concerned with corporate lifecycles in for-profit businesses, Brown applied lifecycle theory and lifecycle models to church planting. He discovered that, with minor adjustments, lifecycle theory has been successfully applied to denominations, churches, and other ministry contexts (Brown 37-38).

The Gospel of Mark records a story about the importance of flexibility, especially during leadership transition. “Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, ‘Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?’” (Mark 2:18). His approach to fasting was just one of many reasons that it became obvious to all that the new leader, Jesus, was not planning to lead like the previous leaders, the Pharisees. And he was not even going to lead like his cousin and friend, John. Jesus answered the fasting question with three-word pictures. First, he explained that guests do not fast during a wedding, maybe after, but not when they are with the bridegroom (Mark 2:19). Next, Jesus reminded them that if an unshrunk patch is sown onto preshrunk clothing, then as soon as the clothing shrinks, the patch will cause a tear worse than the original hole (Mark 2:21). And finally, Jesus said, “No one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins” (Mark 2:22). Just as new wine needs new wineskins, new leaders need flexible structures to fit their leadership style. Structure is necessary, but if it is not flexible it will not accommodate new non-founder leaders.

While Adizes writes about the importance of flexibility in a secular corporate context, Mike Breen addresses flexible structures from a spiritual “Kingdom building” context. Breen writes that spiritual leaders are called to build “something that has a strong foundation but is also infinitely flexible” (ch. 1). He explains that while healthy “Kingdom movements” have unchanging organizational “fixed points,” they also have “the nimble and flexible nature of the organism” (Breen, ch. 1).

Simple Systems

Researchers and authors Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger concluded that the “healthiest” organizations tend to have several common traits including “simple process” and “clarity” (ix, 13, 20). The opposite of the simplicity that Rainer and Geiger advocate for is the “complexity” that Chris Zook and James Allen warn against in *The Founder’s Mentality*. The first sentence of their book reads, “Growth creates complexity, and complexity is the silent killer of growth.” Zook and Allen proceed to explain how an organization can win the fight against growth-killing complexity by embracing the “founder’s mentality,” which has three components: a clear mission and purpose, an owner mindset, and a relentless obsession with the front line. They insist that the founder’s mentality, when embraced by top leaders and filtered throughout the organization, will enable any size organization to continue to grow despite the common and predictable crisis stages that are caused by growth. If an organization does not embrace the simplicity of the founder’s mentality, it soon finds itself in “The Complexity Doom Loop.” Zook and Allen give a simple antidote to the dangerous “Complexity Doom Loop”: “to survive, companies need to make complexity reduction a way of life” (Allen and Zook 69-70). Growing churches and global mission organizations are just as

prone to creating complexity as multinational businesses, and the solution is the same: to embrace the simplicity of the founder's mentality from the top to the bottom of the organization. Entrepreneurial founders are often too busy doing ministry and leadership to take the time to analyze and record exactly what they are doing and why they are doing it. Acknowledging the relationship between "simple process" and organizational health is essential to preparing a church or mission to be led by non-founders. Doing so ensures that simple systems that can protect the organization from the "Complexity Doom Loop" can be installed (Geiger and Rainer 13-14).

Healthy Culture

As mentioned previously, early American Methodism was built around a culture of "community, fraternity, and order." This relational, yet disciplined culture, was preserved and propagated through the Methodist rhythm of quarterly camp meetings and annual conferences. Because of numerical growth and geographic expansion, this rhythm became increasingly difficult to sustain. Nevertheless, in the early days, the Methodist relational culture was established through scheduled events rather than organically (Richey 32). In the book *Culture Shift*, Robert Lewis, Wayne Cordeiro, and Warren Bird insist that "culture is the most important social reality" in any and every church. They compare culture in the church to a soul in the body and argue that culture is what gives each church a unique personality. They also repeatedly refer to the idea of the Holy Spirit using a church's culture as a ministry and mission tool (Bird, Cordeiro, and Lewis Preface, ch. 1). What is meant by a healthy culture depends on the mission, vision, and values of an organization. For a church or mission organization, while biblical and theological principles are essential, for a growing organization a "culture of leadership

development” is essential. When leaders ignore the need for succession planning, they hinder a leadership development culture. Leaders who accept that they are temporary and embrace succession planning, tend to intentionally or inadvertently develop a culture of leadership development (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 1).

Preparing the Founders

When Vanderbloemen and Bird insist that advanced succession planning is the most important task of a leadership team, they are not just talking about planning for the next leader and planning for the organization. They are also talking about the importance on the outgoing leader’s future. Many pastors and ministry leaders, especially founders, do not plan for their own life after leadership. As a result, they often stay in a leadership position too long. “Regrettably, too many of the troubled successions involved transitions from founding pastors” (Vanderbloemen and Bird Preface, ch. 7). There are as many reasons for this as there are founders who overstay and inadvertently cause transition troubles for their successors and their organizations. Common reasons top leaders stay too long include money, perks, status, power, relationships, significance, and contribution (Goldsmith 18-25). No matter the reason, holding on too long hinders the success of the organization and the next leader (Vanderbloemen and Bird Preface, ch. 7). Mark Conner, a former megachurch pastor who has experienced, researched, and written about both sides of leadership transition agrees that when ministry leaders hold on too long, it is usually detrimental to the organization. Conner bluntly writes, “This is not God’s will” (ch. 4). The difficulty of letting go is not unique to ministry. Marshall Goldsmith coaches outgoing CEOs to “make peace with the fact that it is probably going to be very hard for you to just let go and get on with the rest of your life” (Goldsmith 17). Whether in the

corporate world, a local church, or a global mission ministry, every founder is an interim leader. The sooner a founder accepts this reality, the sooner he or she will start the process of identifying, preparing, and empowering next-generation leaders. Also, the sooner the temporary nature of the job is embraced, the sooner the leader can start thinking about life after the position (Vanderbloemen and Bird 162-163; Goldsmith 3).

Unfortunately, when it comes to transitions, founders are often part of the problem rather than the solution. Because founder transitions can be a difficult “psychological process,” or in worst cases “psychological dramas,” sometimes well-meaning founders unintentionally become obstacles to change rather than catalysts for change (Adams 11). This happens when outgoing leaders, especially founders, fail to embrace the temporary nature of their leadership position and fail to invest in the next-generation leadership. Once founders accept the reality of their own mortality, they usually eagerly commit to preparing next-generation leaders for leading the organization and preparing the organization to be led by new leaders. However, the idea of preparing themselves for life after leadership is often ignored. It might be helpful for church and ministry founders to take a lesson from the basic cross-cultural mission best practices handbook. Cross-cultural missionaries are typically trained to enter a mission with an exit plan. They know that at some point, they are supposed to hand the church or ministry over to local leadership and return to their sending nation. Because they see themselves as temporary leaders and “embrace a phase-out orientation” before they ever start, they are more apt to empower locals and less likely to hold on to authority too tightly. If this basic cross-cultural mission practice were applied in sending churches and sending nations as on the mission field, it probably would result in better transitions from

founder-generation leadership to second-generation leadership (Drury 96; Allen 107).

Writing about his own ministry leadership transition, Robert Kaylor recognized that “the first task of transitioning to a new church involved leaving well from the old one”

(Introduction). Likewise, founders who “lead with a view toward leaving” are more motivated to identify, equip, and empower local leaders as part of their daily and weekly routine. Perhaps founders of all churches and ministries should learn from missionaries and lead with a view toward leaving (Murrell, *WikiChurch* 21).

Financial Preparation

While most top corporate executives retire with plenty of money—moving financial concerns to the bottom of their “reasons-to-hold-on” list—very few ministry leaders retire with a seven-digit golden parachute (Goldsmith 17-30). This lack of adequate retirement preparation causes many pastors and ministry leaders to hold on to their position and salary far too long (Stetzer). Concerning money, Vanderbloeman and Bird get right to the point, “The primary reason many pastors hang on to their job too long is a lack of finances for retirement.” Because of inadequate finances, many ministry leaders simply cannot afford to retire. “They have no idea how to fund life when their church paycheck ends, so they let that fear keep them from making a change” (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 2, ch. 7). Vanderbloemen and Bird are not alone in identifying inadequate financial planning as a major reason many founders extend their leadership too long. An article in the *The Stanford Social Innovation Review* shared “they have not planned for their retirement” as one of the main reasons nonprofit founders hold on too long, to the detriment of their organizations (Tuomala et al. 29). A possible

solution to this common problem is for the board's financial committee to create a retirement plan as soon as a new leader is installed (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 7).

Emotional Preparation

Succession and leadership transition are rarely easy, but the baton pass from the founder-generation to the second-generation is usually the most difficult. Vanderbloemen and Bird discovered that ministry successions from the founders and their generation to second-generation leaders are the most likely to have difficulties, and they often end up looking and feeling “much more like a divorce than a wedding.” Goldsmith's expertise is business leadership, not ministry leadership, but he comes to similar conclusions and offers advice that sounds like the advice Vanderbloemen and Bird give to ministers. To avoid common founder to second-generation transition problems, Goldsmith helps high-level leaders imagine and create a productive and meaningful life after transition. Too often, transition difficulties are created because the founding leader was not properly emotionally prepared to let go. When a leader has a clear and compelling next career, it is much easier for him or her to let go of the previous position. The opposite is true when a leader has not prepared emotionally for life away from the previous job (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 7; Goldsmith 38). At the age of sixty, Robert Greenleaf took an early retirement from AT&T to develop what became the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Greenleaf insists that his “most interesting and productive” years were from sixty to seventy-five. He says this is because he spent twenty years, from forty to sixty, preparing for “old age.” His preparation was prompted by an article he read when he was forty. Sadly, Greenleaf also recounted two AT&T colleagues who retired about the same time he did and “found themselves rudderless.” These two men died a few years after

they retired. Greenleaf was not suggesting that lack of retirement preparation causes death, but he did suggest that lack of preparation for life after retirement can leave one rudderless, directionless, purposeless, and bored (270-277). While the main reason ministry leaders hold on too long is often money, for some, money takes a backseat to the their emotional identity being wrapped up in a top ministry position. Vanderbloemen and Bird addressed the need for emotional preparation: “To put it bluntly, too often pastors stay at a church not because they’re thriving there, but because their identity is tied too much to their present role and they don’t have anything else to put their passion into” (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 3). Conner agrees with Vanderbloemen and Bird that in the ministry context, the problem is often that “a leader’s sense of value, worth and significance is overly tied to their leadership position or ministry title” (ch. 4). Researchers Jari Tuomala, Donald Yeh, and Katie Smith Milway also recognize that there is an emotional side of founder transition that makes it difficult for founders to let go. Included in their list of wrong reasons that founders stay too long is that the founder’s “identity is with the organization or they don’t think the organization can survive without them.” (Tuomala et al. 29). Organizational identity and the fear that one’s life work will not survive are powerful emotions that push founders to resist transition.

Most ministry leaders not only have their identity tied to their ministry, they also have most of their friends connected to their ministry. If leaving the ministry position is leaving behind identity and friends, then of course, it will be difficult. How can a leader turn over the position to the next generation, yet still identify as a minister of the gospel, stay relationally connected with friends and colleagues, and do something with their time that matters? One way is by becoming what Goldsmith would call an “informal coach,”

or what Victor Copan would call a “spiritual director.” *Personal leadership mentor* is a phrase that describes both an informal coach and a spiritual director. Mentoring a leader as a coach or a spiritual director is more about building a relationship and setting an example than following a program and observing the rules. It is more about spending time together as leaders than developing leadership techniques. To continue in a life-giving relationship that might also include coaching, directing, and mentoring could be good for the former leader and the incoming leader. In fact, Goldsmith often recommends that the outgoing leader serve as a “coach-facilitator” (not a “coach-expert”) to the incoming leader. Of course, if authority lines are not respected, coaching, directing, and mentoring can hinder rather than help the transition (Goldsmith 95-96; Copan 144-148).

Summary of Preparing the Founders

In his book, *The Call*, author Os Guinness quotes Winston Churchill: “There is nothing to be said for retiring from anything.” He then applies Churchill’s words to the divine calling. “We may retire from our jobs but never from our calling.” Guinness explains that even though called people are sometimes no longer employed by their church or ministry, “no one ever becomes uncalled” (230). While not quoting Romans 11:29, Guinness hints at Paul’s theology of calling. “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Since the calling of God is irrevocable and since a former leader is not suddenly “uncalled” as soon as the transition to new leadership is completed, wise succession planning includes suggesting next steps for outgoing leaders (especially founders, many of whom are still strong visionary leaders who want to contribute).

Research Design Literature

This project utilized qualitative research to discover why some ministry organizations achieve post-founder-generation sustainability while others do not and to determine best practices and next steps for succession planning and leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries. With multiple quantitative research data collection strategies available, the researcher used ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological approaches to discern the best way to collect the most accurate and useful data (Creswell et al. 238). Sensing acknowledges that in qualitative research, “the investigators always have to make judgment calls” (Sensing 41). Therefore, a judgement call was made to use open-ended interviews with former leaders, and online leadership questionnaires for new leaders. The hope was that former leaders would be less guarded and more candid in an open-ended interview. Also, the assumption was that new leaders might be hesitant to actually say something that could be perceived as critical of their former leaders or their new organization, so they were asked to participate in an anonymous online questionnaire. As suggested by Creswell et al, “the audiences’ familiarity” with interviews and questionnaires influenced the choice and development of these instruments (Creswell et al. 239).

Since “no research methodology or data collection method gets the researcher out of the way” (Sensing 41), rather than attempting to get this researcher out of the way, I admit that I am right in the middle of this project and readily confess my “biases, values, emotions, and agendas” (Sensing 42) including the agenda stated in the purpose of this project as well as the fact that I am the co-founder and current president of Every Nation Churches & Ministries.

Summary of Literature

This literature review was organized in five major categories: 1) Biblical Foundations, 2) Theological Foundations, 3) Preparing the Future Leaders, 4) Preparing the Organization, and 5) Preparing the Founders. Major themes included succession planning, leadership transition, multigenerational leadership, leadership pipeline, leadership development, servant leadership, character, founder mentality, founder syndrome, and calling. The literature reviewed addressed these and other topics from different contexts including for-profit businesses, non-profit ministries, global mission organizations, and megachurches. Authors included university professors, Wall Street consultants, executive coaches, former CEOs, current and former megachurch pastors, mission researchers, ministry consultants, ministry practitioners, and executive search experts.

