

ABSTRACT

FRUITFULNESS AND ORDINATION:

MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ORDINATION

by

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One of the most critical issues concerning the church growing and continuing with a healthy system relies on its leadership. In this research, the reader will find a sample of how a minor change can put the church back on its path. Quoting Dan Heath, “Tiny shifts in large systems can have powerful effects” (204). The reader will find a proposal from the missionary field where the church chooses to put experience side by side with education requirements. This Wesleyan way of appointing preachers was adopted by the Sixth Conference of the Methodist Church in Brazil.

Readers will discover a clarification of the process from practice to theory that has helped the church in the missionary advancement area. Also, they will find a proposal of how this renewing process can be improved by the implementation of a coaching program for the candidates in their probationary period. Those appointed for the position of Designated Missionaries have totaled 186 since its start in 2001. Some of them, for a number of reasons, are no longer in the conference appointment framework. Nevertheless, added to the conference’s leaders, this group was the heart of the present research.

Research findings can be useful for future church planters and renewal of existing ones as well. Discipleship and coaching, elements from the historic Wesleyan Movement, can bring new inspiration and renewal.

**FRUITFULNESS AND ORDINATION:
MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ORDINATION**

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CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 1 provides the framework for discerning how to better equip Designated Missionaries in the Brazilian Methodist Church in order to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration. I provided a rationale for the project evolving from personal experience supported by research. Included in the overview of the research project are the research design, purpose statement, research questions, participants, and how results were collected and analyzed. To add support for this type of project, themes of the literature review and contextual factors are identified. Further discussion of the anticipated project results establishes the significance for and impact on the practice of ministry.

Personal Introduction

In December 1998, I stood in line to receive my Bachelor's degree in Theology at the Methodist university of Sao Paulo, in Brazil. While still in line, I was informed about my first appointment to Ivaiporã, state of Paraná, which was not the ordinary way of communicating appointments over there. By 1999, I was one of the ninety-two pastors appointed to serve through the Methodist Church. I was a full-time pastor, an eldership-certified candidate, and already a member of the bi-annual Conference. This status of membership while a certified candidate would be changed in the General Conference of 2011, as detailed in Chapter 3. Thus, graduation, along with the appointment to the probation, put the candidates as members of the council where they would be voted to the

eldership. The Book of Discipline regulates the regular timeline of the probationary process between two and five years.

The path toward pastoral ministry started with the recommendation of the local church, followed by five years in theological education, as well as internship positions and, finally, the appointment as an elder/pastor in probation. At that point, ministry fruitification was not the most critical issue along the process. The same happened to my graduation peers and many other pastors who started before me.

I enjoyed the journey and, most of the time, was not concerned by the fact I was under probation. The community considered me their pastor as I was ordained, the conference allowed me to participate with voice and vote, and no difference existed between my compensation and that of a full time elder; thus, understandably, I felt that ordination would be just a matter of time. Being called reverend or just pastor did not make any difference to me. Under the supervision of the Board of Ordained ministries, in which I voted by the way, I was elected an elder of the Methodist Church of Brazil in 2001, three years after my first full time appointment.

In the local church, I was eager for growth, and numbers were not an issue. In the first year (1999), the church grew around 25 percent, meanwhile, sometimes I got myself confused about the direction where I should take the community. At that point, I highlight my connection with a small group of pastors in my District jurisdiction. The District was the second most spread out geographically in the conference but, in spite of the distance, I endeavored to overcome the difficulties of attending all meetings, because I found there the benefits of mentorship. It was organic, and my DS had a sense of leading the group beyond his elementary responsibilities, and it worked very well for me. A noteworthy

fact is that in Brazilian Methodism, the district superintendents are also appointed as lead pastors in a local community.

Hence, the manner by which I started the traditional ministry journey, considered education as the primary step in the path, and the most important for ordination. I analyze this process in the following chapters. What becomes apparent in the Sixth Conference is a movement back to the roots of Methodism, where effectiveness alongside fruitfulness were non-negotiable elements in ministry. Demonstration of grace, gifts, and fruitfulness for the pastoral leadership, were evidences necessary for those who believed that they were called to serve in the early Methodist movement, and still are today.

Statement of the Problem

The Sixth Conference has multiplied the number of missionary pastors and new churches. The new bishop at the office and a discipleship small-group movement were a couple of elements that created momentum for the church, and boosted by facilitation of the appointment of lay people with a passion for ministry and pastoral leadership. Basically, pastors must have minimal theological education, and calling recognition by the home church. This change was mainly for the purpose of evaluating their calling and effectiveness. Most of the candidates got their bachelor's theological education in the seminary, however they were required to prove their effectiveness before they could be ordained. Conference membership grew, and new churches were planted as this study will show, but questions emerged concerning matters such as: minimum qualification for appointment; length of time they should stay at most until being promoted to the condition of provisional elder; reasons why too many candidates dropped out of the

process; and, possible steps to increase their effectiveness and accelerate their pastoral leadership qualification.

In this time of innovation, the adjustments installed brought new challenges as the need for specific training, follow-up, and evaluation. Moreover, the conference experimented with the thriving features of a pioneering movement, the fear and the discomfort inherent in transition periods.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to identify best practices for equipping Designated Missionaries serving as pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration.

Research Questions

In order to pursue the major goal of the project, the researcher was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question #1

In the opinion of the bishop, district superintendents, designated missionaries serving as local pastors, ordained pastors and consecrated pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church, what promotes the equipping of designated missionaries serving as pastors to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration?

Research Question #2

In the opinion of the bishop, district superintendents, designated missionaries serving as local pastors, ordained pastors and consecrated pastors in the Sixth Conference

of the Brazilian Methodist Church, what hinders the equipping of designated missionaries serving as pastors to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration?

Research Question #3

What are the best practices and strategies moving forward for equipping designated missionaries serving as pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church to increase their ministry effectiveness?

Rationale for the Project

The first reason this study matters is that fruitfulness never was a negotiable issue in Jesus' teaching, thus, it must be the same for his Church. In the parable of the True Vine, he says that God "He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit" (John 15:2, NRSV); also, Jesus pointed to fruitification as a characteristic by which his disciples should be known (Matt. 7:16). Robert Coleman declares that, "we always appreciate an education more after we have had the opportunity to apply what we have learned" (86). So, as the contemporary church endeavors to take Jesus' ministry on, it should not give up on its roots. Neglecting the importance of fruitfulness as a requirement in the process of leadership has been one of the reasons for church stagnation.

The second reason this study matters is that in the experience of the Methodist Church at the Sixth Conference, when graduates in Theology present themselves to be appointed as certified candidates, they quickly become ordained without considering their effectiveness as a requirement. The church soon had mostly maintenance pastors, instead of having pastors who knew how to grow churches.

The third reason this study matters is because of the timeline when the Designated Missionary project started. In 2021, the Conference will reach the twentieth year of this change. This is the first research done on this new plan for appointments, and it will document and evaluate many, but not all, consequences of the plan. I consider such research to be that of a participant-observer with vested interest in the success, or failure, of the outcome.

Another reason for this study is the most critical one from my point of view, which is caring for the people. Candidates for ministry often leave professional careers, move from their hometown and transform their family structures to respond to the call of full-time ministry. The candidates are passionate about the Church. When they volunteer to become pastors, they deserve the best preparation and guidance from leadership in order to develop their calling. Ultimately, if pastors are specifically equipped, chances for success will increase.

Definition of Key Terms

1. **Designated missionaries** are lay members of the Methodist Church in Brazil who feel called to full-time ministry as pastors in the church. They can have a degree or just the primary course of theology. Serving as local pastors, they are under itinerancy and their major goal is to take the community to self-sustained status. They are designated to preach, provide pastoral care, minister the sacraments, to grow and lead a community of Christian believers within the boundaries of their appointment. From now on, they will be referred to as DM or DMs when plural.
2. The **Sixth Conference** is one of ten conferences of the Methodist Church in Brazil. In this project, it is referred to only as the Conference. It is geographically

located in the south of Brazil and is composed of the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. The Conference has been under the leadership of Bishop João Carlos Lopes during all the timeline covered by this research.

3. **Ordination** is a term defined by the Book of Discipline, as: “being set apart for the responsibility to preach, to teach, to administer the sacraments, to nurture, to heal, to gather the community in worship, and to send them forth in witness” (General Conference 217).
4. **Consecration** is the term used to define admission into the clergy category for those whose formation is the theological training. With no bachelor’s degree, the candidate is admitted to the pastoral ministry.

Delimitations

For this project, the researcher chose to work geographically and institutionally with the Sixth Conference, as the pioneer and a representative sample of the entire Methodist Church of Brazil, within the timeline of the last twenty years. The focus is limited to the process of ordination/consecration that starts with appointment for the effectiveness probe period, and ends when the candidates are approved and elected elders/pastors.

Outstanding achievement in four areas qualifies the missionary field to be promoted to the status of a self-sustaining church. Those areas are administrative, missions, education, and social work; thus, the numbers and evaluation on those grounds, are the performance identifiers to measure DM development.

Review of Relevant Literature

This project consulted historical, biblical, institutional, and theological literature to build a reasonable point of view about the movement back to the roots of early Methodism, exploring the practice as an active element of raising leaders and preachers for the church. The starting point was to research biblical/theological foundations considering the Gospel calling for fruitfulness. Jesus' ministry and teaching have the inspirational guidelines of this moment. After that, the researcher considered Paul's ministry with his missionary approach establishing leadership in the many new churches planted. His organization can be recognized in today's methodology of appointing leaders.

Later, the literature of the early Methodism showed how John Wesley developed a process of raising preachers and leaders for the movement and how it matured. Through the literature that explores how the ordination process took place, the research went to the American institutionalized model that became the pattern for the Brazilian one. Apart from institutional and traditional literature, the theme of effectiveness under the perspective of fruitfulness was explored, specifically through biblical literature, but also considered writers on this subject.

Also, the researcher analyzed the development of the ordination process that the Methodist Church in Brazil has created since its autonomy on September 2nd of 1930, until the 2017 edition of the Book of Discipline. The documents written by the Episcopal College, and the historical documents of the General Conferences were also good sources for understanding the movements since autonomy up to this day.

In the absence of literature on the main subject here, the researcher gathered together statistics and numbers from the Conference, boards and documents as a source of data.

Research Methodology

The researcher believed that the best procedures for gathering data were interviews and surveys. The two set of interviews were directed, first, to the bishop of the conference and, second, to the district superintendents. I personally interviewed the bishop because he had the best overview of the project and of the transitions he led. The district superintendents were the team leaders responsible for the supervision of such implementations. Historically, the Methodist Church of Brazil tried many times to improve lay participation in ministry. Some of those attempts are mentioned in the next chapter. The issue about the DM refers to the candidates' lay condition, serving as local pastors with the clear intentionality of becoming clergy. Also, the two sets of surveys were conducted by the researcher, first directed to the group of pastors and elders who have passed through this new process. Their perception was significant because they brought to this research the first fruits of the experiment. Finally, another survey became the fourth source of data, and was directed to the current group of DMs who were pursuing consecration/ordination. This last group was the source of the most practical and fresh information, since they were still in process. The research questions were aligned in such a way as to provide several points of data for finding the best understanding of the subject while answering the research questions and fulfilling the purpose of the research.

