



**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHURCH  
LEADERSHIP  
AND  
PASTOR PREPARATION**

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**Colloquium - Abney, V. I.**

# Problem Statement

Within the last two decades, several 21st century innovative approaches have affected the transition of future clergy leaders from seminary education to congregational practices (Granger, 2010).

- Many seminary graduates are not fully prepared for the practical ministry requirements of local congregation administration.
- There has been a decline in seminary institutions' student enrollment without practical ministry requirements for congregational engagement, church administration, community impact, church management programs, or curriculums (Granger).
- Innovative approaches have negatively affected and challenged church congregations, pastors, post-seminary students, and church staff.
- There is a perception that these negative impacts and challenges are attributed to a lack of clergy leadership characteristics or leadership training and development(Granger).
- The increased number of nondenominational churches and church consolidations, combined with poor financial management decisions, have left many clergy leaders unprepared for the leadership, management, and financial issues facing them, now and into the future (McKinley, Ellis, & Raynor, 2015).

# Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine America's 100 Fastest Growing Churches' pastors who took part in the Outreach Magazine/Lifeway research study between 2014 and 2015 and measure their effectiveness in pastoral leadership, academics, and other demographic areas ("America's 100", 2014;2015).

- The research study sought to determine if the church pastors' leadership characteristics contributed to the church growth within their 21st century churches.
- The study examined the differences between the Outreach Magazine/Lifeway research study and BCWI pastoral groups.
- Pearce, Livingston, & Blount (2016, p. 9) stated "a decade or so ago, traditional management training did not figure prominently on the faith community's radar."

# Literature Review

- To prepare pastors for the 21st century church, the pastors must embrace professional leadership training and development.
- Pearce et al. (2016, p. 2) declared “Although there are many differences, the organizational challenges that a CEO of a Fortune 250 corporation has to face and the challenges that a pastor of a large congregation has to deal with are in some ways quite similar.”
- Educating the pastor on the importance of business administration will assist in the further development of a more impactful ministry.
- Perkins (1995, p. 1) stated, “It is clear that administrators have a significant role in the church. But how has that role developed and what shape will it take in preparing the church for the 21st century?”

# Research Questions

1. What academic and professional leadership training are today's 21st century pastors receiving?
2. How does the academic and professional leadership training received by pastor respondents to the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) 360 survey compare to the training received by pastor participants in the Outreach Magazine and Lifeway research study?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of pastors who took part in the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) respondents' study compared to the leadership characteristics present in those who took part in the Outreach Magazine and Lifeway research study?

# Study Significance

A large number of small churches do not have permanent pastors residing over their ministries or lack qualified pastors equipped or prepared to address the 21st-century concerns in their local churches.

- The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership characteristics and competencies of pastors and their churches in order to:
  - Identify impactful academic and professional leadership training resources.
  - Identify the need to enhance existing business management processes of pastors.
  - Assist in the development of seminary graduate students and pastoral recruitment efforts for local church ministries.

# Research Design

- The researcher selected a quantitative approach for this research study to examine the quantity of one or more variables of interest (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).
- The researcher used quantitative data from the BCWI 360 instrument. The data analysis process was conducted using IBM's SPSS software application. The researcher conducted different statistical procedures for each research question.
- The BCWI 360 Review Assessment is a 44-question instrument that includes 28 demographic and academic selection fields and 3 BCWI questionnaire categories—character, competence, and chemistry—using 12 five-point Likert scale questions.
- In addition to the 40 questions provided in the original BCWI questionnaire, the researcher designed four personal development, five professional training and 10 academic questions.

# Research Participants

- The sample size in this study consisted of six pastoral groups:
  - Pastors who participated in the 2014-2015 Outreach Magazine and Lifeway research study (“America’s 100”, 2014; 2015),
  - Global Leadership Summit pastors,
  - Pastors who were subscribed to The Church Network,
  - Church of the Nazarene K-Church Project pastors,
  - BCWI respondent client pastors, and
  - Pastors mentored under the leadership of a senior pastor located in the Midwest.
- From the six pastoral groups, 11% of the 1,000 senior pastors surveyed (or 106 of the senior pastors) participated in the research study.



# Instrument Utilized

- The BCWI 360 survey instrument demographic section contained the following selection fields:
  - Age range and gender
  - Postgraduate academic and professional training attended
  - Academic levels completed
  - The founding pastor and tenure at the church
  - The year the pastor arrived at their current church
  - Name(s) of senior pastor's seminary institution or college/university
  - Presence of a church administrator on the church staff
  - Annual Sunday worship service attendance
- The BCWI 360 survey instrument contained three quantitative leadership categories:
  - Character: Spiritual Vitality, Integrity, Trustworthiness
  - Competence: Spiritual and Pastoral Leadership, Visionary Leadership, Drive for Results, Strategic Thinking, Creativity and Innovation, People Focus, Resourcefulness
  - Chemistry: Building Effective Teams, Executive Communication, Performance Coaching, Senior Pastor Relationship
- The last section of the BCWI 360 survey instrument contained five academic and professional leadership training customized categorical questions.

# Research Findings RQ1

## **1. What academic and professional leadership training are today's 21st century pastors receiving?**

- The BCWI 360 instrument produced the following academic completion variables: education, higher learning, professional leadership development attendance, assessment surveys, and personal development.
- The SPSS analysis included academic-level frequencies, means, and standard deviations for continuous variables.