Three major categories of preparation emerged from the literature—Preparing the Future Leaders, Preparing the Organization, and Preparing the Founders. These three categories were examined in depth. These three concepts are based on the threefold strategy for succession planning and leadership transition that is suggested by a variety of researchers and consultants including Allen H. Quist, Martin Goldsmith, William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird, Mark Leach, J. Russell Crabtree and Carolyn Weese, and Richard Danielson. All five of these authors use different vocabulary, write from different perspectives, and serve different industries, but they all present a threefold succession and transition model that addresses essentially the same three topics. Richard Danielson summarized it best: “successful transition always depends on three parties—predecessor, people, and successor (2).

One key argument made repeatedly by the literature is that every leadership position is temporary, therefore, succession planning and leadership transition is essential for the ongoing success of the organization. In other words, every leader will either retire, be fired, or die, but the leader will not lead forever. Accepting this reality should cause top leaders and organizations to prepare early for succession and transition. The reality of the temporary nature of leadership positions is complicated in many ministry contexts. Some in ministry do not believe in retirement, equating it with a forfeiture of the call of God. Other ministers, because of inadequate financial planning, cannot afford to retire and pass the leadership baton (and salary) to the next generation. This is unfortunate and causes many in ministry to hold on too long, often to the detriment of the organization.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter reviews the purpose of this project, reviews the three research questions, and explains in detail the participants, data collection, and analysis process. The information in this chapter is organized in the following sections: the nature and purpose of the project, research questions, ministry context, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this research was to determine next steps for post-founder-generation leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries' International Apostolic Team (IAT) and Regional Leadership Teams (RLT) by identifying leadership transition and succession planning best practices in organizations that have outlived their founders. While an abundance of research pertaining to leadership transition and succession planning is available, the majority of it is in the context of corporate for-profit organizations. This research is still helpful in the ministry world. Less information is available that specifically addresses denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches. Hopefully the information in this project, that includes best practices from corporate and ministry contexts, will prove helpful for leaders of denominations, megachurches, and mission organizations as they face succession planning and leadership transition inevitabilities.

Research Questions

The first research question investigated why some organizations decline or die after the founders are no longer leading and why others thrive. The second research question looked at hindrances to successful post-founder leadership transitions. The third research question focused on successfully identifying and training potential new leaders who eventually replace the founders. In order to answer these three research questions a mixed-method approach was used that included Leadership Questionnaires (LQ) and Leadership Interviews (LI).

The LQ included thirty-one questions that were sent to fifteen current leaders who replaced founders or long-tenured leaders including five former denominational leaders, five former mission organization leaders, and five former megachurch leaders. The LQ started with basic demographic category questions (1-6). It then proceeded to three categories of questions that emerged from the literature review. The first category included questions about preparing the organization to be led by the new leader (7-18). The second included questions about preparing the new leader (19-22). The third and final category asked questions about preparing the former leader for the next phase of life (23-31). As some current leaders were hesitant to shed negative light on their predecessor in an interview, especially if the transition was bumpy, or if they did not feel the former leader was helpful in the transition, the anonymous LQs were useful in creating a safe place to be as honest as possible about their positive and negative transition experience.

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews (LIs) were conducted with three former denominational leaders, three former mission organization leaders, and three former megachurch leaders for a total of nine LIs. were used with the nine former top leaders to

enable the researcher to catch the emotion of the answers and to allow for the possibility of follow up questions if needed for clarity.

RQ #1: What factors contribute to the growth or decline of a denomination, ministry, or church after the founder-generation no longer actively leads?

Two research instruments were used to address Research Question #1: questionnaires and interviews. LQ questions 7-8 establish whether the organization was in a state of growth, stagnation, or decline when the former current leader started leading. LQ questions 10-11, and 18 investigate the reasons for growth, stagnation, or decline in the opinion of the current leader. LIs were conducted with nine leaders who formerly served in the top position in a denomination, a mission organization, or a megachurch. The interviews included three former denomination leaders, three former mission organization leaders, and three former megachurch leaders. The same nine LI questions were asked in each interview.

RQ #2: What hinders successful senior leadership transition and post-founder-generation sustainability?

Two research instruments were used to address Research Question #2: questionnaires and interviews. LQ questions 19-21 deal with training, mentoring, coaching, and other topics related to the success of new leaders. LQ questions 15-17 and 23-30, and 31 were designed to reveal whether or not the outgoing leader helped or hindered the process and whether or not the former leader contributed to the success of the new leader after the transition process was completed. The LI questions were designed to get the opinion of outgoing leaders on the same range of topics.

RQ #3: What are best practices to identify and develop new Every Nation IAT members and RLT members who will eventually replace the founder-generation?

Two research instruments were used to address Research Question #3: questionnaires and document analysis. LQ questions 7 and 8 determine the growth status of the organization at the time of the leadership transition: growth, plateau, or decline. By comparing that data with the effectiveness of organizational preparation (9-13), top level leadership development (14, 19-21), and former leader involvement or non-involvement (22, 25-30) some best practices for Every Nation succession planning and leadership transition became obvious.

Ministry Context

Every Nation Churches & Ministries is a relatively young denomination (established in 1994) currently operating in eighty nations, therefore this project sought to learn from relatively young denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches from different global regions. Since Every Nation is focused on church planting, campus ministry, and global mission, research focused on organizations doing similar work. Because Every Nation desires to learn from other Evangelical groups, some of the denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches leaders in this study have different theological distinctives than Every Nation. While Every Nation is active in eighty nations, it is strongest in the Philippines, South Africa, and the United States. Therefore, leaders and former leaders from these nations were considered when possible, but leaders and organizations from other nations were also included.

Because Every Nation is a global denomination, multiple cultures, values, worldviews, and customs are in place in different Every Nation churches and campus

ministries that sometimes hinder or help succession planning and leadership transition. Some Every Nation leaders are from high honor cultures, others are not. Some leaders minister in cultures that utilize direct communication, others indirect. Some Every Nation churches are in nations that see men and women as equals in terms of leadership. Others are not. Since Every Nation is in eighty nations, the list of cultural differences to navigate is endless. One bridge between the various nations and cultures is the English language. No matter which nation is their birth nation, most top Every Nation leaders speak English as their first, second, or third language. The reason Every Nation has an abundance of English-speaking leaders is because of the focus on campus ministry. Many of the top universities in non-English speaking nations either require or at least offer English language classes. Since most Every Nation senior leaders were originally reached on the campuses, most have a good grasp of English. This cannot be underestimated in terms of building relational bridges with leaders all over the world.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

Leaders who agreed to answer the LQ questions were selected because they currently serve in the top leadership position in relatively young denominations, mission organizations, or megachurches. Current leaders who replaced a founder or who replaced the founder's replacement were preferable to leaders further removed from founders. Because Every Nation is a global organization with its strongest presence in the United States, South Africa, and the Philippines, some participants were chosen because they live and lead in South Africa, the US, the Philippines, Australia, and other nations.

Leaders of organizations similar in mission to Every Nation were preferred. And finally, accessibility, availability, and relational connection were also factors.

Former top leaders who participated in an LI were selected because they formerly led denominations, mission organizations, or megachurches that are relatively young. Founders, second-generation, and third-generation leaders were preferred to leaders whose leadership was further removed from founders and the founder-generation.

Description of Participants

Fifteen leaders were given the LQ, including five denominational leaders, five mission organization leaders, and five megachurch leaders. The five denominational leaders are the current heads of Baptist, Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Evangelical denominations in the United States and Australia. (Note: Some of these “denominational” leaders prefer to call their organization a fellowship, network, or movement rather than a denomination.) The five mission organizations focused on campus ministry, cross-cultural mission, the urban poor, or global unity. Their organizations are based in the Philippines, South Africa, and the United States. The five megachurch leaders included a Filipino, a black South African, two white Americans, and one African American. The megachurches are located in Texas, Tennessee, Oregon, Johannesburg, and Manila. The megachurches in Tennessee and Johannesburg are led by an African American and a black South African and both are unusually diverse, a mix of black and white. The church in Texas is also diverse, but with a white and Hispanic mix. The megachurch in Oregon reflects the whiteness of Oregon. The church in Manila has little ethnic diversity but includes members and leaders from various Filipino language and cultural groups.

Former denomination leaders who answered the LI questions included one Australian and two white Americans. All three led Pentecostal or Charismatic denominations. Former mission organization leaders included organizations that specialized in college campus ministry, short-term missions, and cross-cultural mission mobilization. One is Honduran, two are ethnically Filipino, however one Filipino lives and ministers in the Middle East, one in Manila, and the Honduran currently resides in the United States. Former megachurch leaders interviewed included a South African, an American, and a Filipino. They are all three still in ministry, but no longer leading their churches. One has planted a new church as a missionary in another nation. One is a denominational leader. The other is writing, teaching, and coaching pastors. The churches they turned over to their successors ranged from 2,000 to 9,000 in attendance when they transitioned to the next phase of ministry.

Ethical Considerations

This section will address three ethical considerations: Informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. The starting point of informed consent was to clearly communicate to each participant the purpose and methodology of the project (Sensing 35). This was done through the consent forms for the LQ and LI participants, and a brief verbal description of the purpose was given during each LI. Consent forms were emailed to fifteen current leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches prior to filling out the LQ, and a slightly different consent form was emailed to nine former leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches who participated in the LI (Appendix A). At the beginning of each LI, the researcher asked for permission to record the interview. Every participant granted permission. Two devices

were used to record each LI, a cell phone and a computer, both owned by Every Nation Churches & Ministries, and both assigned to the researcher. Both devices are password and fingerprint protected. Recordings were deleted at the end of the project. The LQs were designed to insure the anonymity of the participants. Their names and ministries do not appear in this dissertation.

Instrumentation

Two different instruments were used in this project: Leadership Questionnaires (LQ) and Leadership Interviews (LI). Fifteen current leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches participated in the LQ. Nine former top leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches participated in the LI.

The LQ for the fifteen current leaders starts with basic questions (1-6), then proceeds to three categories of questions that emerged from the literature review: preparing the organization to be led by the new leader questions (7-18), preparing the new leader questions (19-22), and preparing the former leader to let go questions (23-31). The thirty-one questions are included in Appendix B.

Expert Review

Prior to distribution and conduction, the LQ and the LI, both were subjected to three expert reviews. The LQ and LI expert reviews included a pastor who replaced a megachurch pastor, a former megachurch pastor who now works in pastoral leadership development, and a church consultant who does field research as part of his consulting practice.

The expert review input led to an adjustment in the LQ, which initially used only three- and five-point Likert scale questions. After considering the expert input, questions 13 and

25 were changed from five options to four. This eliminated the neutral option and forced a value decision. Questions 7, 10, 18, and 21 remained five option questions. Questions 14, 19, and 31 remained three option questions. The expert review resulted in no significant adjustments to the LI.

Reliability & Validity of Project Design

In *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*, Tim Sensing argues that, “Reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static. Human behavior is unpredictable in many ways” (Sensing 219). This human “unpredictability” renders the task difficult but not impossible (219). While the interpretation of this data will vary, effort was taken to ensure that the method of data collection could be repeated, and therefore trusted as being both reliable and valid. Sensing insists that when assessing reliability in qualitative research, “the question is not whether the findings will be found again, but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (219). In order to obtain the most reliable data, a qualitative mixed-methods approach was employed using two instruments: interviews (LI) and questionnaires (LQ). To give the researcher the ability to dig deeper, the interviews were semi-structured. John C. Flanagan stresses the importance of anonymity (341). “Especially for the collection of information about ineffective behavior, one of the principal problems is to convince the observer that his report cannot harm the person reported on in any way. Usually he also needs to be convinced that the person reported on will never know that he has reported the incident” (341). To ensure anonymity and encourage honesty, the questionnaires were online with no face-to-face interaction. Interviews were conducted with outgoing former senior leaders who were

encouraged to speak freely and allowed to wander off topic in the hope of gaining insight beyond the actual question that was asked. Current top leaders were not interviewed but given online questionnaires. Since some current leaders might be reluctant to speak negatively about their predecessor in an interview on the record, they were given the anonymous online questionnaire. This way, they could express their true opinion without appearing to dishonor or underappreciate their former leader who, many times, is also their elder. This was especially important for this particular research project, since it included leaders from honor cultures in Asia and Africa who would be extremely reluctant to say anything but praise about their elders.

Several methods were followed to ensure the validity of the project. Sensing states that “the trustworthiness of data and interpretation is enhanced by triangulation” (Sensing 220). He also suggests that the “the triangulation of multiple data sources, methods, investigators, or theories” will result in “greater ... confidence in the observed findings” (198). Researcher Samuel N. Peffers acknowledges that while the “potential for human error in the analytical techniques” can certainly adversely impact “the reliability of the analysis,” those limitations can be “reduced through the use of multi-coder triangulation” (11).

Since the purpose of this project was to determine next steps for post-founder leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries by identifying best practices for leadership transition and succession planning, the triangulation included insiders and outsiders. Top leaders and former top leaders who were insiders (Every Nation members) and outsiders (non-Every Nation members) participated in LIs and LQs. The research questions connect directly to the purpose and the methodology of leadership interviews,

and the leadership questionnaires provided data specifically addressing each research question from various angles. Specific parts of the questionnaire were directly connected to each of the three research questions. The same was true of the semi-formal interview questions. This was to validate that the interview and online questions actually informed the specific issues presented in the research questions. The three primary broad topics presented in the research questions were organizational growth and decline, leadership transition, and succession planning best practices that can be applied to Every Nation. The LIs and LQs were designed to shed light on these three issues.

Data Collection

The mixed method data collection process for this qualitative research project utilized two collection instruments. The three-phase process covered four months, from September through December 2018. The first month and first phase focused on instruments and participants. Two data collection instruments were developed: Leadership Questionnaires (LQ) and Leadership Interviews (LI). The goal of both instruments was to elicit “understanding and meaning” (Sensing 57). Expert reviews resulted in slight adjustments to the LQ and no changes in the LI. The LQ included thirty-one questions. The semi-structured LI included nine questions. No matter the quality of the instruments, qualitative research credibility “hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork” (220). The researcher, who was a ministry practitioner and not a professional researcher, recognized his limitations and the need to practice the LI multiple times before making the first call. Along with recording, extensive notes were taken during each LI. Notes included key words and concepts as well as potential follow up questions. According to Sensing, “Qualitative research

involves being reflexive and autobiographical” (218). Therefore, the researcher attempted to get the participants to tell their stories rather than robotically answering nine questions.