Type of Research

The research methodology used in this study is a pre-intervention model with both quantitative and qualitative methods. The questionnaires along with surveys helped to obtain the data, and the interviews were a source of qualitative outcomes to understand both the historical and current model of the ordination process, which was affected by some changes that challenged the ministry candidates.

Participants

In November 2019, on the occasion of the 35th bi-annual conference at the Central Methodist Church in Curitiba, the episcopal report published the numbers of the Conference, with 31,615 members, 85 churches and 68 missionary fields, 153 in total. Also, it had 182 appointed DM, elders, and pastors. This research was directed at 113 appointed ministers; 72 of whom were DM; within this total, 13 had already had their status changed to provisional elder/pastors. Mostly, this research's interest was to follow up on all the DMs from their first appointment, until the day of their approval, election, and consequent ceremony of consecration/ordination.

A predetermined criterion was used, namely, the specific questionnaire in a survey format, with those who were in the probationary process of serving in a missionary field under the requirement of an effectiveness evaluation. Another survey with a different set of questions was used with those who were already approved by means of the new process, to get their collection of experiences of how they overcame the barriers of that time. Also, another type of questions was directed to the DSs to guide the interview in order to get their perspectives. They were the closest leaders the missionary ministers were accountable to. Finally, the researcher conducted an interview with the

bishop of the conference. His leadership was present during the entire timeline covered by the present research.

Instrumentation

In spite of the similarities, the researcher used four different sets of questions. The questionnaire used for the interviews was composed of open-ended questions and were lightly differentiated to extract the best perception from the different positions of the interviewed. The questionnaire used for the surveys employed a Likert Scale directed to two larger groups. The 10 questions were used to interview the bishop, with the odd-numbered questions referring to the RQ #1 and the even to the RQ #2, plus a final question to verify any possible subject not covered. The questions are listed as Appendix A. The same logic was used for the 10 questions directed to the district superintendents, and these were listed as Appendix B. The questions for the surveys were composed of 20 approaches, and again, the odd-numbered ones were directed to answer the RQ #1 and the even ones to the RQ #2, plus an extra yes/no question for the clergy and two extras for the DMs. The survey questions to the clergy audience were listed as Appendix C, while the survey questions to the missionaries still in process were listed as Appendix D.

Data Collection

Research was conducted in 2020, with data collection performed between September and December of the same year. While the interviews were performed in scheduled in-person and online meetings during those four months, the surveys were conducted just online. The initial plan to use the survey during a pastoral retreat on June 2nd, was changed because of the covid-19 pandemic , as declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11th, 2020.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) for the semi-structured interviews was sent in advance of two weeks, and the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Prior consent was obtained related to the purpose, duration, intended use, and volunteer nature of the participation; the right to withdraw anytime, for both the interviewees and the participants of the survey, was clearly explained.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the interviews was reviewed multiple times in order to get themes, patterns, and categories. The transcripts were the instrument used to get the most logical way for the interpretation to be communicated. Tim Sensing's statement challenged the researcher: "qualitative analysis requires some creativity, for the challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful categories, to examine data in a holistic fashion, and to find a way to communicate the interpretation to others" (194). Thus, with the data in hand, the researcher analyzed the similarities and discrepancies, and the different perceptions about the subject.

Generalizability

The historic Methodist Church has a very organized system to empower and enable its leadership. Everything was well done, well written, and precise; however, eventually, it became the object of reflection. New movements, the stagnant communities, and the complex structure required some action. The process of ordination of the Methodist Church of Brazil was inspired by the model of the UMC in the United States. Through the years, natural adaptation and improvement emerged. Chapter 3 explores this further in order to understand motivations and how organically this change emerged. It was a demonstration of a new and unique task of contextualizing ordination

in the Brazilian Methodist Church. This model and process could become an inspiration for other Conferences in Brazil and other churches outside of Brazil. A church that once was a mission field is now a transformational church with a very functional system. Before it is exported, some research is needed to discover the advantages and disadvantages of the model.

Project Overview

This project sought to understand the most recent changes in the ordination process in the Methodist Church in Brazil. The purpose was to clarify and to propose improvement tools to this process based on research findings. Alongside clarification, this research also envisioned the creation of a document that could be a guideline for the community of Brazilian Methodists who want to serve the Lord in full-time pastoral ministry. Chapter 2 connects the historical documents of the Wesleyan Movement with the reality of the Brazilian Church in its current changing situation. Chapter 3 outlines the various ways that the researcher interacted with the missionaries through the Research Questions. Chapter 4 analyzes the outcomes of the interaction of the document with the data and the interviews. Chapter 5 presents the most significant discoveries and the practical proposal to be applied.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The Methodist Church in Brazil reaffirms its foundation upon the Scriptures, Old and New Testament, and its tradition in agreement with universal Methodism. The clergy member is the person the Methodist Church recognizes as called by God, among its members, men and women, to the task of building, equipping and maturing the community of faith, empowering them to accomplish its mission (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 2017* 35). The clergy member, according to the Brazilian Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church, is admitted to one of two spheres, the pastoral ministry or the eldership order (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 2017* 35). In this chapter, the foundation about the process of ordination is revisited in order to critically evaluate the most recent changes in the denomination.

Starting with the biblical foundation, analysis reflects on the essential texts that inspired and offered support to those changes. The researcher chose to narrow the subject of empowerment for ministry within Jesus' teaching along the apostle Paul's approach. Next, from the early days of Methodism in England, this analysis visited the theological reflection on grace, justification, assurance, and sanctification as the themes upon which the emphasis of the movement was built. From John Wesley's practical theology, the researcher collected experiences and thoughts about the ordination process in the Methodist movement. In this section, the inspirational role of Susana Wesley is highlighted concerning her perception and influence on Wesley about the lay preachers. Also, this research consulted the most current documents of the Brazilian Church to

extract the important historic attempts at building a successful ministry organization, in order to promote positions and empowerment to everyone who wants to be engaged in pastoral ministry.

In spite of having both elder and deacon orders, a ceremonial service of Deacon ordination is not commonly witnessed in the Brazilian conferences. For this reason, conferences have no standard approach to Deacons' ordination, although this subject is an elementary area in the church and deserves specific reflection. The focus was on starting people, who were called to be ministers, in the process of pursuing eldership/pastoral ordination/consecration. This chapter examines how the missionary advance explored similarities with the first lay preachers whose ministry was meaningful for the growth of the historic Methodist movement. This chapter approaches the matter by re-reading the biblical foundations of Christian leadership, and also visiting the main historical perspectives of ordination.

Biblical Foundations

Fruitfulness is the most basic commandment stated in Scriptures from the very beginning in Genesis chapter one: God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28, NRSV). Such reality is reaffirmed in Abraham's calling along with the promise of great growth. In spite of this reality found all over the Bible, Jesus' ministry showed the most detailed teaching about what this subject is and how it should be faced. Nevertheless, basically fruitification means fulfilment of God's purpose.

Many studies have been done on this matter; however, the ordination issue under the perspective of fruitfulness as the main endorsement for approval has rarely received

the attention it deserves. The Gospels are the main source for clarifying the process for ministry development.

The commandment to bear fruit is preceded by the vocation. God invites human beings to himself in this very first part of the process and reveals to them his purposes. That is followed by assurance of his empowering presence in order to accomplish the mission, and finally the commissioning where the called are sent to promote God's will on earth.

Jesus broke up the established religious system by bringing to his hearers a transformational message never heard before. Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger declare that "Jesus has the ability to take the complex and make it simple" (17). "Churches are filled with a variety of generations, nationalities, preferences and backgrounds", and act in the midst of this diversity (185). The focus, at the restoration of the person and the invitation for a personal relationship, impress even the most accurate listener. Jesus taught with authority (Matt. 7:29). His ministry had an impressive clarity of teaching putting people together around the concept of the Kingdom of God. Scholars and fishermen started to follow him in a movement that the world had never witnessed before. From the very beginning, the called ones were invited for engagement into a transformational mission (Matt. 4:19).

Jesus' most basic teaching on fruitification present the evidence of an organization that does not neglect the outcomes. His parables about it became a pattern of effectiveness in ministry. He considered the quality, saying: "by their fruit you will recognize them" (Matt. 7:16), and also quantity: "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit" (John 15:5). In this way, faithful discipleship happens when the

believer performs the tasks that Christ demands. “The work must be managed in order to be fruitful” (Willimon 165). He declares: “A leadership theology that emerges from his tradition will be highly concerned with being effective and fruitful in leadership.

Wesleyan leadership is concerned about measurements and results for missional advancement. Wesleyan leaders must not grow lazy, ill-equipped, or unconcerned with results.” (163) Jesus’ ministry serves as a model for passing through the discipleship journey. The invitation would be clear by a close observation of how the master would perform the ministry. This would be the clarification of the vocation, the training, and also empowerment.

Effectiveness and Fruitfulness

Bearing fruit is the major evidence of connection with Christ according to John 15. Absence of fruit denies the nature of being a Christian. D. A. Carson reads this passage as two different sections, first from verses 1-8 and second from 9-16. Both use the word *abide*; however, while the first one refers to the vine, the second refers to the love of God. Nevertheless, “Both present fertility as the goal of the disciple” (my trans.; 511). However, what kind of fruit is John talking about? The word *karpós* (fruit) is used for the first time in the New Testament in Matthew 3:8, in John the Baptist’s speech; the word is found 66 times in the entire New Testament. John the Baptist claims coherence between the speech and the practice of the Jew’s leaders.

Results are one of the most critical aspects in a leader’s life. Without it, leadership is questioned, and the organization enters into a crisis. Focused at the Church, the need for results requires a reasonable performance identifier, because leadership in church is not only about numbers. Therefore, building up a set of criteria to evaluate the process is

extremely necessary. Christian A. Schwarz advocates the concept of the organic development of the Church. He started with Jesus' statement in Matthew 6:28, "see how the flowers of the field grow" (9), and from this first inspiration, he came up with a set of elements always present in growing ministries. The natural development of the church offered clues about the processes involved; however, those processes take the communities up to its goals. Danilo Figueira, a Brazilian pastor states that "all investment in the disciples' life aims to empower them for fruitification" (134).

Jesus' metaphors from nature are always up to date, and they will be the elementary biblical basis for this project, more specifically, those focused on fruitfulness. The parable of the true vine, narrated between the scene of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in the upper room and prayer time in the Gethsemane Garden, will be an elementary text to the biblical foundation part. The same rule could be applied to the fruitless' fig tree parable of Luke 13, and Jesus' statement about fruitification in Matthew 7:16. In this last one, the results are the primary criteria that should be used to identify his followers, namely, a behavior that witnesses Jesus' pattern.

Effectiveness in leadership was translated by Jesus to refer to church development. Bob Farr says that "effectiveness is a way of life" (10). Such a statement matches with the parable translation about producing results that testifies that things have been done correctly. Effectiveness promotes transformation that challenges norms and cultural values and requires clear vision and wisdom.

A teaching along the way

The end of John 14 has a physical transition from the upper room to the Gethsemane Garden (John 14:31). So far, in the upper room, Jesus has taught, oriented,

and offered his disciples emotional support in preparation for the upcoming events. The best moment happened when Jesus washed the disciples' feet, showing them the servanthood pattern for their ministry.