# Research Findings RQ1

## Academic and Professional Development Assessment

	M	SD
<b>Education:</b>		
Traditional Academic Completion Levels	2.90	0.84
Traditional Academic, Seminary, Combined Completion Levels	3.15	1.07
<b>Professional Development Conference Participants:</b>		
Attended Professional Leadership Courses within past six months	1.30	0.46
Attended Global Leadership Summit (GLS) in 2016	1.46	0.50
Attended Global Leadership Summit (GLS) in 2015	1.47	0.50
Attended Global Leadership Summit (GLS) in 2014	1.49	0.50
<b>Leadership and Self-Assessment Surveys:</b>		
<i>Outreach Magazine</i> Lifeway Research 2014-2015	1.67	0.47
Best Christian Workplaces Institute (BCWI) 360 Review	1.88	0.32
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)	1.98	0.14
<b>Church Administration:</b>		
Certified Church Administrator (CCA) on Church Staff	1.87	0.34

# Research Findings RQ2

## **2. How does the academic and professional leadership training received by pastor respondents to the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) 360 survey compare to the training received by pastor participants in the Outreach Magazine and Lifeway Research study?**

- The BCWI 360 instrument generated data for two respondent groups:
  - BCWI 360 respondent pastors who were not participants in the Outreach Magazine/Lifeway study, and
  - BCWI 360 respondent pastors who were participants in the Outreach Magazine/Lifeway study.
  
- The BCWI 360 instrument generated continuous and categorical variables, the latter of which included the highest level of education.

# Research Findings RQ2

## Outreach Magazine/Lifeway Research Academic Comparisons Highest Level of Academic Completion

	OMLR	NOMLR	Totals
High School	0	0	0
College Pastors	2	17	19
Graduate Pastors	24	27	51
Doctoral Pastors	5	18	23
Total Pastors	31	62	93

Note. Outreach Magazine/Lifeway Research (OMLR) Participants, Non-Outreach Magazine/Lifeway Research (NOMLR) Participants.

# Research Findings RQ3

**3. What are the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of pastors who took part in the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) respondents' study compared to the leadership characteristics present in those who took part in the *Outreach Magazine* and Lifeway Research study?**

- The BCWI 360 instrument produced 17 five-point Likert scale ordinal variables. These 17 ordinal variables were imported into a Microsoft Excel worksheet to calculate each respondent's ordinal variable results as three accumulative scores:
  - character score,
  - competency score, and
  - chemistry
  
- This first process allowed the combination of these scores into three categories, reducing the number of statistical *t*-tests required from 17 to four (character score, competency, chemistry, and professional development) to find significant differences between the groups, given the limited number of respondents.

# Research Findings RQ3

Leadership Comparisons:		M	SD	<i>p</i>
Character	1	68.13	14.73	.440
	2	64.85	21.04	.386
Competence	1	142.13	56.41	.963
	2	141.55	56.65	.963
Chemistry	1	93.00	43.34	.848
	2	91.10	46.03	.846
Professional Development	1	2.74	1.70	.376
	2	2.40	1.75	.372

Note. Outreach Magazine/Lifeway Research Study Participants 1. Outreach Magazine/Lifeway Research Study Non-Participants 2.

# Conclusions

- The findings of this study did not support any significant differences between the pastors.
- All pastors in both research groups demonstrated a strong correlation between church success and receiving continuous higher education and professional training.
- There needs to be more research studies conducted by ministry leaders to explore the inability of senior pastors to improve or enhance their effectiveness as ministry leaders is connected to these senior pastors' leadership competencies.



# Implications

The research study data addressed the rapid decline in churches in three concentrated areas:

- **Clergy mentoring.** Interns observation of backstage operations of the church prior to serving were limited or nonexistent.
- **Ministry internship.** Seminaries and academic institutions that offer theological and divinity degree programs should also offer ministerial leadership courses to remain relevant.
- **Leadership development programs.** Provides a leadership development resource to assist church conferences, universities, and seminaries in the development of leadership readiness curricula and conference workshops for future ministers and pastors.

# Limitations

The researcher identified several limitations within the study:

- ❑ The sample size consisted of 1,000 pastors, but the participant size was 11%, or 106 senior pastors, which notes the power limitation between multiple participants, groups, or categories.
- ❑ The distribution of the research assessment during the fourth quarter of 2016 coincided with a demanding timeframe for most senior pastors.
- ❑ The discrepancy between the anticipated time to complete the assessment based on the description in the informed consent document.
- ❑ Additional factors were ethnicity and gender. Fewer than 10% or 9 of the pastors were African-American or Hispanic, and 3% or 3 of the senior pastors who participated in the study were women.

# Recommendations

The research has led to several suggestions for future studies.

- **Expand the population size.** The study reached out to 1,000 pastors, from which about 10% agreed to participate, yielding a sample size of 106 senior pastors.
- **Expand the distribution timeframe of the research assessment instrument.** The research study distributed the assessment instrument during the fourth quarter of 2016.
- **Shorten the time commitment for participants to complete the study.** The research study design took more than 30 minutes for pastors to complete.
- **Target a more diverse sample.** This research study produced minimal results concerning Blacks, Hispanics, and women.

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