At the same time the instruments were being developed, two lists of potential participants were created and vetted. The first list included fifteen current leaders of denominations, megachurches, and mission organizations who replaced a founder or a founder-like leader who would be asked to answer an online LQ. Approximately half of the names on the LQ list were ministry friends or acquaintances of the researcher. The other half were friends of friends. For these names, the researcher relied on friends to make the connections. Two acquaintances of the researcher declined to participate. Only one leader whom the researcher had never met declined to participate. The second list included nine founders or founder-like leaders (long-tenured leaders) of three denominations, three megachurches, and three mission organizations who are no longer in the top position in their organization who would be asked to participate in the LI. Six of the nine were friends or acquaintances of the researcher. The researcher had never met the other three and relied on mutual friends to make the connection. All nine agreed to participate in the LI.

The second phase focused on sending and receiving the LQ. Fifteen participating leaders were asked to complete the online questionnaire within forty-eight hours. That timeline had to be stretched to three weeks as several leaders agreed to participate but failed to actually fill out and send the LQ. Follow-up encouragement was required to complete this phase. Eventually twelve of fifteen LQs were completed via SurveyMonkey.

The third phase focused on the LI. Since the nine participants travel extensively and live in different time zones all over the world, scheduling the interviews proved to be a challenge. Because the participants live on three different continents, the interviews were conducted via Skype rather than in person, and because the researcher travels extensively, the interviews were conducted from Manila and Nashville. This process—from the first interview until the last—took one month to accomplish. Each interview was recorded. The first question in each LI asked for permission to record the entire interview. Every LI participant verbally granted permission to record. The recording was done via the interviewer's computer and his cell phone as a backup. Once the quality of the computer recording was confirmed, the cell phone copies were deleted. The computer is owned by Every Nation and assigned to Steve Murrell. It is protected by a password and fingerprint security. No transcripts of the recordings were produced. At the completion of this dissertation the recording files were deleted. As soon as the last interview was recorded, the four-month (September to December) data collection process was completed.

Data Analysis

Data from the online LQ was easily assembled and managed through the SurveyMonkey platform which offers multiple ways to organize the data as well as charts, tables, and graphs. After considering the data on the SurveyMonkey site in various forms, I decided it would be best to organize the data according to questions rather than organizations. While considering every individual's answers to all thirty-one questions was helpful, I found it more helpful to analyze the data question-by-question rather than organization-by-organization or leader-by-leader. After online analysis, I decided to print

the data, one page for each of the thirty-one questions. This approach enabled me to circle, underline, and color code similar and contradictory answers to each question. It also afforded room for notes and questions that needed to be considered.

Analyzing the data from the LI was not as simple as the LQ primarily because nine semi-structured interview questions yielded much more information than thirty-one online questions. During each recorded interview, detailed notes were written. As expected, the former leaders who participated in the LI were candid, honest, and spoke freely with one exception, a retired leader who seemed to be a bit guarded and hesitant to give detailed answers. According to John C. Flanagan, vague answers “suggest that the incident is not well remembered and that some of the data may be incorrect.” On the other hand, Flanagan writes that data accuracy can usually be assumed when “full and precise details are given” (341). In the case mentioned above, the hesitancy to give detailed answers was probably an attempt to paint a positive picture of an organization rather than a failure to remember. In order to clarify vague answers and to get “full and precise details,” adlib follow-up questions were added to the preset LI questions. In all nine interviews, the spontaneous follow-up questions produced greater clarity and more detailed specificity, resulting in reasonable confidence in the accuracy of the LI data. Because of this, during the data analysis process, much attention was given to how the former leaders answered the follow-up questions.

According to Sensing, no data collection instrument can be completely free from researcher influence or even bias, because “the researcher influences research design, abductive reasoning in hypothesis construction, choice of variables, the coding of data, and the interpretation of data” (41). One obvious way data analysis is unavoidably

influenced by the researcher is through “the problem and purpose statements [which] are the determining force for making methodological decisions” (50). Also, the literature review certainly shaped the coding and interpretation of the data. For instance, the summary of the literature review revealed that post-founder sustainability is dependent on preparing new leaders to lead the organization, preparing the organization to be led by new leaders, and preparing the founder-generation for the next phase of life. Knowing these three factors from the literature caused me to seek confirmation or contradiction in my LI follow up questions and in data analysis. Another way the researcher is inexorably connected to the process is because the researcher created the original three research questions. If it is correct that “the method should be based on the research questions” (238), then the very method of data analysis finds its way back to the researcher.

Sensing suggests triangulation as a way to “cross-check” data and provide “breadth and depth” to data analysis (Sensing 72). He then warns that when analyzing qualitative data, triangulation is “not the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow,” but it is nevertheless useful in providing the researcher with “multiple lenses” to organize and interpret data. Through the use of multiple lenses, triangulation enables the researcher to compare different types of data, different perspectives of different people, and “what people say in public with what they say in private” (78). Data from the LQ (current leaders) was compared with data from the LI (former leaders). Data from Every Nation insiders was compared with data from outsiders. The third angle in the triangulation analysis was the researcher, as suggested by Sensing (75).

The data analysis revealed one surprise and many confirmations. Prior to the literature review, I instinctively knew that preparing new leaders to lead the organization

was essential for post-founder sustainability. The literature review confirmed this and added two more types of preparation that had never entered my mind: preparing the organization to be led by new leaders and preparing the retiring leader for the next phase of life. The data from the LQ and LI confirmed and paralleled the literature with one surprising exception. While the literature often mentioned the importance of including the spouse of the outgoing leader in the succession planning and leadership transition process, not one person in the LQ or LI mentioned the spouse of the leader. I did not notice this discrepancy until late in the data analysis process. Perhaps if I had noticed this during the LI, follow-up questions about the role of the spouse might have confirmed the literature, or perhaps contradicted it.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will address the data that was collected via two instruments, the Leadership Questionnaire (LQ) and the Leadership Interview (LI). The data will be presented in the following sections: Participants, Research Question #1, Research Question #2, Research Question #3, and Summary of Major Findings.

Three research questions were designed to discover why some denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches achieve post-founder-generation sustainability while others do not. The purpose of this research was to determine next steps for post founder-generation leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries' International Apostolic Team (IAT) and Regional Leadership Teams (RLT) by identifying best practices for leadership transition and succession planning in organizations that have outlived their founders. In order to discover best practices for succession planning and leadership transition, one-on-one semi-structured interviews (LI) were conducted with nine former senior leaders, and leadership questionnaires (LQ) were created for new top leaders who replaced founders or long-tenured leaders. This research will impact the practice of ministry by aiding in the development of senior leadership training tools and by identifying best practices for succession planning leadership transition.

Participants

Because Every Nation has its strongest presence in the United States, South Africa, and Philippines, most of the participants were chosen from these nations. As

Every Nation is working in eighty nations, leaders from other nations were also invited to contribute to the research. Two different types of leaders were included in this project.

One group consisted of fifteen current top leaders of denominations, megachurches, and mission organizations. Five denomination leaders, five megachurch leaders, and five mission organization leaders were invited to participate in the LQ and twelve of the fifteen actually completed the LQ while three declined to participate (table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Types of Leaders Who Participated in the Leadership Questionnaire

<i>Organization Type</i>	<i>Invited</i>	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>Declined</i>
<i>Denomination</i>	5	3	2
<i>Megachurch</i>	5	5	0
<i>Mission Organization</i>	5	4	1
Total	15	12	3

The twelve leaders who filled out the online LQ included five Americans, four Filipinos, one Australian, one Canadian, and one South African (See figure 4.1).

Global Demographics

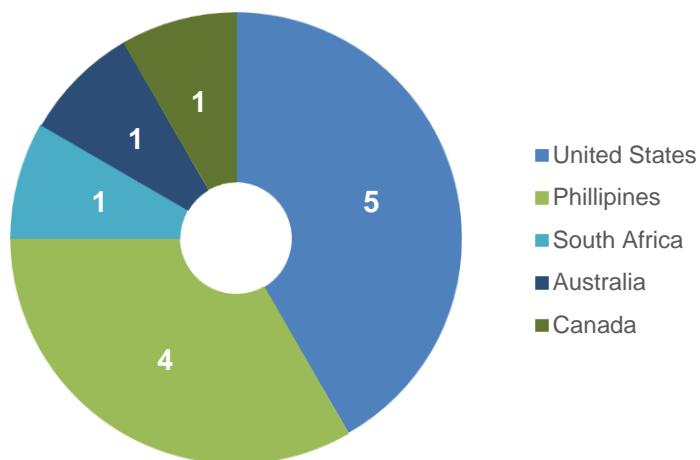


Figure 4.1. Global demographics.

Seven of the twelve current leaders who participated in the LQ served in the organization they now lead for over twenty years before being promoted to the top position. Two served in their organization for fifteen to twenty years before assuming the top position. Three served for less than ten years (figure 4.2).

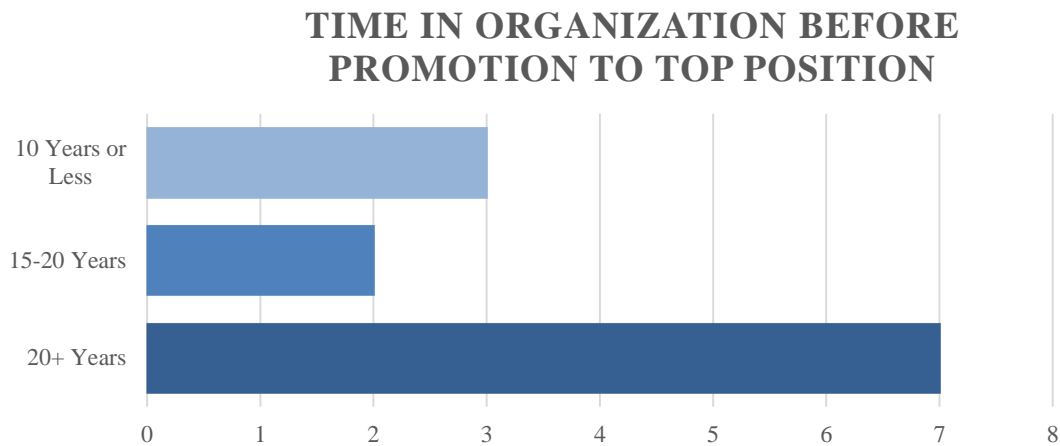


Figure 4.2. Time in organization before promotion to top position.

The leaders' ages when placed in the top position varied greatly, but almost half became the senior leader between the ages of forty and forty-nine (See figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3

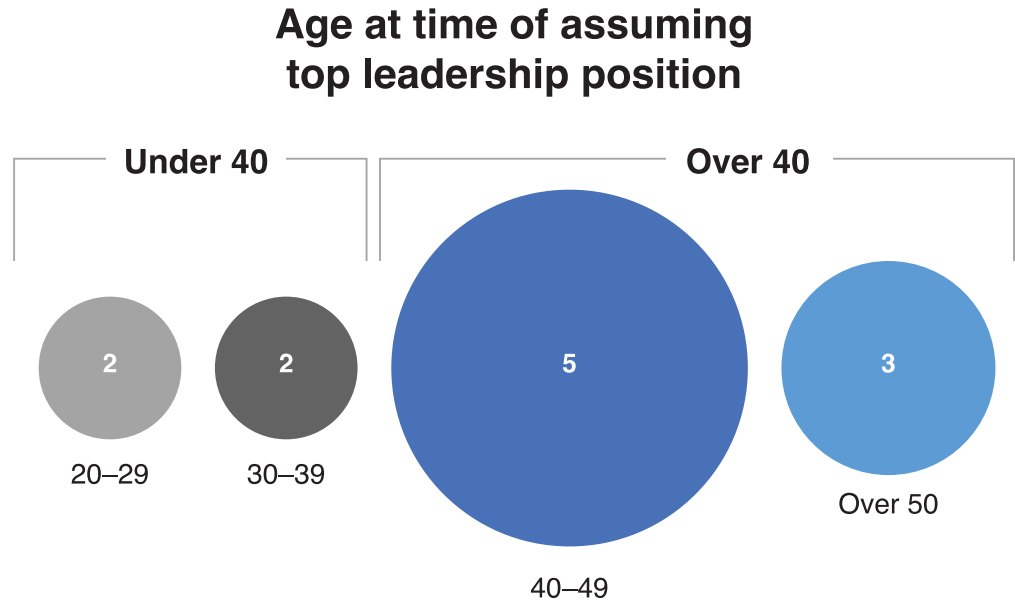


Figure 4.3. Age at the time of assuming top leadership position.

A second group consisted of nine former top leaders of denominations, megachurches and mission organizations. These nine former leaders were invited to participate in a Leadership Interview (LI). All nine participated including three former denominational leaders, three former mission organization leaders, and three former megachurch leaders (table 4.2).

Organization Type	Invited	Accepted	Table 4.2. Leaders who participate d in Leadership Interview
Denomination	3	3	
Megachurch	3	3	
Mission Organization	3	3	

The nine former top leaders were from Australia, Honduras, Philippines, South Africa, and the United States (figure 4.4).

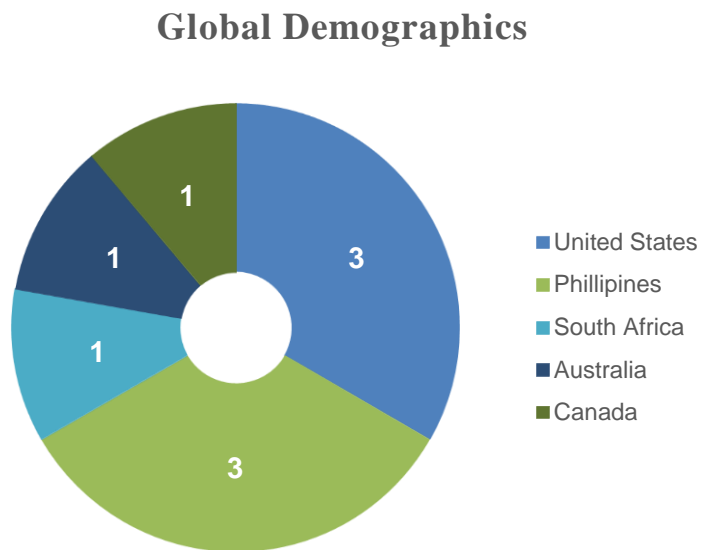


Figure 4. 4. Global demographics

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

Research Question #1 asked, “What factors contribute to the growth or decline of denomination, mission organization, or megachurch after the founder-generation no longer actively leads?” Questions 7-11 on the LQ and all nine LI questions were designed to discover key factors that contribute to growth and decline. LQ question 7 asked,

“Which best describes the growth pattern of the organization in the final 2-3 years of your predecessor’s leadership?” Five options were offered: rapid growth, growth, plateau, decline, rapid decline. Half of the leaders (six of twelve) answered that their organization was experiencing growth or rapid growth when they took over from the previous leader. Four leaders said the organization had plateaued, one reported decline, and one stated rapid decline (figure 4.5).