This milieu of chapters 13 and 14 refers to comfort, orientation and the reaffirmation of core values, and also the promise of the Holy Spirit. It seems to be a moment with strong emotions. The next physical environment clearly identified is the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed for himself and invited his closest ones to do the same. The parable of the true vine is also stated here. The point is, the setting of these texts refers to a critical moment in Jesus' ministry when final words of instruction were given, and teaching about being fruitful is in the heart of it.

The impetus where the most relevant considerations took place is important. The discipleship routine that uses an organic system to unveil the most important issues happened in ordinary activities as sharing a meal or while walking. Some of the examples included calling for ministry in the environment of their professional careers (Luke 5:1-11; Matt. 9:9-13), or giving instructions while at the table for a meal (John 13; Luke 10:38-42); or even teaching along the path (John 4; 15), not to mention those experiences in the houses.

Nature and Process

The Brazilian bishops, in a 2016 official document, called attention to the fact that fruitfulness cannot follow the capitalist mentality seeking productivity in itself, but it must provide fruits for the Kingdom of God (my trans.; COLEGIO EPISCOPAL, Pelos Frutos os Conheceris). Whereas, the Church cannot act as the ends which justifies the means, it also cannot ignore the fact that good trees produce good fruits. Everyone who

plants something has clear goals. The biblical reflection needs to take advantage of the simplicity and clarity of the parable to apply it to the church's teachings. In balance, fruitfulness is not negotiable.

Initially, two elements must be highlighted: nature and process. While the first one talks about identification with Christ and the fact of being connected along with the responsibility to abide, the second refers to the elements, or the steps that must be taken to cooperate with God's work towards the fruitification.

In Matthew 7:16-20, the fruit is the element that reveals the nature of the tree. It is a variation of the parables on fruitification, but here, the objectives are to face the religious system and to point out who belongs to the kingdom of God and who is just religious. Also, the great affirmation, "Know them by their fruits" (7:17, 20), pushes the hearers to evaluate everything around them.

Now, my focus was the process and possibilities that must be noticed and used to make ministry development happen organically. Every parable has its limits, even Jesus' ones, but the balance among them is reasonable to understand the holistic message.

Growing Organically

The subject of organic growth is crucial when dealing with the principles of building the church. Every tree has its environment to grow in. Craig S. Keener affirms that "the three common domestic fruit trees in the Mediterranean world were the fig, olive, and vine, and of these, the olive and vine required more attention" (293). This is the kind of information that suggests how helpful Jesus' parables were.

The diversity of ministries, cultures, and communities are represented in the diversity of nature. Contemporary agriculture knows what basic elements are necessary to

get good productivity. The biologist Justus Von Liebig discovered about 150 years ago that a plant needs four essential elements to grow: nitrogen, potassium, calcium, and phosphoric acid (qtd. in Schwarz 54). In like manner, the church also needs essential basic elements to promote its natural effectiveness, besides the proper environment. Schwartz believes that the church must follow the ordinary example of organic growth. His argument focuses on outcomes, nevertheless taking the attention out of the establishment of a goal, but into the existence of a natural way where the focus on the elements and on the environment will result in fruits.

In 2016, the Brazilian bishops argued that fruitfulness was a consequence of (1) strong roots, which is profoundly an understanding of the Scriptures and the apostles' doctrines; (2) strong trunk and branches, talking about a Gospel-oriented life; and, (3) fertilizer, which is to nurture the Christian life through intentional process in community (my trans.; COLEGIO EPISCOPAL, *Discípulos e Discípulas nos caminhos da missão produzem Frutos de uma vida santificada* 19). Thus, some spheres of the natural growing process have already been contemplated by the Brazilian church leadership, and the most accurate observation intends to improve the process of a healthy institution.

The Bible has many examples of immediate results, such as the Samaritan woman in John 4, or Peter's preaching in Acts 2. Nevertheless, the timing can differ in different circumstances and contexts or with different characters and personalities. People can have different outcomes, and this will be hard to measure. Whatever, everyone with a real connection with Christ has evidence of a transformed life. As in nature, the development of how outcomes happen is hard to explain literally; nevertheless, measures taken to prepare the environment in order to encourage fruitfulness are easy to identify.

Clear Growing Process

After drafting a plan, the ministry needs to follow a clear process. If there are expectations, it must have investments also. In the little parable of the fig tree with no fruits in Luke 13, Jesus tells about the hope of the farmer. The fig tree was planted in the environment of the vineyard; even so, not finding fruit the owner ordains to cut it off. Some rabbinic interpretations, says Keener, consider fruit from newly planted trees as forbidden for three years (253); regardless, the servant intercedes and tries to save the tree. He commits himself to dig, put manure, and do whatever is necessary to promote fruitfulness. Such an image of the servant trying to save the fig tree is of great importance here. It speaks about a process that is essential for fruitification. The second chance is given under the conditions of investment and care.

Again, the image of pastoral ministry and church leadership is demonstrated with a new nature and the expectation of fruitfulness. With care, the outcomes should happen. To invest in the workers is more than to give them tools, but to spend on discipleship and on pastoral care is to nurture them, again remembering Coleman: “men were to be his method of winning the world to God” (21).

Back to the parable of the true vine, the reflection goes to the action of pruning. That is an elementary part of the process of care, from the perspective of improvement, cutting off the long dry or weak branches that are not bearing fruit. . The Greek word, *Kathairo* indicates the action that strengthens the performance. It is not a threat against the tree, but stimulation toward productiveness in quantity and quality. The fruitful branches represent the sincere Christian who is growing more and more and needs to be cared for and purified appropriately to bear a huge harvest (Lima, A Frutificação que

Permanece 12). Michael Brodeur names three kinds of branches: the fruitful, the unfruitful, and those that will not remain (221). Potentially, all of them were created for the same purpose.

Church leadership needs to be shaped through a clear process where engagement, practice, empowerment, and execution must overcome any experience of success in contemporary society. After all, no institution has the power of the Holy Spirit available to support its routine, as the Church has. Richard Santos Canfield states that “the elders, the presbyters, the bishops and the deacons were the chosen people to guide the community of believers” (36), and all of them thrive through a growing process toward maturity.

The main point

Finally, the central point of the biblical foundation of fruitification as an expectative of church leadership is, namely, to abide in him. The branches’ purpose is fruitification, but the powers that generate this miracle is God himself. He shares his nature with everyone who connects with and stays connected with him. Keener teaches that the image of such union goes beyond the organic model developed and goes beyond the analogies (293). Jesus uses the verb *abide* eleven times along the first part of John 15, every single one expressing his connection with his disciples.

The transformation of human nature from the personal experience of forgiveness makes the person a participant of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The Greek word means *to abide*, and Keener reminds us of the Old Testament texts that show how God desired to abide in the middle of his people (Ezra 25:8, 29:45; Lev. 26:11-12; Ezra 37:27-28, 43:9) (392). Nevertheless, conditions for fruitfulness exist, and when Jesus declared we can do

nothing without him (v.5), he stated a piece of advice against our temptation toward independence.

The image of a vineyard was familiar to Israelites. The scriptures used it as a figure of a people planted by God to produce good fruits along its generations (Jer. 2:19-21; Ezra 17:5-6); however, many times the nation showed itself fruitless. From Genesis 1:11, God shows concern for the nature he created. In Isaiah 5:1-7; Israel is pictured as the vineyard planted carefully by God; the grapes were a great symbol of God's work on earth. John the Baptist also recognized the connection of salvation with fruitfulness, and endorsed the importance of fruits from all his followers.

Theological Foundations

The core subject of the present research is the process of ordination in the Brazilian Methodist church. So, the beliefs held around the practice of setting apart people for a specific task through specific a ministry need to be reviewed and reaffirmed. "Theology is our effort to reflect upon God's gracious action in our lives" (General Conference 78). God's gracious action has pushed God's people to build the church with the best organization possible.

As the focus on organizational leadership for the Methodist Church in Brazil is adjusted, just after reflecting on the most elementary biblical foundations, the theological foundations are the next step, and guidelines from early Methodism become essential. The Methodist Church has in its history an expression of great outcomes and transformation. The Methodist movement led by John Wesley renewed their mindset and transformed history in England. Pushed by theological beliefs, a small group multiplied

leadership and influenced a generation of preachers with boldness that created a relevant church.

Richard P. Heitzenrater states that two sermons show the maturity of Wesley's theology: *The Scripture Way of Salvation* and *The Lord Our Righteousness* (223). In those sermons, the theme 'search for salvation' had a privileged highlight. The church has no other primary reason, but to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ. The salvation by grace inherited from Martin Luther is reaffirmed with the words *prevenient* and *justifying* and expanded within the process of continuous transformation named sanctified grace.

Practical theology guided Wesley's reflections. The Methodist Brazilian scholar Rui de Souza Josgrilberg states: "In anticipation of his systematic theological reflection, Wesley, experiment feelings, anguish, deep concerns that affects his life's project" (my trans.; qtd. in Ribeiro et al. 94). The same work states that "Wesley's reflection is deep rooted in the faith communities' life, as it was in sermons, hymnals, etc." (my trans.; Ribeiro et al. 114). Both scholars endorsed the understanding that theological construction was not made within a classroom or within a library, but in the challenging routine of the ministry.

The practical theology of the Methodist Movement is reflects the manifestation of God's grace that promotes salvation. The proclamation of this belief is the environment where the ordination theme appears, restoring the biblical foundation where everyone is called to witness the message. "Wesley was a practitioner theologian." (Snyder 7)

Grace

“The key for all the Wesley’s soteriological doctrines is his comprehension of God’s grace” ‘A chave para todas as doutrinas soteriológicas de Wesley é o seu entendimento sobre a graça de Deus’ (my trans.; Runyon 39). Practical theology of Methodism is a manifestation of God’s grace that promotes holistic salvation. The proclamation of this belief is the environment where the ordination theme appears, restoring the biblical foundation where everyone is called to witness the message. Randy L. Maddox agrees that Wesley’s soteriology is more appropriately described under the rubric of way of salvation (313), and the process of such understanding will be put under the delineation of the means of grace. The scholar Mortimer Arias, on the occasion of his speech to the first class of the year at the Methodist University of São Paulo, highlights that the journey of the historic movement is walked through those means of grace: Baptism, communion, Scripture, prayer, community, and good deeds (qtd, in Ribeiro et al. 36).

“Wesley saw no necessary bounds to the free grace of God” (Snyder 96). Any Wesleyan student can easily quote the three most basic manifestations of the grace of God through John Wesley’s lens: prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace. Basically, this theological concept is so important that it follows the entire process of a Christian life journey. In his sermon “Salvation by Faith,” Wesley said that “all blessings that God has given humanity are based simply on his grace, generosity, or favor” (134). Nevertheless, Maddox adds that “Wesley was convicted that nobody could access the divine revelation separated from the gracious restoration of the divine self-revelation” (my trans.; Maddox 51).

He highlights the major goal of Wesley to integrate juridical Christian convictions with the plan of salvation. In other words, Maddox is committed to clarifying Wesley's practical theology for God's design for restoration of creation.

To Wesley, "the grace is, fundamentally, God's love for humanity manifested in Christ" 'A graça, Segundo ele, é fundamentalmente o amor de Deus pela humanidade manifestado em Cristo'(my trans.; Runyon 39). This agreement encourages belief in God's gracious manifestation in Christ Jesus that he did in order to reconcile the world to himself in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), thus promoting its transformation. Thus, the laypeople who preach the gospel inviting people to repentance and achieves success in their approach, become a channel of God's grace.

Grace is unconditional, transformational, and invitational; this is the "sense of how grace works in our life" (*The Means of Grace: Traditioned Practice in Today's World* 11). This theological foundation talks about the heart of the Methodist movement that developed, in the practice of discipleship, its way for the church's restoration. The means of grace refers to that. The spiritual practice of prayer, searching the Scriptures, the Lord's Supper, fasting and conferencing, are perceptive expressions of how this foundation is manifested in the church. At the conclusion of a reflection about the means of grace as the experience of God's love in the Wesleyan way, Elaine A. Heath expresses it as "an expression of prayer that leads to missional engagement" (35).

Every Believer is a Minister

The Methodist movement believed in the capacity of everybody to embrace the Word of God and also communicate it. The understanding of the authority of the Bible and the importance of a personal faith were part of the heritage of the Protestant

reformation from the sixteenth century. The Book of Discipline of the UMC says that all Christians are called through their baptism to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment. Everyone is called, not just to believe in the Lord, but to serve (suffer for) him (Phil. 1:29), witnessing the message of salvation through every way possible. “Although not every Christian is called to be a minister or a missionary, God does intend each of us as Christians to be a witness to Jesus Christ (. . .) need to be discreet and courteous, but determined” (Stott 167).

Justo L. González is precise in his commentary on Martin Luther’s declaration of the priesthood of all believers, that it cannot be a private or personal affair (329). The rediscovery of the New Testament teaching about the role of believers released people from the position of religious mediators. However, it could quickly go to the opposite extreme where people would not care about the community and could search a life in God in isolation. The church is a priestly and sacerdotal people, he says, and this mindset must push the people to God’s mission. This is the kind of action seen in the Wesleyan movement when people were empowered to preach and witness the message of salvation, as a rediscovery of the role of the laity in God’s mission, and as an exercise of the priesthood in the community.

Life in community requires organization in leadership. The church still needs priests and pastors as much as it needs other leaders like teachers, evangelists, and many others (Eph. 4:11). However, the basic structure for the local church and its mission is the appropriation of the priesthood of all believers. “The direct access all believers have to God is developed in Ephesians 3:12 in terms of their freedom to speak as part of the responsibility of every believer to minister to one another” (Lotter and Aarde 9). The

Methodist Church in Brazil had a great change in 1987 when it voted to be an institution organized in gifts and ministries. Rev. Dr. Paulo Cesar Da Silva describes it as an effective model to lead the church, and affirmed that one of the major contributions of his research was “in the distinction between elders and lay pastors” (84). Along with other researchers, he published how the Brazilian church had its own time and experience of embracing the laity in ministry. Following this thinking, the introduction of the lay preachers was one of the greatest Methodist innovations, and from this ministry called “laity,” the movement expanded.

The priesthood of all believers is based on God’s invitation to reconciled persons to spread the Gospel by proclamation and witness, according to their gifts. The church manifests the kingdom of God to its own generation by mean of this action. Ministry in the Wesleyan movement is a clear continuation of the apostolic church in its effort to proclaim salvation in the new covenant. Thomas F. Torrance clarifies this idea, saying “The word priest is derived from the Old Testament, although the order of priesthood in the New Testament relies entirely upon the person of Christ, the High” (1). Thus, the communities are organized and managed to engage everyone in ministry, as Michael Bird describes the “pastors as priests who have a special charge to preach the Word and administer the sacraments” (71). Strength for fruitification happens when the organization puts the right people, in the right place, and equip and empower them to fulfil their vocation.

Ordination

Since the Methodist Church embraces and reaffirms the Priesthood of all Believers, reflection on the basis of the specific orders in church is called for. David F.

Watson states that the orders in the church should relate to one another. He emphasizes that the order can be of laity, deacon, or elder. Nevertheless, even though not in a superior position, “elders are called for specific ecclesiastical responsibilities, but they remain both, deacon and laity”. He points out that in the Methodist tradition, elders are in charge of the sacraments, and have to understand them theologically and administer them appropriately.

Matthew Abel states something about the reality of the United Methodist Church that remembered the core of the present research, namely, the relatedness of fruitfulness and ordination. Designated Missionaries are lay people serving as local pastors. “The local pastor who does serve for less, but with no less passion for the calling” (Abel), has been the reality of appointments to embrace small communities and to serve them with pastoral care.

Like elders, licensed local pastors are appointed by bishops and serve under District Superintendents, but they serve as appointments are available for them. When they are not under appointment, they serve cheerfully and passionately as laity. When they are appointed to a local church, they serve as the pastor-in-charge, and therefore accorded the privilege to celebrating the sacraments, preaching the word, presiding at weddings, and funerals, and maintaining the good order of the local church. (Abel)

This movement in 2020 moved toward becoming a new denomination. Its leaders defined ordination as “the action, through the physical laying on of hands, by which the church sets apart and orders those called by God to this particular ministry for the good of the whole church” (Wesleyan Covenant Association, par. 502). “Laying on of hands becomes a strategic appropriation of power in the era of Radical Reformation,” states J. Matthew Price. Based on his reflection, John Wesley’s built his own understanding to overcome the struggle as the Methodism movement advanced toward America. Wesley

believed in the importance of the sacraments for spiritual well-being, and therefore, “extraordinary ordinations were done precisely to avoid administration without ordination” (Price).

Brazilian Methodism has not been an exception concerning discussions about orders. There are pastors, and pastors of pastors, elders elected to preside over the conferences, and many other definitions to organize the structure of the daily routines of the local church. Most of struggles surface when people in leadership positions forget the high level of ministry expressed by the Lord of the church, which is the calling to serve, and that, according to the priesthood of all believers, is for everyone.

Calling

All members of the Church are called to serve God throughout the developing of the natural talents and professional careers. “The calling is for the salvation, for the sanctification, for the witnesses, for the discipleship experience and for the practice of gifts and ministries” ‘A vocação é para a salvação, para a santificação, para o testemunho, para a vivência do discipulado cristão, para o serviço cristão e para o exercício de dons e ministérios.’(My trans.; Lazier, *Carisma* 14). With those words, Lazier, introduces his textbook about the charisma of the pastoral ministry, reaffirming the ministry of all Christians. Deacons, elders and laypersons are called by God to lead his church. John Stott says: “we are not to be inward-looking and interested only in ourselves. On the contrary, every Christian should be deeply concerned about others. And it is part of our Christian calling to serve them in whatever ways we can” (166). Thus, everyone are called to witness serving one another.

Pastors are called to be Jesus' representatives, salt and light, to shine forth the glory of God in every sphere and bring about transformation. Discerning the calling of being set apart to the specific ministry of church leadership is the very first step that can culminate in ordination. The patriarch Abraham, an inspiration to many, started a life-journey ministry just after understanding his calling. The voice of God calling him to a mission ignited his journey. "The initiative is always divine," stresses Bishop Stanley da Silva Moraes (25).

Hearing stories of transformation and calling inspires any audience. However, there are some characteristics that evidence the person is specifically set apart for the ordained ministry. In the context of a church that recognizes the priesthood of all believers, those characteristics must be clarified and used to develop pastoral ministry.

Hernandes Dias Lopes offers two main features of God's call; they are: "the vector that guides our choices and the awareness of being in the right place doing the right thing" (my trans.; *Vocação*). He also highlights two regular possibilities for such a personal discovery, namely, the natural inclination toward good performance, and the need.

The Expositor Cristão, the main Newspaper of the Methodist Church of Brazil, dealt with this theme in the March 2015 edition. Wesley Gonçalves Santos wrote about the process of leaving the local community of faith, going through seminary and being appointed to another local church. He mentioned that the very first challenge of the called person is the assurance that he/she listened correctly. "The conviction about God's voice will be foundational to a solid ministry" (9). With no doubt, this is the first conscious

experience in the pastor's journey. Unbearable crises in ministry will occur where only the remembrance of God's voice will make the pastor remain firm.

The Methodist Church of Brazil recognizes that the elder's calling is firstly a community's calling, thus the calling of the individual becomes secondary. Such orientation was addressed through a pastoral letter to the Brazilian church in 2007, and sought to clarify the apostolic heritage in which the calling belongs to the body of Christ as a unity (Colégio Episcopal, *Carta Pastoral*). Such understanding refers to the community the responsibility of discernment for the personal callings, making it stronger as the community also listens, confirms, and witnesses God's revelation. Bishop Moraes highlights the collegiate as the placement where the elder serves with the community. The collegiate, he says, has authority over the individual, and "these procedures are the essence of the order" (27).

Inspiration and patterns for pastoral ministry come from God himself. The image of a supreme pastor who leads, cares, protects, feeds, and guides the flock must guide the church in the formation, equipping, and follow-up of its leadership pastoral teams. In the ordination ceremony, the bishop, just after exhortating from God's Word, declares upon the approved candidates the following: "We are convicted that for long ago you have already meditated meticulously on those things and, by the grace of God, made a decision to give yourself entirely to this ministry. We recognize also, that as all of your strength, you will dedicate with integrity for such purpose" (Colégio Episcopal, *Ritual da Igreja Metodista* 113). In this way, the consecration is the seal of the calling to perform the ministry following the steps of Jesus' ministry.

Ecclesiology

Awareness of the priesthood of all believers promoted a revolution that touched and influenced the Methodist movement. This new church would be the church of people, and John Wesley reaffirmed that in his speech and his writing. Learning from the community's life, he assimilated preaching outside of sanctuaries, the ministry of lay preachers, and women's role in ministry. The movement will value some essential things to serve faithfully. "The church is the joyful company of all those who have been redeemed and brought into right relationship with God" (Tennent 67). This quote reflects what Timothy C. Tennent expresses about the reality that the Church must be a tangible expression of the Kingdom of God.

Structures are necessary, remembering a singular textbook written by Philip Yancey and Paul Brand concerning a very informal ecclesiological approach, where they compare the structure of an institution with the bones of a body. It is elementary, but if it calcifies more than needed, will make mobility hard (65). This idea is necessary for ecclesiological reflection, because structures are necessary in measure to promote and sustain the movement.

Historic Methodism used the small group in many ways; it was considered the heart of the movement: "Class meetings connected believers who met to grow as Jesus followers. Bands were groups where high accountability and deep honesty were demanded. Select societies were groups where ministry leaders were trained. Penitent Bands were groups where people found opportunity for restoration from addictions."(Smith 358) The movement was built on the pillars of committed relationships.

The focus is on mission, always. The ecclesia, renewed by the participation of the people with their gifts, was organized in its leadership and values. It must be the place for proclamation the message of salvation, as the Body of Christ, a community to serve the world. Within the community, its leadership is recognized, trained, and sent to the mission fields.

In 1746, as John Wesley recorded in his journal, while he read *The Primitive Church* by Peter King, he came to accept that bishops and elders belong to the same order (Mesquita 39). Such understanding became crucial to the movement's development, because it supported the possibility of ordaining his ministers. Wesley did that only in 1784 when the church in America required leadership; he ordained two elders and one district superintendent to attend to them (39). America already had lay preachers; however, from Wesley's point of view, baptizing and serving communion could only be done by elders.

Connexionalism, or the unity of the church, was valued by early Methodism as they accepted to participate with the Body of Christ in the implementation of his kingdom. There is one church, one body, Jesus is the head, and the parts positioned in local communities have to relate in interdependence with each other.