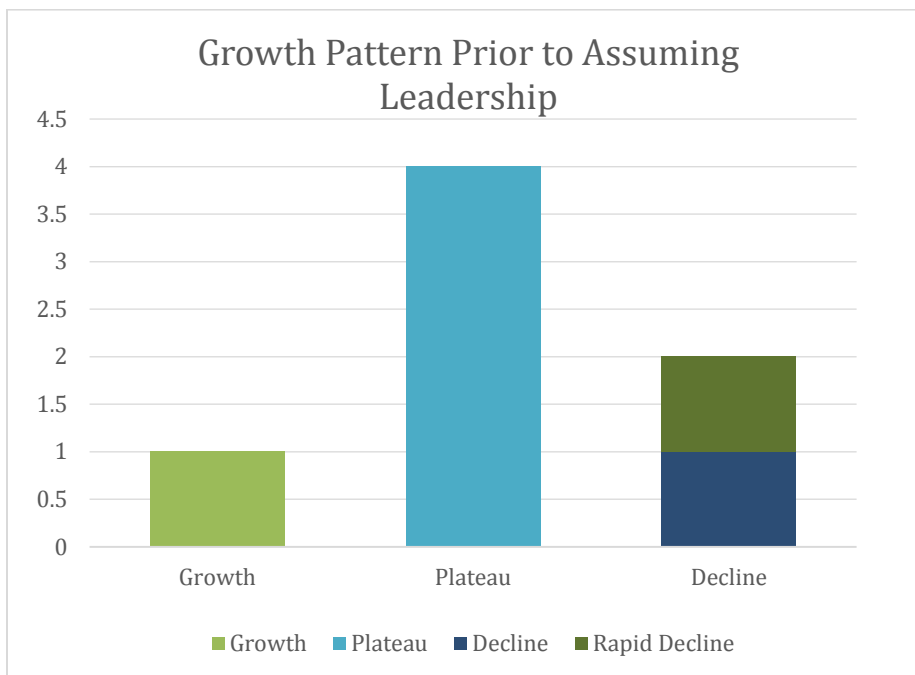


Figure 4.5. Growth pattern prior to assuming leadership.

LQ question 8 was open-ended and sought to find out the reason for the growth or decline. “In your opinion, what best explains the answer above?” According to one leader (Q-10), “disunity at every level” was the primary reason for rapid decline. Another (Q-1) cited “poor communication” among key leaders as the cause of decline. Current leaders reporting plateau under the previous leader mentioned inadequate facilities (Q-7), lack of

leadership focus (Q-8), and outdated organization structures (Q-4) as factors that contribute to a growth plateau.

LQ question 10 asked, “Which best describes the growth pattern of the organization since you assumed the top leadership position?” Nine leaders reported growth. Two leaders reported rapid growth. One leader reported plateau. No one reported decline or rapid decline under their own leadership (figure 4.6).

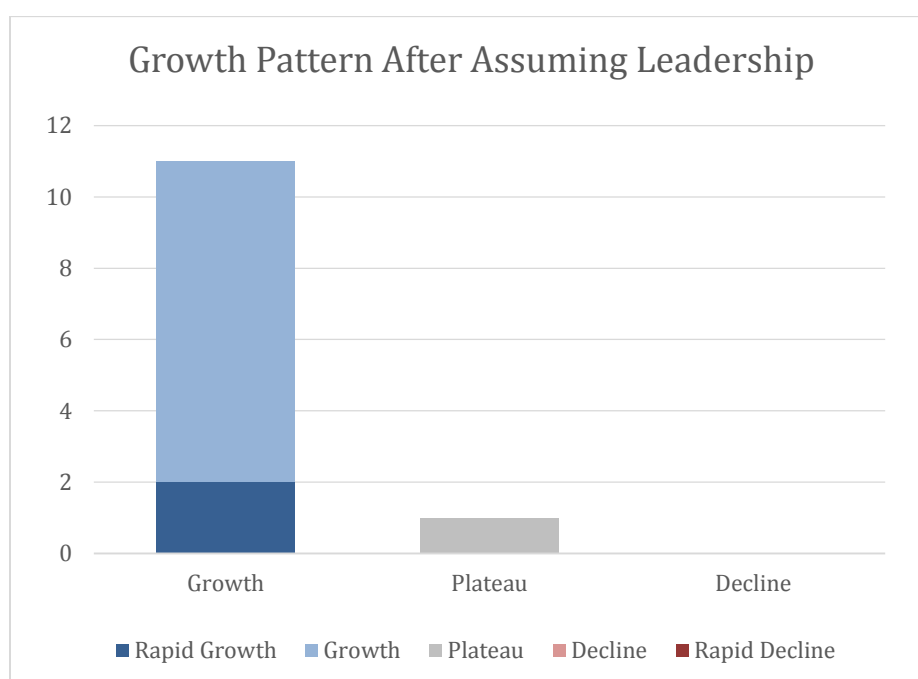


Figure 4.6. Growth pattern after assuming leadership.

The next question was open-ended: “In your opinion, what best explains the answer above?” While most leaders included multiple answers to this question, the three most mentioned words were priorities, culture, and grace. One denominational leader (Q-12) reported that despite slow growth in the United States, “our growth internationally has been rapid.” The most common reasons cited for growth or rapid growth can be

divided into four categories: spiritual (grace of God, prayer, seeking the Lord), missional (global focus, evangelism, international outreach), organizational (upgrade operations, empower teams, decentralize), and leadership (new leaders, more leaders, better training).

Every former leader who participated in the LI, either directly or indirectly mentioned leadership as the main reason, the only reason, or one of several reasons contributing to post-founder-generation sustainability and growth. Most also mentioned the idea of urgency in the transition process. In other words, it is better to engage the succession planning and leadership transition process now rather than later.

One former denominational leader (I-8) said that when replacing a founder or long-tenured senior leader, the search team should “look for a team of leaders, not one leader.” He was not saying that his position would be occupied by a team, but the person who would inherit his job would need his own team. Another former megachurch/denomination leader (I-9) suggested that outgoing senior leaders should look for “five or six key leaders who are thirty to forty years old; all should be able to potentially replace” the senior leader. He said that the outgoing leader should mentor these people for several years until it is obvious who the replacement should be. One mission organization leader (I-3) said that the outgoing leader must have a season of personally mentoring the next leader. He went on to explain the importance of creating a leadership pipeline in the organization. Another former mission organization leader (I-2) cited the importance of “trusting” the new leader, explaining that high trust empowers the outgoing leader to fully walk away without worrying about the organization’s future. A former megachurch pastor (I-4) said, “if the goal is to hand off leadership in five years, then start giving up power now.” He said this to stress the importance of starting the

process as early as possible. Another former megachurch pastor (I-6) insisted that the best replacement must not be “an outsider, but a spiritual son.” He said the outgoing leader must “mentor a son-like leader” and the mentoring must start “sooner than later.” He strongly believed that a home-grown insider would be a better senior leader than an imported outsider. “Mentoring a son is better than finding a great organizational skilled leader.”

Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

Research Question #2 asked, “What hinders successful senior leadership transition and post-founder sustainability?” LQ questions 15-18, 21-25, and all nine semi-structured LI questions were designed to discover hinderances. LQ question 15 asked, “Did your predecessor make the necessary tough decisions? (e.g. firing the wrong people, dealing with bad attitudes, stopping unproductive problems, cutting budgets where necessary, etc.)” Seven leaders answered yes. Four leaders answered no. One leader did not answer this question. LQ question 16 asked the leaders who answered “yes” to cite examples. The most common answer about the outgoing leader dealing with possible hinderances mentioned firing, transferring, or correcting staff who might be problematic for the new leader. LQ question 17 asked the leaders who answered “no” to explain their answer. Three (Q-5, Q-11, Q-12) of the four “no” answers mentioned money. One pastor (Q-5) said the building debt he inherited had not been clearly communicated to key leaders. Another leader (Q-12) cited systemic overspending. While money was the most commonly mentioned hinderance in LQ questions 15 and 16, in response to LQ question 18, only two current leaders said they inherited “heavy debt” from their predecessor. Two

reported “manageable debt,” and most described the finances of their organization as “breakeven” or “cash reserves.”

In trying to determine the importance of ongoing training, mentoring, and coaching for the new leader’s success, LQ question 21 asked, “How would you describe the ongoing mentoring, coaching, or training for your position?” Almost half of the respondents checked the “inadequate” box. However, LQ question 22 revealed that over half of these same leaders checked the box that indicated they were “satisfied with the level of coaching, mentoring, and input from my predecessor.” These new leaders say they have “inadequate” mentoring, coaching, and training, yet most are satisfied with the level of mentoring, coaching and input from their predecessor. Only two leaders checked the box that indicated they want more input from their predecessor. Some leaders recognize their need for input, but they want that input from someone other than their predecessor.

During the LI, several leaders addressed potential hinderances to successful senior leadership transition and post-founder sustainability. One former denominational leader (I-8) and one former megachurch pastor (I-6) agreed that their presence could be a hinderance to the new leader. A recently retired denominational leader (I-7) said, “my responsibility is to fade into the shadows.” Another former denominational leader (I-8) explained that many years ago when he took the job, because his predecessor did not let go of “some responsibilities,” it made his job as the top leader extremely difficult. When he passed the leadership position to his replacement, he decided to completely disengage and disappear because he did not want to “repeat that negative experience.” He said that if the new leader wanted his advice or help, he would have to contact him directly. Until

then, he would do his best to stay out of the way of the new leader. Several times, board members and staff members tried to get him to reengage, but he declined every time unless the new leader directly asked for his input.

The problem of “micromanagement” was mentioned as a hinderance by several former leaders. One retired leader (I-1) of a United States-based global mission organization talked passionately about the importance of global partnership and respecting the local senior leader and local boards. He said that “micromanagement is destroying *XYZ Mission*.” The opposite of micromanaging was described by the former leader (I-3) of a different mission organization. He said that rather than establishing “a foreign office of *ABC Mission*,” his organization wanted to “reproduce *ABC Mission* in other nations.” He wanted each new *ABC Mission* to be locally led, not micromanaged from an international headquarters in the United States. A former denomination leader (I-7) said that to avoid undue influence (micromanagement) of local leaders in developing nations, his organization does “not financially support nationals” with money from the United States. He said they generously support “projects and relief” but not local staff salaries. One mission leader (I-1) complained that because of the money from the United States, local leaders have little actual authority to make decisions.

Three leaders—one former denominational leader and two former mission organization leaders (I-1, I-2, I-8)—considered the lack of an official written succession plan to be a hinderance. One former megachurch pastor (I-5) said that although his church had no written succession plan, it was not a hinderance because the unofficial unwritten succession plan worked to his satisfaction. Having a written succession plan does not automatically guarantee a successful leadership transition. One former

denomination leader (I-7) said their written succession plan was actually part of the problem since it was outdated and had not evolved as the denomination grew larger and more multinational. Two former megachurch leaders (I-5, I-6) mentioned that their written plans overestimated the transition time. One transition was planned for two years but was cut in half because the outgoing minister had so many ministry opportunities. Another was planned for six months but shortened to three months.

One final hinderance was mentioned multiple times: finances, specifically communication and clarity about finances. In the context of succession planning and leadership transition, one former megachurch leader (I-6) exhorted outgoing leaders to speak honestly about their financial expectations. He concluded, “finance is usually where the problems happen.” To avoid this problem, financial details (specifically payments to the outgoing leader) must be discussed and written. Concerning finances, a retired leader (I-9) said the more that is written, the better the transition; he also added, “write the details.”

In summary, the most common hinderances to successful leadership transition mentioned in the LQ and LI include unwanted involvement of the former leader, unclear financial expectations of the former leader, an unwritten transition plan, and an unempowering micromanagement leadership style.

Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

Research Question #3 asked, “What are best practices to identify and develop new Every Nation global senior leaders (IAT and RLT members) who will eventually replace the founder-generation?” LQ questions 3-6 and 23-24 ask for quantitative data pertaining to length of service in the organization before promotion to the top position, age of leader

when promoted to the top, and other quantitative information about the outgoing and incoming leader. LQ questions 7-11 address possible reasons for growth, plateau, or decline in the organization. LQ questions 19-22 address preparing the new leader to lead the organization. LQ questions 12-18 address preparing the organization to be led by the new leader. LQ questions 23-31 address preparing the outgoing leader for the next phase of life. Best practices and next steps will hopefully be discerned from these five groups of questions.

Comparing LQ question 5 to LQ question 24 shows that all three participating denomination leaders, all four mission organization leaders, and four of five megachurch leaders were replaced by younger leaders. In three cases, the outgoing leader was replaced by a leader who was at least twenty years younger. In three cases, the incoming leader was at least ten years younger. In three cases, the new leader was less than ten years younger. In one case, the incoming leader was the same age as the outgoing leader. LQ question 4 revealed that five incoming leaders had served in the organization at least twenty years before promotion to the top job. Three incoming leaders had served the organization for at least ten years. Four had served less than ten years. In summary, eight of twelve had served ten years or more before being promoted to the top. The shortest length of service before top promotion was four years (table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Organization	Experience before top job (LQ4)	Age when promoted to top job (LQ5)	Retirement age of predecessor (LQ24)	Age difference between predecessor and new leader
Denomination 1	35	54	75	21
Denomination 2	20	42	45	3
Denomination 3	12	33	60	27
Megachurch 1	4	26	50	24
Megachurch 2	8	44	44	0
Megachurch 3	21	55	65	10
Megachurch 4	24	42	50	8
Megachurch 5	15	39	54	15
Mission Organization 1	5	50	64	14
Mission Organization 2	28	48	56	8
Mission Organization 3	55	26	31	5
Mission Organization 4	16	48	49	1

Six of twelve leaders who participated in the LQ became the top leader of an organization that was experiencing “rapid growth” or “growth.” One new denominational leader (Q-12) indicated that the reason for growth in his denomination was “global

expansion” despite “slowing growth in the United States.” One new megachurch leader (Q-5) wrote that “a new building” was the main cause of the growth under his predecessor. Another megachurch leader (Q-7) attributed the state of growth to the addition of a fourth worship service. Two mission leaders (Q-2, Q-3) mentioned “the grace of God” as an explanation for growth. While the grace of God certainly contributed to or caused growth, it is difficult to translate grace into best practices and next steps. However, global expansion, expanded facilities, and additional worship services or ministry activities can easily translate into best practices and next steps.

LQ questions 19-22 were designed to shed light on best practices and next steps for preparing new leaders to lead the organization. Question 19 revealed that over 70% of respondents described the leadership development provided by their organization as “informal.” The next question revealed that over 75% of those receiving “informal” leadership training for the top position in the organization described that training as “effective” or “highly effective.” When asked to “describe the ongoing mentoring, coaching, or training for your position” almost half felt it was inadequate—five leaders checked the “inadequate” box, two chose the “highly effective” box, and four picked the “effective” box. One skipped the question. To summarize, most current leaders indicated they received informal leadership training, and most felt that it was effective or highly effective.

LQ questions 12-18 were designed to shed light on best practices and next steps for preparing the organization to be led by new leaders. The most frequently mentioned negative issue was the lack of empowerment. The LQ question 12 asked leaders to “describe the organizational structure that you inherited.” One leader of a mission

organization that had plateaued (Q-1) answered, “lack of empowering leaders” and that “almost everything had to be okayed at by the top leader.” A megachurch pastor (Q-9) wrote, “one leader oversees everything.” He explained that even though there are many department heads, all plans, details, and execution are ultimately directed by the senior leader. While much was written about the lack of empowerment, one leader (Q-11) mentioned the problem of over-empowerment. “The leader ahead of me gave a lot of freedom to staff and leaders. Probably too much freedom without accountability.”

According to LQ questions 13 and 14, most respondents described the organizations they inherited as “functional” and over 80% said they have the authority to make necessary changes. Question 16 asked for examples of a predecessor making tough organizational decisions before passing the baton to the next leader. Common answers related to either terminating, relocating, or correcting difficult staff members, rather than leaving difficult people on the new leader’s team. Money was another organizational issue that was mentioned multiple times. Some leaders inherited organizations in debt, others had mismanagement problems, and another indicated a lack of financial transparency. In order to prepare the organization for new leadership, it must deal with empowerment, personnel, and financial issues before promoting a new leader.

LQ questions 23-31 were designed to uncover best practices and next steps for preparing outgoing founders and long-tenured leaders for the next phase of their life. Question 29 read, “Whether official or unofficial, intended or unintended, my predecessor tends to help or hinder.” One-hundred percent indicated that their predecessor helps. Question 30 asked, “In what ways has the former leader affected your leadership?” One denominational leader (Q-12) said, “spiritual mentoring.” A

megachurch pastor (Q-7) said his predecessor, “speaks up when he sees things that are not going right.” Another megachurch pastor (Q-11) said his predecessor, “helped with the board and got people to believe in me.” A different megachurch pastor (Q-5) described the founding pastor as, “unwaveringly supportive, encouraging, readily available.” A mission organization leader (Q-3) indicated that his predecessor helps because he is “supportive but generally out of the picture.” A denominational leader (Q-10) also described his predecessor being out of the picture: “He moved to another country.” Everyone who participated in the LQ indicated their predecessor tends to “help” rather than “hinder” their leadership. Some help by staying engaged and speaking up when adjustments are needed. Others help by speaking positive and encouraging words. Others help by not engaging and staying away.

Former senior leaders participating in the LI mentioned several potential best practices and next steps for identifying and developing future leaders. LI questions 8 and 9 asked how the succession plan and the actual leadership transition could have been improved. Three (I-2, I-5, I-8) of the nine former leaders said that the process could have been better if they had been more involved in mentoring the incoming leader. One former mission leader (I-2) said, “I wish I could have had Carlos (not his real name) under my wing for one more year.” A former megachurch leader (Q-5) said, “Staying longer to help James (not his real name) would have been an improvement. I could have really helped him.” Another former megachurch pastor (Q-6) said the succession plan was good, but the timetable should have been longer.

Three former leaders also mentioned that the transition process could be improved if “politics” could be removed or diminished. They were not always clear exactly how to

remove politics, but they agreed that it was problematic. One retired denomination and mission organization leader (I-8) offered a possible solution to the problem of politics. “Having term limits forces the leader and the board to begin to think about the next leader.” He explained that term limits would be “less political” since each leader would automatically have to exit when the term ended. In his case, since there were not term limits, he felt the process of getting him to transition became overly political. A second former denomination leader (I-7) who had term limits decided not to pursue an additional term because he felt the process had become too political. Rather than play politics, he resigned at the end of his term.

LI question 10 asked, “Is there anything you would like to share that we haven’t covered yet?” Several of the answers were about heart, character, or attitude. These answers are difficult to translate into best practices but are nevertheless important for healthy leadership transitions. A former mission leader (I-3) candidly spoke of his own heart issues during his leadership transition, “I wish I had been more humble.” A former megachurch pastor (I-6) looked back and identified “trust” as a key issue. “Succession is a matter of trust. Trust God and trust the new leader.” He implied that he did not trust sufficiently during his transition but offered no advice about quantifying or upgrading trust. A different former megachurch pastor (I-4) humbly acknowledged his hidden insecurities. “The outgoing leader has to work on his own insecurities and where he gets his affirmation.” One retired megachurch pastor (I-6) made an important differentiation between the transition and post-transition. “The actual transition could not have been better. But post-transition is harder than transition because it is not theological or

strategic, but emotional.” He then talked about the importance of outgoing founders and leaders having the patience to process their emotions with God and with trusted friends.

Summary of Major Findings

Three research questions sought to discover why some denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches achieve post-founder-generation sustainability while others do not. In order to discover best practices for post-founder succession planning and next steps for Every Nation leadership transition, two qualitative data collection instruments were created. Leadership Questionnaires (LQ) were used to gather data from current top leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches who replaced founders or long-tenured leaders. Semi-structured Leadership Interviews (LI) were used to gather data from former top leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches. The LQ and LI instruments revealed seven major findings.

1. **New Leadership Preparation.** Post-founder sustainability depends on successfully preparing new leaders to lead the organization. In other words, successful leadership transitions flow from a healthy leadership pipeline. LQ question 4 revealed that five incoming leaders had served in the organization at least two decades before landing the top job. Three incoming leaders had served the organization at least one decade. Only four had served less than ten years. In summary, eight of twelve had served ten years or more before serving in the top position. These eight leaders were part of the leadership

pipeline long before they were appointed or elected to the top position. The shortest length of service before top promotion was four years. All of the leaders who participated in the LQ and LI were products of the internal leadership pipeline. None were imports. In both, the LQ and LI mentoring was mentioned by current and former top leaders to explain growth while lack of mentoring was an explanation for decline. Leadership mentoring was not only mentioned as a need for incoming leaders, but also as something outgoing leaders felt they should have done more. LQ question 21 asked current leaders to evaluate the available leadership training, coaching, and mentoring for the top job. Almost half of the respondents checked the “inadequate” box. Nevertheless, over half of these same leaders indicated they were “satisfied with the level of coaching, mentoring, and input from my predecessor.” These new leaders say they have “inadequate” mentoring, coaching, and training, yet most are satisfied with the level of mentoring, coaching, and input from their predecessor. New leaders admit they need more mentoring, but not necessarily from their predecessor. LQ question 19 revealed that over seventy percent of respondents described the leadership preparation provided by their organization as “informal.” However, over seventy-five percent of those receiving “informal” leadership training for the top position described their informal training as “effective” or “highly effective.” To summarize, leadership development and leadership mentoring is essential for post-founder sustainability, but it does not have to be formal to be effective and it does not have to come from the outgoing leader.

2. **Organizational Preparation.** Post-founder sustainability depends on successfully preparing the organization to be led by new leaders. Along with preparing next-generation leaders to lead the organization, the organization must also be prepared to be led by next-generation leaders. Three issues rose to the top in regard to preparing the organization to be led by new leaders: politics, money, and writing. Politics is addressed in point four and money is addressed in point five. This point will address the importance of getting directions and decisions in writing. As important as writing is, not all succession plans are written. As mentioned above, several LQ participants felt their leadership transition was successful even though it was unwritten. On the other hand, sometimes having everything in writing can cause more problems than it solves. For example, one former denomination leader (I-7) said he retired at the end of his term rather than get involved a “political” battle for another term. He felt that he could win another term, but the relational cost was too high. He retired to keep unity, and graciously supported the new leader and the written process that called for a democratic election. A follow up question asked how the written succession plan could be improved. He explained that the succession plan improvements would require major organizational and governance changes in the denomination. When the denomination was new and small, the written process for replacing the founder and successive leaders worked. But in time, the denomination outgrew that “wineskin,” and organizational changes were needed but not installed. This retired leader was not suggesting that written plans are bad, but

that even well-written plans need to be updated and rewritten as an organization grows and matures. Speaking about succession planning and leadership transition, a retired megachurch leader (I-6) said, “the more in writing, the better.” The first items on his list of what needs to be in writing included several money matters, especially separation pay or ongoing support for the outgoing leader. He explained that when financial commitments to the outgoing leader are not written, this is “usually when problems happen.” While not all succession plans are written and it is common for unwritten plans to succeed, no one who participated in the LI or LQ recommended having an unwritten plan. Some experienced difficult leadership transitions with written plans, but no one thought having an unwritten plan would solve the problem; instead, they suggested periodic updates and upgrades to the written plan. Just as written succession plans need to be amended and updated as an organization grows and matures, other parts of the organization might also need to be adjusted in order for post-founder sustainability to become reality.

3. **Founder Preparation.** Post-founder sustainability depends on successfully preparing founders and outgoing leaders for the next phase of life and ministry. The LI confirmed what was abundantly clear in the literature review, that for former founders and outgoing leaders, emotional stress caused by leadership transitions are common (Conner ch. 4; Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 7; Russell 34). An unexpected emotion that was expressed by several outgoing leaders was regret. Two former leaders (I-5, I-6) regretted not

providing enough mentoring for their replacement. Another (I-3) regretted his pride and wished he had shown more humility in the process. One retired leader (I-6) admitted that he was still experiencing “emotional stress five months after” his transition. His emotional struggles had to do with missing the parts of the job he loved to do. One former mission (I-1) leader expressed anger and bitterness about perceived injustices in the way the transition happened. From his perspective, decisions were being made that were destroying his work. In the same way leadership development is offered to the incoming leader leading up to the leadership transition and coaching and mentoring is offered after the transition, the same should be offered to the outgoing leader. Unfortunately, mentoring, coaching, and preparation is rarely offered to the retiring founder/leader.

4. **Heart Preparation.** Post-founder sustainability depends on outgoing and incoming leaders intentionally preparing their own hearts for new roles. LI question 10 asked, “Is there anything you would like to share that we haven’t covered yet?” Several of the answers were about heart, character, or attitude. These answers are difficult to translate into best practices but are nevertheless important for healthy leadership transitions. A former megachurch pastor (I-5) and a former mission leader (I-3) both said it is important to acknowledge that the church or ministry “is not mine.” If we assume it is ours, then even when we no longer occupy the top position, we will still feel the right to influence decisions. As mentioned above, a retired mission leader (I-3) mentioned a heart issue when he confessed his lack of humility during the leadership

transition. That is a heart issue. A former megachurch pastor (I-4) mentioned another heart issue: trust. He talked about the importance of trusting God and people. He also humbly acknowledged his insecurities. “The outgoing leader has to work on his own insecurities and where he gets his affirmation.” One retired megachurch pastor (I-6) made an important differentiation between the transition and post-transition. “The actual transition could not have been better. But post-transition is harder than transition because it is not theological or strategic, but emotional.” He then talked about the importance of outgoing founders and leaders having the patience to process their emotions with God and with trusted friends. Several leaders mentioned “the grace of God” as an explanation for organizational health and growth. While trust, security, grace, and other heart issues might be difficult to translate into best practices and next steps, heart attitudes are nevertheless absolutely indispensable for leadership transition success and post-founder sustainability.

5. **Financial Preparation.** Post-founder sustainability depends on wisdom, integrity, and generosity in money matters. Financial mismanagement, massive debt, over-spending, lack of transparency, lack of clarity, and other money problems were mentioned multiple times by current and former leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches. When asked LQ question 15, “Did your predecessor make the necessary tough decisions? (e.g. firing the wrong people, dealing with bad attitudes, stopping unproductive problems, cutting budgets where necessary, etc.)” before passing the baton, three of the four current leaders who answered “no” indicated their

predecessor's failure to make tough organizational decisions related to money. In response to LI question 10, "Is there anything you would like to share that we haven't covered yet?" two former leaders (I-6, I-1) mentioned the importance of clarity in the context of ongoing ministry financial support or retirement packages for founders and long-tenured outgoing leaders. They both explained that a lack of financial clarity can lead to conflict between the new leader and the former leader. It is the responsibility of the outgoing founder or top leader to make the necessary tough decisions, especially the tough financial decisions in order to help the organization and the successor succeed.

- 6. Spouse Preparation.** Post-founder sustainability depends on getting the spouse of founders and outgoing top leaders involved in the succession planning and leadership transition process. Leadership coach and church consultant Jim Ozier and Jim Griffith admonished everyone involved in leadership transition to, "Please include the spouse in all matters of discernment and decision-making. Ignoring this diminishes the special role they have played" (ch. 15). Other authors—Conner, Russell, Vanderbloemen and Bird, and Crabtree and Weese—writing about succession planning and leadership transition also mentioned the importance of including the spouse in the process. No one who participated in the LQ or the LI ever mentioned the spouse of the new leader or the outgoing leader. This was surprising in its absence, especially since it was so prevalent in the literature review. LI questions 8, 9, and 10 could have easily been prompts for the former leaders

to mention their spouses. Question 8 asked, “How could the succession plan have been improved?” Question 9 asked, “How could the leadership transition have been improved?” Question 10 asked, “Is there anything you would like to share that we haven’t covered yet?” Yet, no one mentioned their spouse. Perhaps a specific question or follow-up question about spouses would have forced the participants to address the role of spouses.