Since this study deals with the start of the ordination process for candidates with no high level of formal education, a necessary factor to remember is that, for Wesley, knowledge was always a requirement. Daniel L. Marsh states, "No other man in the 18th century did so much to create a taste for good reading and to supply it with books at the lowest prices" (6). His approach was intentionally written to highlight the powerful educational system as an ethos for the movement.

Having ordained leaders was essential to an institution with clear goals and strong values. Considering that the ecclesia has changed structurally, reaffirming the core values and embracing the goals for the current generation would be helpful. Moreover, dialogue around the process and structures is necessary for advancement and faithfulness. While ordination is not negotiable for the church, the process to get there is, and this makes the ecclesiology possible and meaningful.

“According to Frank Baker, Wesley viewed the church as an historical institution and a fellowship of believers. He described the historic church in terms of an institution that is organically linked to the apostolic church by a succession of bishops and inherited customs.” (qtd. in Payne 36) The continuation of the apostolic ministry in the environment of fellowship among Jesus’ followers promoted the advance of the gospel.

José Carlos Souza is a professor of Methodism in the Methodist University of São Paulo who had performed important research about this subject. His overview is particularly important because it is from and for the Latin American public; he said:

More than faithfulness to the orthodox principles, the practice, the real life from the shared experiences of the Methodist’s societies, the daily meet with regular people that constitutes the pivot of Wesleyan reading of the church’s doctrine (. . .) his love toward the poor; the way how he mobilized men and women, even with no clergy ordination, for preaching and for the work; (. . .) in this sense, the Wesleyan ecclesiology manifests strength and vitality, particularly for the Latin American context. (89)

Stott agrees with a common belief that “every Christian needs to belong to a local church and share in its worship, fellowship and witness” (165), and that such involvement empowers the engagement of the believer toward the world’s needs. It is Throughout its purpose statement, Brazilian Methodism shows the “face of the Church” (Lazier, *Kairós* 47).

The Apostle Paul and his empowerment leadership process

Paul, the apostle, acquired great success in his mission of planting, consolidating, and strengthening churches. Working in teams became a very popular characteristic and “there is no doubt that upon a ‘good report’, he did appoint elders” (Allen 79). Now, observing the evolution of his ministry concerning the subject of this research, an organic way of leadership development becomes noticeable. Certainly, “he did not establish a provincial school to which all candidates for ordination must go” (80); however he did invite, train, and empower leaders, and then release them to take care of the growing missionary church. Paul had a skill absolutely necessary for leadership, both in his personal life and also in the sphere of service, namely the ability to translate knowledge into action, which explains why the ecclesia’s structure was greatly developed by him.

As a matter of fact, “it is in our Lord and not in Paul that we see the ideal of leadership, for he is the leader par excellence” (Sanders, *Dynamic Spiritual Leadership* 11). Such a statement from J. Oswald Sanders is appropriate to remember, based on Paul’s experience of leadership development and structure for the church. David Kornfield, an American pastor, who served in Brazil through a strong ministry of pastoring pastors, says that Jesus had a clear pattern for selecting his leaders, namely, “divine encounters, divine patterns, high requirements, discernment of obedience and prayer” (185). Those characteristics can be found in Paul’s personal journey, and in his pattern of recruitment.

The retired Brazilian Bishop Paulo de Tarso Oliveira Lockman affirms that “all believers have equal access to spiritual gifts and corresponding ministry, and all of them are important for the growth of the Body of Christ.” In his writings, Lockman claims

Paul's understanding of God's empowerment of the believers to perform ministry. The issue of church growth is related to the present research, after all, in the letter to the Ephesians (4:16); Paul wrote about the whole body, joined and held together, which means placing empowered people in the best positions for the best results.

Questions around empowerment for ministry are not theoretical. They refer to elements such as timeline, qualifications, and processes that enable the called person to the practice of leadership. Sanders, in his classic book *Spiritual Leadership*, used some Pauline insights on leadership principles as social, moral, mental, personality, domestic, and maturity. Every sphere mentioned ought to be developed aiming at maturity. "Paul did not appoint elders in every place on his first missionary journey. He sometimes waited until a later visit when questions about spiritual development had been clarified by time and experience (Acts 14:23). Timothy was converted during Paul's first journey, but not ordained until the second journey" (38).

Perhaps such leadership behavior reflects Paul's particular experience as a recognized preacher and leader who took a certain amount of time in discipleship preparation before Barnabas assumed any position in the church. Building on my own experience, I checked some of the main characteristics of the Pauline process for ordination.

Conversion as a hallmark of the calling

Three times in the Acts of Apostles, Paul tells his experience of conversion. In the third one, before king Agrippa, he defends his apostolic calling with the words "the vision from heaven" to which he could not be disobedient (Acts 26:19). Such experience was foundational in his journey of setting apart workers for the ministry. Lazier identifies

three moments in which an ordinary person can be called to ministry: “First is the interruption of personal projects, second God reveals himself, and third, the person reveals what he/she wants to be, just a born again” (my trans.; *Liturgia* 33). Paul definitely understood his personal experience not only as an interruption of his personal projects, but as a way to change the way in which his faith was renewed, and his life’s purpose as well. The concept of his understanding is written clearly in the second letter to the Corinthians when he sees himself as a reconciled person and committed with the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

His personal experience, thus, becomes an important pattern that should be recognized in the journey of any follower. The conviction is that no one could pursue leadership in ministry without a personal story to tell about who he/she was, and how God transformed them. As Lazier quotes above, Paul became convicted about his calling at the very same moment when he had the conviction of God’s acceptance toward him.

Surely the call has its starting point, and some leaders can date and testify to it in detail. However, the maturing, or confirmation must be recognized. The experiences that confirm, and affirm along the way, are as important as the moment when the servant understands the vocation. Three great moments in Paul’s calling can be highlighted here. The very first one comes from the words of God to Ananias, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (Acts 9:16); the next one comes by God’s revelation through the church in Antioch, “set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2), and the third one when God expresses a more accurate goal for his ministry approach, “Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21). These manifestations confirm and narrow down his calling. Again, personal

experience becomes the pattern for developing leaders and appointing them to each placement where the church would reach.

Concerning the preaching ministry, Michael J. Quicke declares: “Preachers are also God’s sent-persons whose sense of call involves a total commitment to preach. God calls, gifts, and employs preacher so that through them his truths might impact and change lives. Paul’s apostleship was tested and authenticated through the changed lives of his hearers (2 Cor. 3:1-3)” (Kindle Loc. 131). In this way, the confirmation of his calling and the authenticity of his ministry was the fruitfulness.

Working in teams as equipping structures

Invited by Barnabas, Paul started a new journey in leadership development with the church in Antioch, as part of a team. This point was between 13 to 14 years after the Damascus road experience. After that experience, Paul spent three years in Arabia and Damascus, and then went to Jerusalem where he met the apostles and stayed with them for no more than two weeks (Gal. 1:15-20). After that, he went to Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21) and to Tarsus (Acts 11:25). Just after that, 14 years after his conversion (Gal. 2:1), he went to Jerusalem again, compelled by the Holy Spirit in order to share his theological beliefs that endorsed his approach to the Gospel’s proclamation.

Since his very first experience in Antioch where Paul served in a team of five—he was the fifth listed by Luke—he was always part of a team. Teamwork was always present in every situation along the journey. The core idea centered on the formation of the worker, within and throughout of the team. Kornfield defines a team as “a group defined, committed, empowered and coordinated in order to achieve the same goals” (

174). Such a definition summarizes the overall nature of a team even in different contexts and times.

Recognition that Paul always served on teams and used the team format to equip servants, leads to the realization of how important this issue is within the present research. The ordination process is nurtured within these defined, committed, empowered and coordinated people, whose journeys are focused by a vision, and aligned by the power of accountability. As Jesus did, Paul invested time and energy in the life of key persons and joined them to form successful teams. “When Timothy is charged to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2), he stands in the new order of Christian preaching, in continuity with the apostolic commission”(Quicke Kindle Loc. 131). Paul’s advice to the Philippian community was a pattern for his team: “whatever you learned, received, heard, or saw in us” (Phil. 4:9).

The author of Hebrews declared that “one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was” (Heb. 5:4) (Foster 409). This quote referred to the priesthood of Christ, which is the pattern for the ministry leadership of the church. Paul was a great leader; nevertheless, “he developed a team ministry and shared with his fellow missionaries the glories and honors of the job done” (Lazier, *Igreja Testemunha* 45). Hence, since he was included by an experienced leader in a team, until he could form and equip his own ministry missionary team, the apostle offers a path where the experience is concomitant to the theory.

The qualification required

Mostly, the qualifications listed for pastoral leadership were moral. Thus, the leadership development process in Paul’s ministry did not primarily require education.

“The characteristics of the presbyters mentioned by the apostle are more about life than their performance. The leader’s life is their leadership. The life precedes the ministry” (My trans.; H. D. Lopes, *Tito e Filemon* 49). Such an approach is confirmed by the long lists of character skills extracted from Paul’s pastoral letters to his pastoral leaders and disciples in ministry, Timothy and Titus.

The ordained leaders were normally very familiar with their community, because they were regularly raised from that context. “They were not necessarily highly educated men, they cannot have had any profound knowledge of Christian doctrine” (Allen 81). However, they had to be men of high morals and good reputation to lead the community and to administer the sacraments. Significantly, they could ordain others. This is noted by Roland Allen when he states that “there is no suggestion that St. Paul ever ordained a second time in any church of his foundation” (83).

Jozadak Lima looked at 1 Timothy and Titus, searching for those required hallmarks and found these noteworthy principles (3): affection, divine calling, responsibility and perseverance. The focus of that leadership formation was not the position, but the person and his/her development. Being chosen is based on recognition of a personal healthy lifestyle, a healthy family life, and emotional/spiritual maturity, not an election.

Timothy became the best example of how Paul developed a pastoral leader, starting with the invitation to join the missionary team (Acts 16:1-3), someone who did not have any title but had a reputation as a trustful person, passing through the process of small responsibilities, and finally taking the leadership position leading an entire community. From the local community, to a pastoral team led by Paul, Timothy started

on a process in which he was equipped during the journey by his leader and mentor. To belong to the team in the second missionary trip was formative and intentional where there were elements such as observation, delegation, and accountability.

In that formative journey, the nineteen-year-old Timothy was in an internship (Acts 16:1-17:12), always serving under Paul's leadership. However, soon he took steps of responsibility (Acts 17:14-15), and under the leadership of Silas he experienced another level of commitment while serving in Berea. Next, his leadership skill was tested by circumstances, and he was sent alone to Thessalonica to be the head of the ministry. He was still very young, probably 20 years old and the context was hard, which is valuable for someone who was in the process of formation. The element of affection recurs in Paul's letter to his leaders each time he refers to them as spiritual sons, and also in the remembrance of their calling by God, and in giving them encouraging words, because, in spite of the team environment formation, the task of ministry involves a certain amount of solitude, a regular thing in leadership.

Organization

Discipleship is a great word concerning the new design for God's people in the New Testament. The Great Commission of Matthew 28 highlights how important it is for those sent by Jesus to not forget the essence of their vocation, that is, making disciples. Jesus' team was the first-ever team—defined, empowered, and coordinated—to implement the Church of God as a sign of God's kingdom. Jesus named them apostles.

Thus, apostles (sent) and disciples (learners) were structural words for the movement that touched the world. However, soon many others would be necessary in the organization, as deacons (servants), in Acts 6. Paul became the “brain” of the movement,

fired up by Jesus' resurrection especially among the Gentiles. The movement was plural, diverse, with a variety of needs and multiple gifted persons to accomplish such necessities. The body of Christ has many members, all of them with particular peculiarities, importance, and responsibilities.

Hence, crucial words were added to the vocabulary of the Christian movement:

(1) pastors, from the Greek word *poimen* which indicated care, and is the role that represents leadership; (2) prophets (proclaimers); (3) evangelists (the proclaimers of the Good News); and teachers (professors). These important words regardless, the primary concern was not to define positions, but to recognize a specific calling within the Body of Christ. Paul saw himself as an apostle (1 Cor. 15:9), and as one sent, and known as responsible for the implementation of local churches.

The Pauline context of ministry also had the foundational element of continuation of the called, equipped and sent leaders. "When Timothy is charged to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2), he stands in the new order of Christian preaching, in continuity with the apostolic commission" (Quicke Kindle Loc. 131). This mindset strengthened the unity and the collaboration among those who served.

The Wesleyan Movement

Wesley's Ordination

Ordination was a serious issue for John Wesley and this subject took a privileged spot in his ecclesiology. "He was ordained deacon in 1725 and priest in 1728. From that time forward, he never wavered in his belief in the validity of his own orders, continually affirming that he would remain in the Church of England until his death"(Bullen 124). However, as Methodism grew as an evangelistic movement, issues on ordination arose,

particularly concerning preaching and administrating the sacraments. Methodism eventually overcame these difficulties by recognizing the lay preacher's ministry and, later, ordaining leaders with no formal theological education.

Gwang Seok Oh in his study about Wesley's ecclesiology, uses the terms early Wesley, middle Wesley and later Wesley in referring to the stages of his life and ministry. Concerning ordination, he states: "Wesley wrestled with this issue at least as early as the 1740s. In his later period, however, we can more clearly see Wesley's theological transformation or evolution concerning the issue of ordination" (213). Understanding the roots of ordination, as Wesley understood it, is a prerequisite before arriving at the conclusions and historical outcomes.

Within the formal educational structure of the official church, Wesley was reluctant to accept lay people carrying on in roles of the ordained ones. The first one highlighted is public preaching. The experience of his mother serves as the reference for breaking down his antique patterns and thoughts.

Susanna Annesley Wesley

All relevant movements have key characters who actively participated in decisive moments; nevertheless, not all of them are recognized and historically honored as they should be. Fortunately, Susanna Wesley was not one of them. John Wesley's formation started at home. "It was, thus, since his first formation, in the environment of the parsonage used by Wesley's family that John Wesley had a continuous process of educational formation and growing of his spiritual practices" (Silva 41).

Susanna Wesley is referred to as the mother of Methodism, and frequently quoted for her important role in the foundation building process, namely, the education of her

children. Here, however, the main highlight goes to her participation in the historical moment when lay preachers started to perform ministry and faced the natural opposition of the time when only the clergy could do that.

Susanna Wesley had a strong theological conviction. In a letter to her son John, dated 27 November 1735, just after she lost her husband and moved in with her daughter Emilia Wesley Harper, she wrote:

God is being himself! The I am! And therefore, must necessarily be the supreme good! He is so infinitely blessed that every perception of his blissful presence imparts a vital gladness to the heart. Every degree of approach toward him is in the same proportion a degree of happiness. And I often think that were he always present in our minds as we are present to him, there could be no pain or sense of misery. I have long since chosen him for my only good! My all! My pleasure, my happiness in this world, as well as in the world to come! And although I have not been so faithful to his grace as I ought to have been, yet I feel my spirit adheres to its choice, and aims daily at cleaving steadfastly unto God. (Rogal 137)

Susanna Wesley's opinions of the lay preacher Thomas Maxfield (1720-1785) reflected the beginning of a great change to the movement. In a letter to John Wesley, she said: "take care what you do with respect to that young man; for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching and hear him yourself" (Kirk 253). The change took time as Samuel J. Rogal pointed out in his writing: "Keep in mind, however, that when Susanna Wesley died on 30 July 1742, the evangelical organization known as Methodism still lay in its infancy" (135).

Rediscovering biblical Redemption

John Wesley in his sermon about obedience to pastors said that they should go in front of the flock to guide them in truth and holiness, nurturing them with the pure Scriptures, directing the people in the doctrine and guiding them in justice. The pastoral commitment should consider two significant issues: "the primary goal was Christlikeness

and responsibility, as accountable to God of every soul” (249). “The search for holiness is the focus of Wesley’s theology” states Heitzenrater (36). With a practical reflection, John Wesley did not see ministry as an end in itself but was meant to restore the church, and, consequently, influence the world.

The theological focus of early Methodism was salvation-centered. “From the beginning and throughout his development, Wesley’s prime concern was with human salvation” (Langford 6). His theology added experience later, as the editor Albert C. Outler delineated when he systematized the “quadrilateral,” remembering that the first three were scripture, tradition, and reason. From the experimental field of practice, his reflection was molded along the advance of the movement. “Themes of repentance, faith, and holiness were the most fundamental doctrines upon which salvation thinking was built” continues Langford (6).

The importance of proclamation as the heart of the movement was the unfolding of understanding about biblical redemption. The boldness of the Methodist itinerant preachers was based upon the confidence that God himself called them to proclaim salvation through faith in Christ. Once questioned by an Anglican bishop about his credentials to be an itinerant preacher, he answered: “perhaps it is not familiar to you, but I know that God put it in my hands” (Ensley 24). Wesley’s new understanding of biblical redemption explains where his evangelistic passion came from.

The Authority of Scripture

“A man of one book” is probably the most well-known statement about John Wesley in the sense of the Scriptures for Christian faith and practice (Preface to the sermons 5; WJW 1:104-06). The Methodist theological reflection grew upon such

declaration and its unfolding. However, in spite of outcomes in the past, the Church continuously struggled about the way to interpret the Bible. Wesley also did it in his own time. Scott Jones mentions that he used to take most of the Bible texts literally; however, eventually, he explained some figuratively. With lens focused on the doctrine of salvation, the Bible was read and taught firmly to make “the application text clear to his readers” (187).

The concern about people’s salvation and the preparation of leaders trained to proclaim the way of salvation delineated the interpretation. Nevertheless, Wesley and his contemporaries upheld the authority of the biblical revelation usually on the classical principles of divine inspiration, the tradition of the church, and the internal witness of the Holy Spirit in the believer. “Wesley’s whole relationship to Scripture is bound up in his understanding of the unity of authority, Scripture and Christian life” (221). Wesley summarized his own rules of interpretation into seven, as follows: Speak as the Oracles of God; Use the literal sense unless it contradicts another Scripture or implies an absurdity; Interpret the text with regard to its literary context; Scripture interprets Scripture, according to the analogy of faith and by parallel passages; Commandments are covered promises; Interpret literary Devices appropriately; and, Seek the most original text and the best translation (189–213).

The authority of Scripture is the ground where his theological reflection grew. As Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquardt state, Wesley’s “full confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible closely approximates that of the Pietists” (My trans.; 47). As always, practice was the most crucial issue that pushed the reading and interpretation of the Bible along tradition and reason. Wesley intended his notes on the New Testament to

support his preachers in their practice. John Wesley believed in the unity of the New Testament, and assumed that his preachers would read the Notes with that unity in mind.

Wesley's sermons and writings were full of Bible quotes, and the Old Testament was considered on the same level of authority along with the New Testament pointing the readers to Salvation through Christ. His teachings held to the infallibility and divine inspiration of the Scriptures. He thereby, states Klaiber and Marquardt, "affirmed the position on the canon that had been set forth by the protestant reformers" (48), which is vital for the following reflection on this research, namely, the heritage of the restoration of lay ministry.

Lay ministers and their role in the small groups

Smith says that the heart of the Methodist movement was "the use of different groups to meet specific needs" (358). He identified some categories of those as follows: Class Meetings, Bands, Selected Societies, and Penitent Bands. They worked from recovery from addiction up to training for leadership ministry. Leadership was necessary for many levels of the organization and mostly were not ordained to accomplish those tasks.

Such a strategy made effectiveness of life in the community possible even in a crowded congregation. The multiplication of accountability and teaching were powerful tools in the environment of societies and bands, and leadership only became possible with the emergence of an army of lay ministers. Chad Short, in his text about the relevance of Wesleyan theology in the post-modern context, states that "Wesley's theology always called people away from isolated individualism and into the community. His theology also went a step further" (236). Lay preachers led communities where Christian values

were taught, strengthening the communities within a movement that originated a strong church.

Christine Margaret Pocock investigated the origins, development, and significance of the circuit in the connectional structure of Methodism. In her focus on the circuits, two other subjects—*itinerancy* and *lay preachers*—pertinent to this present research, became evident.

John Wesley (1703-91), a priest of the Church of England, though not licensed to a parish, was convinced that the parish clergy of the Established Church was failing to reach those most in need of the Gospel. He considered that parishioners' souls were being neglected by those with responsibility for their 'cure', an itinerant ministry appeared to Wesley to be how these shortcomings could be remedied. Wesley intended the itinerant ministry to complement the work and worship of the parishes, but it was not to be constrained significantly by traditional parish boundaries, despite this being contrary to canon law. He began his itinerant ministry in 1739. (13)

Wesley soon defended the importance of *itinerancy* to lay preachers also, and such understanding is an appropriate link to the current subject, namely, lay ministers and their journey in full-time ministry. Winfield H. Bevins highlights that significant movements were built on lay leadership. He adds:

Part of Wesley's genius was his ability to select, train, and gather lay leaders around him who became extensions of his own personal vision. The rapid and miraculous growth of Methodism would not have been possible without the endeavors and self-sacrifice of those early Methodist leaders. John Wesley famously said in a letter, give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth. (Loc. 902)

One of the features of the Methodist movement's lay army was the preaching. Souza remembers how secure Wesley was about the knowledge of his preachers, equipped with heavenly wisdom. He remembers that Wesley was not against intellectualism; on the contrary, he frequently recommended good reading and "made a

personal effort to make the good literature available for a low cost” (155). David Ward asks what makes a preacher good. Highlighting the concepts of centered humility, compassionate empathy and participatory wisdom, Ward believes that using contemporary words and concepts challenge clergy and lay people to a meaningful ministry approach (37).

The contemporary Issue

Overall, the Christian Church has not had many examples of great steps promoting radical changes. Minor corrections pushed transformation when small mistakes led the Church to proactive actions. John Wesley was challenged to change his mind concerning lay preachers, and, in the end he was convicted about their importance to advancement of the Gospel. He trusted his lay preachers to have a high standard for knowledge of theology. “They are not ignorant, he said, and they are ready to take a substantial test and experiment as the candidates to ordination usually take” (Wesley 251). To identify and to analyze the subject of ordination in Brazilian Methodism is to collect small pieces of change along the way since the independence of this denomination in 1930. Only from 1965 and 1970/71 did the General Conferences take over its own history. Moreover, since the position of designated missionary started in 2001, it call church’s attention to a new phase in its history.

Brazilian Bishop’s Reflection on Ordination

The College of Bishops, after the XVI General Conference of 1997, commended Bishop Stanley da Silva Moraes, an honorarium bishop who was serving in the central office of the general church, to design a special program at the Methodist University to revisit the themes of vocation, space, and the function of the ordained ministry. The

outcome after deep research, was an important paper, that became the critical perspective of a Brazilian bishop about the church's attitude toward the ordained ministry during a reevaluation process.