7. **Timing.** Post-founder sustainability is not dependent on the leadership transition following the timetable specified by the succession plan. One outgoing megachurch leader (I-5) said that while his replacement reduced the written timetable in half, the church continues to grow and his relationship with the current pastor continues to be healthy. Looking back, the former leader regrets not being able to provide more mentoring, but that decision was not his to make. Another leadership transition had to be shortened because of an unexpected physical illness. This transition also turned out better than could have been expected. One mission founder (I-3) had to drastically speed up his unwritten unofficial succession plan because of a calling to another nation. While a delay might have improved the leadership transition, according to the outgoing founder, the mission organization continues on its mission, and the leader who replaced the founder continues to lead well. Several current and former leaders expressed what the literature review revealed: it is never too early to start working on the succession plan, but it can be too late.

This chapter set out to address the data that was collected via two instruments, the Leadership Questionnaire (LQ) and the Leadership Interview (LI). The seven major findings from the LQ and LI data—leadership preparation, organizational preparation, founder preparation, heart preparation, financial preparation, spouse preparation, and timing—were, not surprisingly, confirmations of what the literature revealed. There was one exception: the important role of the outgoing leader’s spouse in leadership transition, which was clearly addressed in the literature but completely unmentioned in the LQ and LI.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter begins by addressing seven major findings that contribute to post-founder sustainability. The next section addresses the ministry implications and possible applications of the findings. Limitations of the study are presented, then four unexpected observations are explained. The chapter ends with three recommendations and postscript reflections on this journey. All of this information is presented in the context of the problem and purpose statement, which was to discover why some denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches achieve post-founder-generation sustainability while others do not and to determine next steps for succession planning and leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries.

Major Findings

As referenced previously, research findings were organized into several major groups: Leadership Preparation, Organizational Preparation, Founder Preparation, Heart Preparation, Financial Preparation, Spouse Preparation, and Timing.

Leadership Preparation

I begin with a personal observation. Long before I did a review of scholarly literature, leadership questionnaires, or leadership interviews, I instinctively knew that post-founder sustainability would depend, at least in part, on successfully preparing new leaders to lead the organizations that I currently lead. The local church, mission organization, and extension ministries I have led for three decades, have all had a strong emphasis on leadership development and multi-generational leadership empowerment. In

fact, outside observers often comment on the quality and quantity of next-generation leaders in Every Nation Churches & Ministries, Every Nation Campus, and Victory Church Manila. Pastors and leaders often inquire about our leadership development best practices and materials. While the literature review, the questionnaires, and the interviews certainly upgraded my understanding of leadership development, the concepts were not new or foreign to me or the organizations I lead. As leadership development has been a primary focus in our organizations for many years, many parts of our leadership strategy were confirmed by the literature, questionnaires, and interviews. As a result of the study, I recognized a gap in our leadership development and our succession planning process that will be covered in point 6 below.

The literature review confirmed my thinking. It was difficult to find any literature that did not strongly support the importance of leadership development for post-founder sustainability. Quist, Goldsmith, Vanderbloeme and Bird, Leach, Crabtree and Weese, and Danielson addressed leadership development specifically in the context of succession planning and leadership transition. In *The Elephant in the Boardroom*, Crabtree and Weese stressed the importance of developing leaders in a ministry context. As important as succession planning is, she believes it is only “the second most important need” in a church. She is emphatic that “well-trained and committed pastoral and lay leadership” is number one. Without well-trained and committed leadership, the succession plan simply will not succeed (Crabtree and Weese Introduction). Business professor and leadership advisor Noel M. Tichy echoed Weese’s emphasis on leadership development in a non-ministry context. “Building a pipeline to develop the abilities of future generations of senior management” is not optional, rather it is “critical to long-term corporate survival.”

Tichy writes that the outgoing leader has “flunked an essential leadership test” when there is not “at least one strong internal candidate for succession.” In Tichy’s opinion, no matter what else has been accomplished, a lack of potential top leaders is a “clear sign of leadership failure” (151-152). Vanderbloemen and Bird apply Tichy’s leadership pipeline emphasis to ministry organizations. They recommend that senior ministry leaders intentionally invest a significant amount of time in “developing the strength of their bench to create a potential leadership pipeline for every major leadership position” in the organization (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 9). Megachurch pastor, turned church consultant, Mark Conner writes, “There is no success without a successor and Christianity is always one generation away from extinction. These two sobering facts highlight the urgent need for successful leadership transition” (ch. 1). Ram Charan’s “leadership pipeline” concept gives a solution to Conner’s warning. Charan offers what he calls his “alternate definition” for succession planning: “Succession planning is perpetuating the enterprise by filling the pipeline with high-performing people” (Charan et al. 207). In summary, the literature from the business, non-profit, church, and mission writers all agree that developing new leaders is essential for long-term organizational sustainability.

Biblical examples of the importance of leadership preparation as an essential part of the leadership transition process are recorded in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah. Some of these leadership development and transition stories ended in disaster while others were successful. In the New Testament, all four gospels and Acts include multiple leadership development and transition stories. Most of Paul’s epistles address leadership

development and often address leadership succession. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus address succession planning and leadership transition by outlining the character quality of future church leaders. The Bible makes it clear that multigenerational leadership development, succession, and transition is not just a secular corporate idea; rather, the concepts are thoroughly spiritual and part of the biblical narrative beginning with Genesis and ending with Paul's epistles and John's Revelation.

Organizational Preparation

While I instinctively knew that post-founder sustainability would depend, at least in part, on successfully preparing new leaders to lead the organization, it had not dawned on me that the organization would need to be prepared in order for new leaders to lead it. As I read the pertinent literature and realized organizational changes would be necessary, especially for the leaders who replace the founders and the founder-generation, I had no idea what those changes might be and how they might be accomplished. Fortunately, the leaders who participated in the LQ and LI collectively mentioned several essential areas of organizational preparation, including finances, written documentation, and eliminating organizational politics as much as possible.

While all of the literature seemed to emphasize the necessity of preparing new leaders to lead the organization, not all the writers addressed the importance of preparing the organization to be led by new leaders. In *To Change the World*, James Hunter makes the case that as important as individuals are to the mission to change the world for the glory of God, individuals are nevertheless inadequate. The organizations and institutions that individuals develop are essential to the mission. "The passion to engage the world, to shape it and finally to change it for the better" requires "individual and corporate, public

and private” engagement (4). In the leadership classic, *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders wrote, “The true test of a person’s leadership is the health of the organization when the organizer is gone” (143). Once their founders are no longer leading, some churches and ministries grow stronger and larger, others grow smaller and weaker. To ensure that the organization continues to grow in strength and health, founders and senior leaders must prepare future leaders to lead the organization and prepare the organization to be led by a new generation of leaders (Sanders 143). As highlighted in a previous section, Harvard professor Michael Watkins writes, “transition represents a time of acute vulnerability for both the new leader and the organization” (1). This season of organizational vulnerability demands wise succession planning. Quist insists that because of the organizational magnitude of leadership transition and because “leadership succession draws the focus away from leadership and onto the values,” the whole organization must take responsibility to steward the values (57). Ideally, the new leaders who replace founders will be “Level 5” leaders who will be following “Level 5” leaders who not only led well, but also prepared the next leaders and the organization for the transition. Collins and Porras describe “Level 5” leaders as people who “want to see the company even more successful in the next generation, comfortable with the idea that most people won’t even know that the roots of that success trace back to their efforts” (26). In other words, Level 5 leaders prepare the organization, not only to survive, but also to achieve greater success with each subsequent generation. Authors and church consultants Don Cousins and Bruce Bugbee argue that churches and ministries need spiritual leaders who are also “organization builders.” There are many valid reasons for succession planning and leadership transition, but according to Bob Russell, “the most

important reason for transitioning is for the good of the organization” (45).

Unfortunately, while they might be godly and effective spiritual leaders, many pastors and ministry leaders do not know how to build an organization and do not necessarily know what is good for the organization. According to Cousins and Bugbee, preparing an organization for long-term health and growth requires the leader to build staff, formulate strategies, design structure, and create systems (28). Aubrey Malphurs adds that good preparation and “advanced strategic planning” can help a church or ministry clarify and codify core values, vision, mission, direction, and even the discipleship process (99). The above-referenced items on Cousin and Malphur’s lists can be summarized in three broad categories representing essential organizational upgrades that are needed for new leader success: flexible structures, simple systems, and healthy culture.

The Old Testament and the New Testament give multiple examples of organizational change in the context of leadership transition. The vision to build a house for the Lord was in King David’s heart, but at some point, he realized that it was for the next generation to accomplish. The vision was too big to be accomplished in one generation. David accepted that God’s vision was multi-generational. He therefore invested time and resources into the development of the next generation rather than attempting to complete the vision in his lifetime. David not only prepared Solomon to lead, he also prepared the organization to be led by Solomon by making extensive building plans, setting aside financial resources, and making personnel decisions that would benefit his successor (1 Kings 8; 1 Chron. 22). In the New Testament, Jesus addressed the necessity of organizational and structural change: “No one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed,

and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins” (Mark 2:22). A structural or organizational change (new wineskins) was necessary to contain the new wine. Likewise, new organizational wineskins are often necessary in order for a new generation of leaders to lead well. The Book of Acts paints a picture of massive organizational change from the day of Pentecost where the church was a sub-set of Judaism with worship centered around the Temple and synagogue, to the end of Acts where the church has embraced Gentiles and Gentile culture and worship is now centered in the homes of believers. The Bible has much to say about preparing new leaders to lead, and also about preparing the organization (the nation of Israel and the church) to be led by new leaders.

Founder Preparation

Prior to this study, I knew that post-founder sustainability would depend on intentionally preparing new leaders to lead the organization. I was not surprised when I discovered that the organization would also need to be prepared in order for next-generation leaders to effectively lead it. I was actually surprised to learn that the outgoing leaders, especially founders, would need to be prepared for life outside of the top seat in the organization. This idea had never entered my mind, but the literature—both in business and ministry contexts—clearly addressed the need to prepare outgoing leaders for their next phase of life. Several former leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches who participated in the LI addressed the need for outgoing leadership preparation. Emotional struggles and regrets in the way the transition happened were mentioned. Current leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches who participated in the LQ also addressed the issue of preparing the

outgoing leader for the next phase of life. Several mentioned the importance of mentoring provided by the outgoing leader.

Vanderbloemen and Bird point out that most modern pastors and ministry leaders have given little thought to retirement planning, with 27% saying they will never retire (Preface). This could explain the gap between the average age of senior leader retirement in the corporate world and the ministry world. For outgoing CEOs at S&P 500 companies, the average retirement age is fifty-eight (ch. 4). According to Vanderbloemen, the average retirement age of American megachurch senior pastors is sixty-five, seven years older than in the corporate world. A quick look at the “Succession Ages for Prominent Large Church Pastors” chart in Appendix 1 of *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* reveals that it is common for founders and long-tenured megachurch pastors to hold their positions well into their late seventies and often into their eighties (Appendix 1).

While there is much that churches and mission organizations can learn from non-religious organizations, there are nevertheless biblical and theological principles that impact the way leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches approach succession planning and leadership transition. The top four theological concepts that impact succession planning and leadership transition include a theology of calling, a theology of work, a theology of retirement, and a theology of death. When viewed from a uniquely Christian perspective, each of these four broad concepts produce a leadership motivation that tends to be quite different in a secular non-religious organization. For example, it is common to hear pastors, missionaries, and denominational leaders speak of obeying a divine calling rather than choosing a career path. While the idea of calling is

not completely foreign to the non-religious world, it is certainly more common in ministry contexts. Also, a biblically informed theology of death that includes an afterlife and a judgement day certainly impacts how one approaches leadership. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the lack of a solid theology of retirement can negatively impact leadership transitions. If a leader does not believe that retirement is biblical, then there is no need for a succession plan. In this case, leadership transition happens when the leader dies.

Heart Preparation

Founders have a difficult time letting go of a church or mission that they started and invested so much of their life into. I know this by personal observation and personal experience. In 1984, my wife and I started a church in Manila, Philippines. Six years later we turned that congregation over to another pastor as we started a new congregation in a different part of Manila. A few years later we transitioned that congregation to another pastor and started another new congregation. Every leadership transition was both joyful and painful. Leadership transitions are rarely easy, but the baton pass from the founder-generation to the second-generation is usually the most difficult. I wish I had known how important heart preparation was when I transitioned those congregations. If only I had read the literature many years ago, I could have been better prepared.

Vanderbloemen and Bird discovered that ministry successions from the founders and their generation to second-generation leaders are the most likely to have difficulties, and they often end up looking and feeling “much more like a divorce than a wedding.” Too often, transition difficulties are created because the founding leader was not properly emotionally prepared to let go. When a leader has a clear and compelling next career, it is

much easier for him or her to let go of the previous position. The opposite is true when a leader has not prepared emotionally for life away from the previous job (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 7; Goldsmith 38). While the main reason ministry leaders hold on too long is often money, for some, money takes a backseat to the leader's emotional identity being wrapped up in a top ministry position. Vanderbloemen and Bird addressed the need for emotional preparation: "To put it bluntly, too often pastors stay at a church not because they're thriving there, but because their identity is tied too much to their present role and they don't have anything else to put their passion into" (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 3). Former megachurch pastor Mark Conner says the problem is often that "a leader's sense of value, worth and significance is overly tied to their leadership position or ministry title" (ch. 4). Researchers Jari Toumala, Donald Yeh, and Katie Smith Milway also recognize that there is an emotional side of founder transition that makes it difficult for founders to let go. Included in their list of wrong reasons that founders stay too long is that the founder's "identity is with the organization or they don't think the organization can survive without them." Two powerful emotions—organizational identity and the fear that one's life work will not survive—are powerful emotions that push founders to resist transition (Toumala et al. 29). Most ministry leaders not only have their identity tied to their ministry, they also have the majority of their friends connected to their ministry. If leaving the ministry position is leaving behind identity and friends, then of course, it will be emotionally difficult. All of this points to the importance of heart preparation as one approaches leadership transition.

When Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus about qualifications for church leadership, his lists were heavy on internal character qualities with no mention of academic

credentials or practical ministry skills. For Paul, preparing leaders to lead seemed to be primarily about preparing the heart. Since God promises to resist the proud and give grace to the humble in James 4:6, character development, especially the character quality of humility, is vital for next-generation leaders to succeed at the highest level. If next-generation leaders are to lead the church or ministry to the next level of effectiveness after the founders are no longer leading, then an emphasis on heart preparation in the areas of humility and a servant attitude is essential.

Financial Preparation

I have seen too many pastors and ministry leaders who have not adequately made financial preparations and therefore hold on to ministry positions too long, to the detriment of the organization and the potential next generation leaders. Others do not hold on. They move on to a financially insecure future. Both situations can be avoided when we make financial preparation part of succession planning. Wise financial preparation will benefit the new leader, the outgoing leader, and the organization.

While most top corporate executives retire with plenty of money—moving financial concerns to the bottom of their “reasons-to-hold-on” list—it is the opposite for most ministry leaders (Goldsmith 17-30). This lack of adequate financial preparation causes many pastors and ministry leaders to hold on to their position and salary far too long. Concerning money, Vanderbloeman and Bird get right to the point, “The primary reason many pastors hang on to their job too long is a lack of finances for retirement.” Because of inadequate finances, many ministry leaders simply cannot afford to retire. “They have no idea how to fund life when their church paycheck ends, so they let that fear keep them from making a change” (Vanderbloemen and Bird ch. 2, ch. 7).

Vanderbloemen and Bird are not alone in identifying inadequate financial planning as a major reason many founders extend their leadership too long. An article shared in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* listed, “they have not planned for their retirement” as one of the main reasons nonprofit founders hold on too long, to the detriment of their organizations (Tuomala et al. 29).

A starting point for financial preparation is for a leader to adopt a reasonable theology of money at the beginning of the job rather than just before retirement. A biblical view of money includes hard work, disciplined saving, wise investing, as well as frugality, contentment, and generosity. These biblical principles, if applied early in a career, will make it much less likely that a leader must hold on to a position just for the salary.

Spouse Preparation

Post-founder sustainability is dependent on a successful leadership transition, which in some measure requires that the spouse of the outgoing leader is prepared for the transition. This has certainly proved true in the ministry leadership transitions I have experienced. Since our first leadership transition in 1984 until now, I observed that the more I involved and included my wife in the transition, the better the transition. This has included transitioning the senior leadership of a church or ministry from me to another leader six times in the past three decades. I was surprised to observe that, despite the literature generally highlighting the role of the spouse in the process, no one in the LQ or LI even mentioned their spouse. I did not realize this until after the completion of data gathering during the data analysis process. I wish I could go back and ask follow-up

questions to all the former leaders who participated in the LI, and I wish I could add a question about the role of spouses to the LQ.

The importance of including the spouse of the incoming leader, and especially the outgoing leader in the succession planning and leadership transition process, was so ubiquitous in the literature that it was hardly noticed. It was like the air we breathe, always there, but not calling attention to itself. It was not until I noticed the absence of any mention of the spouse in the LQ and LI answers that I realized that almost every writer mentioned the important role the spouse plays, especially the spouse of the outgoing leader. Here are a few of the many examples. Vanderbloemen and Bird described the outgoing pastor's spouse as a "key ingredient to successful succession" and a "hidden key to the success or failure of pastoral succession" (ch. 5). Retired megachurch pastor Bob Russell wrote that if he could do it all over again, one change he would have made was "to be more understanding of my wife's feelings about the approaching transition" (36-37). Concerning spouses, Robert Kaylor advises outgoing leaders to "listen to his or her concerns" (ch. 8). Jim Ozier believes the leadership transition process should "include the spouse in all matters of discernment and decision-making. Ignoring this diminishes the special role they have played in the church" (104). According to retired megachurch pastor Mark Conner, "the pastor's spouse is possibly the most neglected person in any congregation. It is a unique role, and adequate attention needs to be given to thinking it through to create realistic and clear expectations for all involved" (Closing Words).

If the outgoing and incoming leaders are both unmarried, then there are no biblical/theological implications or issues since there will be no spouse to include.

However, in the more likely case that one or both of the leaders involved in the transition are married, then the spouse must be included since they are “one flesh.” God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:27-28) was given to man and woman (to husband and wife), not just to one or the other. The assumption then was that they would work together as a team. The same assumption should apply to the couple transitioning out of leadership. They must exit into the next phase of life as a team. Paul exhorted husbands and wives to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3). Maintaining unity requires communication and inclusion in major decisions.

Timing

Post-founder sustainability is not dependent on the leadership transition following the timetable specified by the succession plan. I have observed ministry leadership transitions that went exactly according to the plan and others that were not even close to the plan. One former megachurch leader (I-5) indicated that the succession plan timetable was suddenly cut in half by his successor. One mission founder (I-3) reported that he had to speed up his unwritten succession plan because of a ministry opportunity in another nation. Despite not adhering to the original timetable, both of these ministries continue to thrive. Perhaps if they had not deviated from the original schedule, they would be even larger and stronger, but nevertheless, these transitions were successful.

In *The Elephant in the Boardroom*, Crabtree and Weese write about the timing of succession planning and leadership transition. “Because every pastor is a departing pastor, the day to begin thinking about a transition plan is the day the pastor arrives” (ch. 3). For Crabtree and Weese, the transition timer starts on the first day. Few leaders follow this suggested timetable. Many wait as long as possible to begin thinking about their

transition. Vanderbloemen and Bird begin their book *Next: Pastoral Succession that Works* with this sentence: “Every pastor is an interim pastor.” This fact is the reason for his book about succession planning and leadership transition. He explains that, “ultimately, all pastors are ‘interim’ because the day when a successor takes over will come for everyone in ministry (Preface). Because of this inevitable reality, Vanderbloemen and Bird believe that “succession planning can (and should) start with pastors early in their tenure at their church” (Preface). While Crabtree and Weese, Vanderbloemen, and Bird encourage succession planning to be discussed sooner than later, succession can be successful even if that wisdom is rejected and the process is delayed or if the timetable is adjusted midstream.

According to Crabtree and Weese, “Jesus began managing His exit transition on the day, and in the way in which, He called His disciples. In Mark 3:14 (NIV), the text says that Jesus appointed twelve.... From the beginning, Jesus was creating capacity in the lives of those He called so that they could replicate His work” (ch. 1). This idea of “creating capacity” for the next generation of leaders was not unique to Jesus. Moses created capacity and cleared space for Joshua’s leadership. David created capacity and provided funds for Solomon’s leadership. Paul created capacity and gave clear instruction for Timothy’s leadership. Because all leadership positions are temporary, the biblical pattern is for one leader to prepare the next leader.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover why some denominations, mission organizations, campus ministries, and megachurches achieve post-founder-generation sustainability while others do not and to determine next steps for succession planning and

leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries. The purpose was accomplished. The study revealed many reasons why some denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches survive post-founder succession and others do not, but all those reasons are directly connected to leadership development, leadership clarity, leadership transition, and leadership culture. Post-founder success or failure is all about leaders and leadership. This research has already impacted the practice of ministry in Every Nation by determining next steps, by catalyzing the development of senior leadership, and by identifying best practices for succession planning and leadership transition that will, hopefully, be useful not only in Every Nation global, but also in Every Nation-affiliated local churches and campus ministries in over eighty nations.

Next steps for Every Nation include creating well-written succession plans for Every Nation and Every Nation-affiliated local churches, upgrading the Every Nation leadership pipeline by creating Every Nation Seminary, and reorganizing the Every Nation International Apostolic Team (IAT) and global regional structure. The reorganization of the Every Nation IAT and global regional structure could not wait until the completion of this dissertation. These Every Nation global structures have been evolving as this research was being analyzed. Two months before the completion of this project, a major reorganization was presented at an Every Nation regional leadership meeting in Macau, China. Every Nation global regions have expanded from six to eleven regions. Terms and term limits have been installed for all regional directors and regional team members. The office of the president and vice president have been redefined and clarified. The functions of the IAT have been divided among three new teams: Oversight Team (OT), Apostolic Council (AC), and Global Team (GT). Plans are underway to

decommission the IAT and replace it with the OT, AC, and GT. These changes and more are the results of this research.

Limitations of the Study

Accessibility. Every current and former leader of a denomination, mission organization, and megachurch who participated in the LQ and LI is either a personal friend, a ministry acquaintance, or a friend of a friend. Even the three who declined to participate in the LQ are either personal or ministry friends. Not everyone attempting this type of research will have the same access to this level of senior leaders and thus might find it difficult to recruit the right leaders for questionnaires and interviews. On the other hand, there were more denomination, mission, and megachurch former leaders I would like to have interviewed, but I did not have the relationship or connections to get them involved. Three high level leaders I hoped would participate did not. One current denomination leader had a heart surgery at the exact time I needed him to participate in the LQ. Another simply never responded to my multiple invitations to participate. A third who declined is explained in the next point below. All three of these leaders could have given valuable input.

Anonymity. I originally intended to make LI names and organizations public but decided to promise anonymity and confidentiality for both the LQ and the LI participants. This decision to obfuscate the names and organizations led to a level of candid honest in the interviews that surprised me. I do not think I would have gotten this level of honesty, vulnerability, and self-criticism had I not assured them that no one would know who said what. Despite my promise of anonymity and confidentiality, one current denomination president declined to participate after reading the questions because he was

uncomfortable going on record saying anything that might be considered critical of his predecessor, even in a confidential setting. I respect his decision.

Gender. While I did not intentionally make this a male leadership study, all nine former leaders who participated in the LI were men and eleven of the twelve leaders who participated in the LQ were men. The lone female leader who participated is the current leader of a mission organization. I wonder if the results would have been different if I had intentionally included a better mix of male and female leaders and former leaders.

Ethnicity/Nationality. Because Every Nation Churches & Ministries is a global ministry in over eighty nations, this study had a global perspective. Also, since Every Nation is strongest in the United States, South Africa, and the Philippines, leaders and former leaders from those nations were included in the LQ and LI. Perhaps results would have been different if Nigerians had been interviewed rather than South Africans, Indonesians rather than Filipinos, and Peruvians rather than Americans.

Unexpected Observations

While this project confirmed many hunches I already had concerning the importance of succession planning, leadership development, and leadership transition, I did encounter four major unexpected observations.

The first was about written plans. I did not expect to hear about multiple leadership transitions going well despite the absence of a written succession plan. After reading so much literature about the necessity of a well written succession plan, I wrongly assumed that leadership transition would fail without a written succession plan.

The second was transparency. I did not expect the level of candid honesty that I heard from several leaders who participated in the LI. Had I been the former leader being

interviewed, I do not think I would have offered that level of detail and emotion for someone's dissertation. I am not sure they would have been as candid if not for the confidentiality agreement.

The third was about the lack of transparency. While some former leaders were extremely honest and blunt, others were not. I was disappointed in two former leaders who, despite the pledge of confidentiality, still seemed guarded in their answers. Perhaps this was because these former leaders were ministry acquaintances rather than my personal friends. Nevertheless, I still gleaned helpful information in those interviews even though at times it was obvious they held back, not wanting to tell me the full story.

The fourth was related to the spouses of the leaders. After reading the literature, which spoke much about the importance of including the spouse in the leadership transition, I did not expect the idea to be completely nonexistent in the LQ and LI. If I did the interviews over, I would ask follow-up questions about the role and involvement of the spouse.

Recommendations

One important recommendation for future consideration is a study to determine how best to include spouses of incoming and outgoing leaders in the succession planning and leadership transition process. It might also be helpful to approach the study from the perspective of the spouse of the retiring leader. It might also be helpful to consider the spouse, not only of the retiring top leader but also of the incoming leader.

Postscript

This journey actually started five years ago, when I was fifty-five years old. I was at a retreat with five close friends and ministry colleagues. After some time of prayer and reflection, we discussed how we wanted to finish well. That week, I realized that to finish well, I would have to replace myself in the global organization I helped start and currently lead. I knew I needed major upgrades in order to get Every Nation Churches & Ministries ready to be led by the next generation, and to get the next generation ready to lead Every Nation. I felt a sense of urgency about the task at hand, but I was unsure exactly what to do about it.

The purpose of this study was to discover why some denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches achieve post-founder-generation sustainability while others do not and to determine next steps for succession planning and leadership transition in Every Nation Churches & Ministries, specifically to discover next steps for post founder-generation leadership transition in the Every Nation International Apostolic Team and Every Nation's Regional Leadership Teams. The goal was to identify best practices for leadership transition and succession planning in organizations that have outlived their founders. In order to discover best practices for succession planning and leadership transition, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with former senior leaders and leadership questionnaires were created for new top leaders who replaced founders or long-tenured leaders.

The problem and purpose were obvious and important. Finding a solution was urgent. However, the research process was not so obvious to a person who has spent his entire professional life as a ministry practitioner, not a researcher or theorist. As the data

was collected via the LQ and LI, some best practices gradually revealed themselves and some next steps became clear.

One lesson learned from this research was the importance of listening to and learning from the successes and failures of other organizations. This seems like a self-evident lesson, but it is common for leaders of denominations, mission organizations, and megachurches to become so busy leading their own organizations that they do not make time to intentionally learn from other organizations. Hopefully Every Nation will continue to learn from other organizations in the coming years.

Because of the nature of the ministry I get to lead, what I learned during this journey will have a positive and lasting impact on hundreds of thousands of people in over eighty nations. For that I am grateful.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Templates

1. Survey Consent Form

Dear participant,

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary, and I am conducting research on best practices for transitioning a ministry's leadership from the founding generation to non-founding-generation leaders. I am seeking to figure out how to build an organization that will outlive its founders. I believe this is a crucial and important topic that could help ministry leaders in multiple contexts.

You have been invited to participate in this research project because you are a leader who has transitioned into a leadership role formerly held by a founder-generation leader. Your input in this study will be invaluable.

Since I recognize that discussing a leadership transition can be sensitive and confidential, I want to assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions on the survey, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

The process involves filling out a questionnaire that will take approximately thirty minutes. Your responses will be kept entirely confidential and your name and email will not be shared with others. The survey questions will be about your experience taking over an organization from a founding-generation leader.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Steve Murrell at steve.murrell@everynation.org. This research has been reviewed according to Asbury Theological Seminary IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

If you are willing to assist me in this study, please sign and date this letter below to indicate your voluntary participation.

I volunteer to participate in the study described above and so indicate by my signature below.