Such commendation was a reaction to conversation from the local communities that ended up in a proposal to extinguish the eldership order at the 1997 General Conference. Basically, the question was: "if everyone is a minister of God, why do we need a special order?" The ballot was not approved; however, it awoke the church to the need for a serious conversation and clarification about the subject.

Bishop Moraes' work was very helpful to this present research for two major reasons: First, it was performed by a bishop of the church with vast experience concerning this subject. Second, he looked carefully at ordained ministry in the important historic period between 1965 and 1998, thereby giving a good historical perspective.

The Ordained Ministry Before 1998

The General Conferences of 1965 and 1970/71 were the moments when the Brazilian Methodism took control of its history, making a cut in the historical timeline. Although the autonomy of Brazilian Methodism happened in 1930, its first thirty years was spiritually and economically dependent on the mother church. At this point, the Brazilian Methodism started to review its practices, structures, ministries, and orders. This was a period of many internal conflicts, leadership changing, losing and adding new members. The General Conference should be formed with 50% composed by the eldership order, and the bishops would be part of them. (Moraes 46)

After the General Conference of 1965, the Book of Discipline had two orders, ministerial and laity; "the first was composed by elders and the second by deacons" (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1965* 17). "The elder is ordained by the bishop's laying hands, just after his election by the regional conference. He is itinerant and member of his

regional conference. He has lifelong in ministry. It [eldership] is the full ministry of the church. Just men and theology bachelor's graduates had access to such position in church" "O presbítero é ordenado pela imposição de mãos de um Bispo, depois de eleito por um Concílio Regional. Ele tem vitaliciedade no ministério. É o ministério pleno da Igreja. A ele só tem acesso pessoas do sexo masculino que tenham nível superior de teologia." (My trans.; Moraes 47).

At this point, Bishop Moraes interpreted the evolution of the eldership order. With the 1970/71 General Conference, which was held in two phases, the changes came. The ministerial order made up of elders changed to the eldership order. Ordination was opened to both men and women, and also no longer required a bachelor's degree (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1971* 13). However, in the XI General Conference of 1974, the bachelor's degree became an essential requirement again. Now, a bachelor's degree in theology from other institutions recognized by the General Board of Education is accepted.

One important issue was the back and forth change on the main subject of this research along with the appointment of lay people for ordained functions. In 1971, the category of supplementary pastor was created to embrace called people who had no required qualifications to reach the eldership order (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1971* 27). further, the possibility arose for the appointment of theology students and lay people as voluntary local pastors (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1971* 67). The XII General Conference of 1979 retained the eldership order as it was, but the voluntary local pastor was replaced by the evangelist pastor (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1979* 85).

The XIII General Conference reaffirmed the order of elders established at the former General Conference, with the bachelor's degree as the minimal theological formation; however, the degree could be earned in a different institution other than the Methodist. Those who come from a non-Methodist institution require extra training on Methodism (My trans.; Colégio Episcopal, 1982 *Cânones* 115). Moreover, that General Conference ended the position of evangelist pastor and created the pastor evangelist ministry (219). Such modifications evidenced the difficulty of dealing with the struggle between ordained and lay people. That conference was the setting where ministry became essential over structure, and the term's definitions symbolized the struggle. Once more, Bishop Moraes' interpretation of the facts in his research offered the foundation for this present research:

In this period of five years after the 1982 GC, the ordained ministry struggled with a deep identity crisis. Which would be its specificity? In practical ways, ordained and non-ordained ministers are evaluated identically. What validates the ministry is not the order anymore, but the fruits. The charisma is specially evaluated by the fruits, not by the formation, by the sense of belonging to an order (. . .)the discussion about the existence of an ordained ministry was established, as many churches realized that many non-ordained pastors were more fruitful than the ordained ones. (Moraes 75)

The period from 1988 to 1991 saw the most relevant change happen in Brazilian Methodism: the implementation of the Gifts and Ministries plan, “which was not a new program, but a movement that would define a new way of being a church” (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1988* 5). At this point in the history of the church, ordained ministry did not receive much attention, because the focus of the church relied with hope on the new plan.

A Calling Campaign

In 1992, the Theology College of the Methodist Church of Brazil, the central place for pastoral formation so far, wrote a document promoting a great campaign to awaken new pastors for the ministry. It sought to be a national movement in the first few years after the approval of Gifts and Ministries which changed in 1986. It cannot be seen as above other ministries, said Professor Josgrilberg in his foreword to the document.

Specialists of the Old Testament and New Testament, respectively, point to two texts that clarify the elements of a calling. Tércio M. Siqueira highlights four called characters from the Old Testament to conclude that their highest joy in ministry was to accomplish their mission. Pastoral and prophetic ministry is a contemporary need to overcome the tendency of self-care. From the New Testament perspective, Paulo Roberto Garcia points to the resurrection as the main subject for the called the gospel.

Along with Bible Study and Sermon, the 1992 document issued by the Theology College of the Methodist Church of Brazil attached liturgies that could be used by the local church while the campaign was spreading. Another, and perhaps the most practical side of this initiative, was the attachment that clarified the role of that institution in the process of formation by the main theological education institute of the Methodist Church in Brazil.

Students and Scholars discussing pastoral Calling

The 1988 General Conference made the Bishops responsible for general administration (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 1988* 171), and they made the appointment of academics not possible. The college of bishops made the administrative decisions to bar theology students from appointment as academic pastors and to end the system where the theology graduates were automatically appointed as certified candidates. Those

decisions motivated students and scholars to dedicate a special week of theological debate on the subject of pastoral calling.

The speeches focused on the calling related to ordained ministry. A call from God has two distinct moments; the first one is private involving personal discernment, and the second one is in the community when the congregation follows the insight of the candidate and endorses it by confirming with church approval.

Helmut Henders, one of the scholars of the special theological summit called Wesleyan Week, stated three essential things: (1) The call requires a pastoral charisma; (2) The pastoral-theological formation helps to develop the charisma, but does not take its place; and, (3) The ordination is the church's authorization for the called to play his/her vocation (6).

Two scholars, already quoted before, spoke during that Wesleyan week, and their essays were a continuation of their teaching in the calling campaign promoted in 1992. Here, they repeated and expanded their reflection following the new challenges faced by the church. A couple of years before, the church was in search of more students and the university was clarifying the message and the process for ministry. Now, about ten years later, in a new moment, the reflection took the direction of the essence of the calling and the meaning of ordination.

No mention or any quote about Designated Missionaries, the primary object of our research, is found here because, while those environments were nationwide, the appointment of lay people for missionary tasks as Designated Missionaries took place as a specific action from the Sixth Conference. Meanwhile, Bishop Nelson Luiz Campos Leite was designated Dean for the theology students; within the years 1997 to 2003, he

studied about one hundred students concerning “calling, expectations, and motivations” (18). That effort did not touch on fruitfulness at first; it focused on the pastor’s emotional health, worked as upstream action toward health ministries.

The First Designated Missionary

The year 2002 saw the very first appointment of a laywoman as a Designated Missionary. The appointment did not substitute for any other format previously used, although, it recalled some structure already used before. Edna Regina Ruiz concluded her basic theology graduation and made herself available for appointment. The bishop appointed her to the missionary field of Sertanópolis. After five years serving as Designated Missionary there, she was appointed to a different missionary field, Santa Cecília of Pavão with the status of certified candidate for the pastoral ministry. A year later, in 2008, she was transferred to another missionary field, called Santa Mariana. She is now a consecrated pastor of the Conference.

Certified candidates had to be on probation from two to five years as required by the Book of Discipline (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 2017* 50). The same was required for candidates to eldership. Those with bachelor’s degrees from other non-Methodist institutions had to be on probation for a minimum of four to, at most, five years. Nevertheless, the law allowed the candidates to take advantage of their missionary experience and to ask the Board of Ordained Ministries for a one-year probationary period. If granted, candidates can be ordained/consecrated after just one year of probation, as in the case of the missionary Edna.

Since the first DM appointment, 183 have been designated to serve through this fruitfulness challenge. A complete list numbered in order and identified by numbers is

attached as Appendix G. The researcher extracted data from that chart to reflect upon some very interesting historical information. The sixteen years in the first line is the timeline for the status change, which is critical for its interpretation.

2.1 Total of Missionaries Designated

General Table	
Not in Ministry	63
Yes in Ministry	120
Total	183

The first chart shows the total number of DM, namely, 183. 115 out of it are still in ministry, 63 of them did not achieved their goal and are not in ministry anymore.

2.2 Total of Elders and Pastors Approved

Autonomy Table	
Elder	32
Achieved	7
Status changed by other criteria	25
Pastor	16
Achieved	10
Status changed by other criteria	6
Total	48

The second chart shows the number of elders ordained and pastors consecrated from the new starting process. With 48 in total, 32 of them were ordained and 16 consecrated. As mentioned before, the candidates took different paths in their theological formation. It does not prevent pastors from moving on in their studies pursuing the bachelor's degree. As soon as pastors earn the degree, they can apply to change their status to the ordained category. Status change occur mostly between the fifth and seventh years of ministry.

2.3 Approved Pastors and Elders who Reached the Highest Goal

Table of Data	
Elder	7
Achieved	7
Pastor	10
Achieved	10
Total	17

According to the extracted files of the councils of the Sixth Conference of the Methodist Church of Brazil, 25 self-sustained churches have been approved since 2002. The chart number 3 shows that 17 of them were led by DM.

2.4 Statistics of Interruption

Not in Ministry Table	
Not in Ministry	63
Dead	2
Dismissed	2
Quit	59
Total	63

The very first chapter of this research mentions the high number of candidates leaving the ministry. This is confirmed here; 63 out of 183 are no longer designated. This chart shows the major reasons noted in the Conference's files. Two died, two were interrupted, and fifty-nine asked to leave. Also, the greatest concentration of those who left happened on the four first years, more than 50%.

The mother church involvement

The following questions are from the tradition of the Methodist Church: "Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they gifts, as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they fruit? As long as these marks occur in them, we believe they are called of God to serve. These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit" (General Conference 224). Those were the most basic elements required for certification as licensed and ordained ministry; along with minor elements, the historical

elements are transferable and extemporal. Those were the crucial elements which set someone apart for the pastoral ministry. “Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?” (General Conference 224). Currently, the church used to ask if the candidates have theological education.

From early 2000, Brazilian communities were challenged to get involved with a higher commitment level and with the moment to send their member to the candidacy for the ministry journey. The question to be asked for the church local leadership in charge of the candidate should be: “would this church like to receive this candidate as its lead pastor after his/her theological preparation?” Such question should push the leaders into a deeper conversation about needs and possibilities, calling and fruitification, experience and commitment.

Recommendation by the community is a requirement for those who want to engage in theological study, and it is intentional in the pastoral career. This is helpful because it gives the community a longer period of time to evaluate and support the student. A candidate from the local church is oriented about the journey challenges even before starting the process.

Meanwhile, from the start of engagement with the local church throughout the baptism, until the official meeting where his/her name is appreciated and put to vote, the member is observed naturally. As mentioned before, the church participates actively in the calling discernment, thus, endorsing the candidate’s continuation; the church shows itself involved in prayer, commitment, and, not rarely, financially also.