Your signature: _____

Please print name: _____ Date: _____

2. Interview Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary, and I am conducting research on best practices for transitioning a ministry's leadership from the founding generation to non-founding-generation leaders. I am seeking to figure out how to build an organization that will outlive its founders. I believe this is a crucial and important topic that could help ministry leaders in multiple contexts.

You have been invited to participate in this research project because you are a founder-generation leader who has transitioned leadership over to a non-founder generation leader.

The process involves an approximately forty-five-minute interview with me that will be conducted in-person or over the phone. Your responses will be kept entirely confidential and your name and email will not be shared with others. My interview questions will be about your experience transitioning leadership to a non-founding-generation leader.

You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Steve Murrell at steve.murrell@everynation.org. This research has been reviewed according to Asbury Theological Seminary IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

If you are willing to assist me in this study, please sign and date this letter below to indicate your voluntary participation.

I volunteer to participate in the study described above and so indicate by my signature below.

Your signature: _____

Date: _____ Please print name: _____

Appendix B. Survey/Interview Schedule and questions

1. Leadership Questionnaire

1. What is the name of your organization?
2. What's the mission or purpose of your organization?
3. How old is the organization you are leading?
4. How long had you been in the organization before becoming a senior leader?
5. How old were you when you became a senior leader?
6. How long have you been serving in this position?
7. Which best describes the growth pattern of the organization in the final 2-3 years of your predecessor's leadership?
 - 1 – Rapid growth
 - 2 – Growth
 - 3 – Plateau
 - 4 – Decline
 - 5 – Rapid decline
8. In your opinion, what best explains the answer above?
9. How long have you been in the top leadership position of your organization?
10. Which best describes the growth pattern of the organization since you assumed the top leadership position?
 - 1 – Rapid growth
 - 2 – Growth
 - 3 – Plateau

4 – Decline

5 – Rapid decline

11. In your opinion, what best explains the answers above?

12. How would you describe the organizational structure you inherited?

13. How would you classify the organizational structure you inherited?

1 - Very functional

2 - Functional

3 - Dysfunctional

4 - Very dysfunctional

14. As the new leader, do you feel you have the authority and support to make the necessary changes in the structure?

1 – No

2 – Maybe

3 – Yes

15. Did your predecessor make the necessary tough decisions before passing the baton to you? (e.g., firing incompetent people, dealing with bad attitudes, stopping unproductive programs, cutting budgets where necessary, etc.)

1 – Yes

2 – No

16. If you answered “Yes,” please cite some examples.

17. If you answered “No,” why do you think so?

18. Which best describes the financial health of the organization the day you assumed leadership?

- 1 - Heavy debt
- 2 - Manageable debt
- 3 – Breakeven
- 4 - Cash reserves
- 5 – Major cash reserves

19. What best describes the training provided by the organization to prepare you for the role as the new leader of the organization?

- 1 - Formal
- 2 - Informal
- 3 – None

20. If training were provided, either formal or informal, how would you describe the training?

- 1 – Highly effective
- 2 – Effective
- 3 – Inadequate
- 4 – Highly inadequate
- 5 – Non-existent

21. How would you describe the ongoing mentoring, coaching, or training for your position?

- 1 – Highly effective
- 2 – Effective
- 3 – Inadequate
- 4 – Highly inadequate

5 – Non-existent

22. Which of these statements best describes your current relationship with your predecessor?

1 - I want no contact with my predecessor.

2 - I want less coaching, mentoring, and input from my predecessor.

3 - I am satisfied with the level of coaching, mentoring, and input from my predecessor.

4 - I want more coaching, mentoring, and input from my predecessor.

23. How long did your predecessor serve as the leader of the organization?

24. What was your predecessor's age when the role was given to you?

25. What best describes your predecessor's attitude toward the succession planning and leadership transition?

1 - Actively resisted

2 - Passively complied

3 - Faithfully supported

4 - Aggressively led

26. Does the former leader still exercise authority in the running of the organization?

27. Is your predecessor still employed by the organization?

28. If "Yes," in what capacity?

29. Whether official or unofficial, intended or unintended, my predecessor tends to:

1 – Help

2 - Hinder

30. In what ways has the former leader affected your leadership?

31. My predecessor vacated the top position:

1 – Too soon

2 – At the right time

3 – Not enough time

2. Leadership Interview

1. How long did you lead your organization?
2. How old were you when you started and stopped leading?
3. What are you currently doing (post-leadership position)?
4. Are you still involved in the organization? In what ways?
5. Are you satisfied with that level of involvement? Do you want more or less?
6. Was there an official succession plan? Did the actual leadership transition go according to the succession plan?
7. How could the succession plan have been improved?
8. How could the leadership transition have been improved?
9. Is there anything you would like to share that we haven't covered yet?

WORKS CITED

- Adams, Tom. *Founder Transitions: Creating Good Endings and New Beginnings: A Guide for Executive Directors and Boards*. Baltimore, Maryland: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005. Print.
- Addison, Steve. *Pioneering Movements: Leadership That Multiplies Disciples and Churches*, 2015. Kindle.
- Adizes, Ichak. *Managing Corporate Lifecycles*. Santa Barbara, California: The Adizes Institute Publishing, 2014. Kindle.
- Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* Cambridge England: Lutterworth Press, 1964. Kindle.
- Atkinson, David J. *The Message of Genesis 1-11: The Dawn of Creation*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990. Print.
- Botelho, Elena Lytkina, Kim Rosenkoetter Powell, Stephen Kincaid, and Dina Wang. "What Sets Successful CEOs Apart." *Harvard Business Review* 95.3 (May/June 2017): 70-77. Print.
- Breen, Mike. *Leading Kingdom Movements: The Everyman Notebook on How to Change the World*. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina: Sheriar Press, 2013. Print.
- Broocks, Rice. *Every Nation in our Generation*. Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 2002. Print.
- Broocks, Rice. *The Gift of the Evangelist*. 2010. Fuller Theological Seminary, D. Miss dissertation.

Brown, Duane. *Life Beyond the Launch: Case Studies in Post-Launch Vitality, Adaption, and Identity Formation of New Wesleyan Congregations*. 2009.

AsburyTheological Seminary, Ph.D. dissertation.

Bunton, Peter. *The Transference of Leadership in International Organizations from European/North American Founders to Leaders from the Global South*. 2015.

University of Manchester, Ph.D. dissertation.

Charan, Ram “The Secrets of Great CEO Selection.” *Harvard Business Review* 94.12 (Dec. 2016): 52-59. Print.

Charan, Ram, Stephen J. Drotter, and James L. Noel. *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

Clinton, J. Robert. *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012. Print.

---. *Titus: Apostolic Leadership*. Altadena, California: Barnabas Publishers, 2001. Print.

Collins, James C. *How the Mighty Fall: And Why Some Companies Never Give In*. New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2009. Print

---. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*. London: Random House Business, 2001. Print.

Collins, James C, and Jerry I. Porras. *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Vision Companies*. New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2009. Print. Bottom of Form

Conner, Mark. *Pass The Baton: Successful Leadership Transition*. Rowville, Victoria: Conner Ministries, 2006. Kindle.

- Copan, Victor. "Spiritual Formation and St. Paul as Spiritual Director." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 3.2 (Fall 2010): 140-154. Print.
- Cousins, Don, and Bruce Bugbee. *Experiencing Leadership Together Leader's Guide: A Step-by-Step Strategy for Small Groups and Ministry Teams*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: David C Cook, 2008. Print.
- Creswell, John et al. "Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Instrumentation." *The Counseling Psychologist* 35.2 (2007): 238-62. Print.
- Damazio, Frank. *The Making of Leader*. Portland, Oregon: City Bible Publishing, 1988. Print.
- Danielson, Richard. *Beating the Odds: Successfully Following a Long-Term Pastor*. 2001. Asbury Theological Seminary, D. Min Dissertation.
- Drury, Elizabeth Childs. "Leadership Transfer Awakens Dormant Dilemmas in a Multiethnic Church." *Great Commission Research Journal* 2.1 (2010): 96. Print.
- Dudgeon, Katie. "More than Good Ideas: The Significance of Planning in Scripture." *Great Commission Research Journal* 2.1 (2010): 104-105. Print.
- Edgar, Brian. "The Theology of Theological Education" *The Evangelical Review of Theology* 29.3 (July, 2005): 208-217. Print.
- English Standard Version*. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Bibles, 2007. Print.
- Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology: Second Edition*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1998. Print.
- Flanagan, John C. "The Critical Incident Technique." *Psychological Bulletin* 51.4 (July 1954): 327-358. Print.

Friedman, Edwin H. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. New York, New York: Church Publishing Inc., 2007. Kindle.

Getz, Gene A. *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody, 1984. Print.

Gibbs, Eddie. *LeadershipNext: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005. Print.

Goldsmith, Marshall. *Succession: Are You Ready?* Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Press, 2009. Print.

Greenleaf, R. *Power of Servant Leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1998. Print.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: InterVarsity Press, 1995. Print.

Guinness, Os. *The Call*. Nashville, Tennessee: W Publishing Group, 1998. Print.

Harrell, Eben. "Succession Planning: What the Research Says." *Harvard Business Review* 94.12 (Dec. 2016): 70-74. Print.

Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook: The 17 Skills Leaders Need to Stand Out. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2017. Print.

Hayford, Jack W. *Pastors of Promise: Pointing to Character and Hope As the Keys to Fruitful Shepherding*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1997. Print

Hobson, Steve. *Church-Based Leadership Training Factors Contributing to the Development of Spiritual Authority in Filipino Male Leaders*. 2001. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D. Min dissertation.

Hoffman, Reid, Chris Yeh, and Ben Casnocha. "Learn From People, Not Classes."

Harvard Business Review. Mar./Apr. 2019)

Hunter, James D. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print.

Kaylor, Robert. *Your Best Move: Effective Leadership Transition for the Local Church*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Seedbed Publishing, 2013. Kindle.

Keener, Craig S. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014. Web.

---. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1993. Print.

Kouzes, James, and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2002. Print.

Leach, Mark. "Table for Two: Can Founders & Successors Co-Exist So Everyone Wins?" *Management Assistance Group*, 2009, <https://changeelemental.org>. Accessed Jan. 2019.

Lewis, Robert, Wayne Cordeiro, and Warren Bird. *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2005. Print.

Long, James. "Peter Scazzero: Emotionally Healthy Leadership." *Outreach Magazine* (Sept./Oct. 2015): 76. Print.

Lui, Otto. *Development of Chinese Church Leaders*. Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2016. E-book. Accessed Jan. 2019.

- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Leading Leaders: Empowering Church Boards for Ministry Excellence, a New Paradigm for Board Leadership*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2005. Print.
- Moldoveanu, Mihnea, and Das Narayandas. "The Future of Leadership Development." *Harvard Business Review* 97.2 (Mar./Apr. 2019): 40-48. Print.
- Murrell, Steve. *WikiChurch*. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2011. Print.
- Murrell, Steve, and William Murrell. *The Multiplication Challenge: A Strategy to Solve Your Leadership Shortage*. Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 2016. Print.
- Newton, Angel D. *An Exploration of the Apostle Paul's Influential Power Behaviors Juxtaposed to Destructive Leadership Theory and Weberian Charismatic Attributes: A Sociorhetorical Interpretation of Philemon*. 2009. Regent University, dissertation.
- Nunes, Paul, and Tim Breene. "Jumping the S-Curve." *Harvard Business Review* 2011: 97. Print.
- Ozier, Jim, and Jim Griffith. *The Changeover Zone: Successful Pastoral Transition*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016. Kindle.
- Parsons, Mikeal C. *Acts*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008. Print.
- Palmer, Anita. "Training the Next Generation: How Mentoring and Ministry Partnerships are Reshaping Seminary Education." *Outreach Magazine* (Sept./Oct. 2015). Print.
- Patrick, Darren. *The Man, The Message, and the Mission*. 2010. Covenant Theological Seminary, D. Min dissertation.
- Peffer, Samuel N. *Identifying Innovative Work Behaviors: An Inquiry Using Critical Incident Technique*. 2013. Indiana State University, dissertation.

Peterson, Eugene H. *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1992. Kindle.

Petriglieri, Jennifer, and Gianpiero Petriglieri. "The Talent Curse." *Harvard Business Review* 95.3 (May/June 2017): 88-94. Print.

Plueddemann, James. *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2009. Print.

Quist, Allen H. "Leadership Succession from Matthew's Gospel: Passing the Baton of Leadership to the Next Generation." *Great Commission Research Journal* 1.1 (2009): 50-57. Web. Accessed Jan. 2019.

Rainer, Thom S., and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. Nashville: B & H Publication Group, 2006. Print.

Reiland, Dan. *Amplified Leadership*. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2011. Print.

Richey, Russell E. *Early American Methodism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. Print.

Robinson, Anthony B., and Robert W. Wall. *Called to Lead: Paul's Letters to Timothy for a New Day*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012. Print.

Russell, Bob. *Transition Plan*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Publish Green, 2010. Kindle.

Sanders, J. O. *Spiritual Leadership*. Manila: OMF, 1997. Print.

Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015. Kindle.

- Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*. St. Charles, Illinois: ChurchSmart Resources, 2012. Print.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf, 2011. Kindle.
- Shaw, Perry. *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning*. Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2014. Kindle.
- Stetzer, Ed. "Church Succession: How to Lead Our Churches into a Healthy Future." *Christianity Today* Christianity Today.com., (May 2018). Web. Accessed Jan. 2019.
- Stott, John. *Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling*. Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2014. Print.
- Tichy, Noel M, and Nancy Cardwell. *The Cycle of Leadership: How Great Leaders Teach Their Companies to Win*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. Print.
- Tuomala, Jari, Donald Yeh, and Katie Smith Milway. "Making Founders Successions Work." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 16.2 (Spring, 2018): 26-33. Print.
- Vanderbloemen, William, and Warren Bird. *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2014. Kindle.
- Van Gelder, Craig, ed. *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009. Print.
- Watkins, Michael. *The First 90 Days: Critical Strategies for New Leaders at all Levels*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2003. Print.

Weese, Carolyn, and J. R. Crabtree. *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Transitions*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2004. Kindle.

Wilson, Todd. "Rediscover Your Calling." *Outreach Magazine* (July/Aug. 2016): 75-80. Print.

Wright, Walter C. *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Service*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2009. Print.

Zook, Chris, and James Allen. *The Founder's Mentality: How to Overcome the Predictable Crises of Growth*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2016. Print.