Movements from General Conference on behalf of the Ordination Process

“In the United Methodist Church, whenever candidates’ assurance of a call to ministry has been followed by the confirmation of that call by the action of the church, the candidates become probationary members, and ordained as either deacon or elder and accepted as members of their annual conference in connection” (Klaiber and Marquardt 380). The Brazilian Methodist Church gained its autonomy on September 02, 1930, with three conferences, South, Central, and North. The national church built its documents based on the heritage of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.

Getting acquainted with so many needs and focused on the advance, until the General Conference of 2006, candidates to ordination used to be members of their bi-annual conferences. In other words, they were members of the assembly and, among many other attributions, they elected the Board of Ordained Ministers that would later evaluate them. At the XVIII General Conference performed in two phases, such a mistake was fixed.

Under new legislation, certified candidates continued their membership in the local church that recommended them to theological studies (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 2007* 172), thus changing a practice of considering the candidates clergy from their appointment. Such change was adjusted by an action called ‘complementary act’ which dealt with discipline subject and with the possibility of resuming the process (Colégio Episcopal, *Ato Complementar 01/2007*).

Designated Missionary’s Regulation

The Brazilian Book of Discipline, namely, Canons, in Article 16 says: “The ministry of the missionary performed by laypeople, is recognized and embraced by the Methodist Church, under the authority and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the name of

God, to serve the church at the local, district, regional, national and international spheres, through specific regulation of the Missionary director's plan" (Colégio Episcopal, *Cânones 2017* 31).

In 2018, the bishops regulated the Designated Missionary ministry through an official document. There, they clarified the minimal education needed for such a position. There were four possibilities, and every one of them must be linked to CONET (National Coordination of Theological Education). Missionary courses, evangelist courses, initial pastoral theological formation, or bachelor's degree, could be the starting point to make themselves available for appointment as Designated Missionaries in a variety of possibilities accordingly based on the Conference's needs.

This regulation became the most significant document for the Designated Missionary position. It not only referred to the minimum required theological education, but also clarified how the Designated Missionaries are to do their ministry since taking religious vows, and elucidated the details of the sphere of appointment and the pastoral role to be performed. Finally, this regulation defined some of the most important issues concerning the designation as financial maintenance and supervision (Colégio Episcopal, *Regulamentação para Designação de Missionário/a*).

Fruitfulness as Part Requirement

Fruitfulness Project for Ordination and Full Membership is the title of the requirement adopted by the South Georgia UMC (SGUMC) since 2012. It followed the same way of thinking that many institutions, including the Brazilian Methodist Church, have done. Reflecting on the purpose of the church, effectiveness is remembered as a non-negotiable requirement for its leadership.

Effective with the 2012 Discipline, those seeking ordination will present “a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church’s mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The biblical emphasis upon fruitfulness is clear. Jesus spoke of his disciples being known by their fruitfulness. John Wesley asked his ministers again and again, “Are there fruits?” We are accountable for achieving outcomes that move us toward our mission. The emphasis upon fruitfulness is what moves the church from a maintenance mentality to a mission mentality. (SGUMC)

“Are there fruits?” With those words, the Board of Ordained Ministers of SGUMC remembered the roots of Methodism, which is deeply engaged with Jesus’ teaching. They recognized losing the track along the way, and just quoting basic Bible texts and some historic documents was enough to engage the conference in an action of revitalization for its pastoral leadership. In their example, the option chosen was a project with clear guidelines and objective accountability. With the assessment of the Board, the candidate would have a chance to face the challenge that would refine their calling.

The goals of the project had to search for leadership skills, understand the ministry settings, and work in teams; more specifically, it sought to understand what fruitfulness meant and how to achieve it. The Brazilian approach went further, making the project the path itself; however, it can be identified as the same inspirational action toward the same objectives.

The Local Church as a Missionary Community

As the United Methodist Church has the odd purpose statement of *making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*, the Brazilian Methodism has its own prophetic purpose statement: *we are a missionary community serving the people*. Actually, such a statement endorses understanding the local church as the main missionary agency. Bishop Canfield declared: “The missionary work does not happen out of the context of the church” (57).

The national missionary plan (2017-2021) states the following highlight:

Pastoral ministry is understood by the Protestant vision as a special ministry called and equipped for the zeal of preaching the Word, the correct application of the sacraments, and care for the essential hallmarks of the church; also, zeal for the community as a whole, all of that as a mandate of the church. The pastoral charisma is not only individual. It needs knowledge along the church's charisma in the apostolic dimension. This fact is visible when the church ordains pastoral ministry. For that reason, Protestant tradition recognizes the pastoral ministry as a mandate for the church, and not only for the individual. In pastoral ministry, personal charisma cannot overcome the ministerial charisma of the Church. (My trans.; Colégio Episcopal, *Plano Nacional Missionário 2017* 65)

Research Design Literature

This pre-intervention research focused on the transitions promoted to starting the process of leadership in the Methodist Church from an almost automatic process that took people from the position of gifted lay servants to the trained and empowered clergy team. Understanding that the D.Min. project, as Sensing says, “is a type of action where the researcher becomes a co-participant with the community in the process of gathering and interpreting data to enable new and transformative modes of action.” (63), this study is intended to offer an intentional and focused analysis of reality and search for possibilities on how the Church can improve the ordination process to aid in its growth. This qualitative research and pre-intervention project is looking for a proper perspective, trying to be neutral with no bias toward anybody or anything, with the purpose of suggesting tools to support the beginners. The goal is to determine possible ways of improving the ordination process, based on the Methodist Church's understanding of the Bible, the first steps, and consolidation of the movement, given the Church's heritage in use and constant transformation.. The real issue is the need for wise criteria that embrace

the theoretical and practical aspects of clergy leadership, and appropriate tools to help them.

Summary of Literature

Much literature is written about the first part of this research, especially after the Sixteenth Century Protestant Reformation. It does not make the analysis easier, because narrowing the subject in question was difficult. Of many roads available for reflecting on contemporary contextualization, this section of the literature review highlights three.

The Biblical-theological section covers the great rupture promoted by Jesus' ministry followed by the apostolic Church organization, especially under the apostle Paul's leadership. The religious system was confronted by this new way of interpreting and practicing relationship with God, with no other mediators, but Christ alone. This brand-new perspective differed from every other religion's reality proposed so far, which was difficult even for Jesus' closest followers. With no need for mediators, every person can be free to serve God freely, and eventually the relevance of clergy leadership has been questioned.

The second significant part of this research focuses on the Sixteenth and Eighteenth centuries in their approach to the subject of the clergy system and its processes. The main issue was about returning to the roots of the apostolic church because they lived closer to the great rupture promoted by Jesus. The researcher narrowed it down by analyzing the Wesleyan movement that broke with the formal tradition of rescuing the element of the layperson and by taking action on what used to be only a clergy attribution. Both the apostolic church and the Wesleyan movement were marked by great multitudes being touched by a renovation.

Now, in the particular context of a conference within a not-so-big denomination, a sample of the very same challenge was happening, that is, a renovation from the understanding that there is no possibility of the church keeping on growing with no clarity about the role of each part in the Body of Christ. Minor changes have been established to make it happen. In both the first two significant parts of this undertaking, however, the literature supported discerning and understanding this critical moment, and mainly, the reality that other tools are necessary where the church is at present. Naturally, not much literature exists about the present situation, except for the documents and experiences explored in the interviews and statistics.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes the research methodology used to develop this transformational project. Starting with a review and detailing the nature of the project, the researcher explains how and why the specific participants and the context were chosen. The research questions are addressed through reliable instrumentation connected with collection and data analysis that answer them and accomplish the purpose of the project. Also, the factors that contributed to the validity and reliability are mentioned.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

Ordination has been an old and broad subject in the Christian Church. Setting apart vocationed people to perform specific tasks in ministry has been noted since the formation of the early Church in the apostolic community, and the Methodist movement has not been an exception among many other branches of Christianity. Ever since the start of the Methodist Movement, discussion about the process of setting apart some leaders to be ministers has been subject to study, dialogues, reflection, and even conflicts. The purpose of this project was to identify best practices for equipping Designated Missionaries serving as pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church in order to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration.

The Brazilian Methodist Church became independent in 1930, with three geographically large conferences. The church has grown since then, but the Sixth Conference was created only in 1965. The organizational structure followed the model of

the UMC General Conference and its Book of Discipline, which dealt carefully and thoroughly with the topic of ordination, always pushed by its calling for the mission's advance. Some important historical actions must be mentioned as attempts to make the structures functional, to involve lay members, and to promote church growth. Among those actions were the multiplication of the conferences, the plan of life and mission (PVM), and the Gifts and Ministries organizational strategy. Those subjects were studied exhaustively and served as historical foundation for the current context.

With this spirit of improvement, the Conference implemented an organic process of appointment, starting at the conference of 2001, touching subjects such as theological education, laity involvement, simple structures, and others. The changes were minimal, but expressed signs that something bigger was to come. At that point, all graduates of theology who asked, was appointed as provisional pastor or provisional elder. In the routine of the ministry, they could have the same rights as the clergy, and their participation in the councils was assured. It was only in 2006, in the XVIII General Conference, the church approved the legislation where the certified candidate had no more the same rights of the clergy ones. At the following General Conference in 2011, the same article was expanded preventing them of being delegate to the regional councils and keeping their status of a lay person with his/her name in their home church registers. Thus, in 2006 the certified candidate position was clarified as a separate condition of laity pursuing ordination.

Those changes reflected the establishment of the character of the DM, a Methodist member who had a minimal theological education and put him/herself available for the pastoral appointment. With the first appointment of a DM in 2002, the

process was started, and in 2009 it was consolidated, being declared as the only entrance door to start the ordination process at the Sixth Conference.

The present research sought to identify the best practices for equipping those DM for their effectiveness in ministry since such fruitfulness became the primary prerequisite for their consecration/ordination. In this chapter, the researcher attempted to collect a diversity of data from the appropriated instrumentation in its context to substantiate the findings.

Research Questions

In order to identify the practice of the Sixth Conference concerning its pastoral leadership from the calling discernment, probationary appointment, and consequent ordination, the researcher will follow the guidelines of three research questions. Questionnaires and interviews will be performed with the four different groups of people, the Bishop, the DSs, the approved pastors, and the missionaries/certified, but always following the same patterns, just adapting the questions to get the specific perspectives of the different positions.

RQ #1. In the opinion of the bishop, district superintendents, designated missionaries serving as local pastors, ordained pastors, and consecrated pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church, what promotes the equipping of designated missionaries serving as pastors to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration?

This RQ is addressed to the leadership, to the approved DM, and also to the current missionaries. Two different sets of five open questions were addressed to the bishop and the district superintendents' interview, a set of five questions asked to the

ministers already approved, and a final set of five questions to those who are still in process, both used for the survey. The primary purpose was to identify the practice from the different perspectives of those who are at different positions with their particular point of view. The data from the interviews and the surveys were the source of a balanced understanding of how the Conference has had equipped the DM.

RQ #2. In the opinion of the bishop, district superintendents, designated missionaries serving as local pastors, ordained pastors and consecrated pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church, what hinders the equipping of designated missionaries serving as pastors to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration?

Answering this question brought to the researcher condition to analyze and synthesize the expectations of the large community of the Conference. It addressed straight to the purpose of the project, and the balance of the outcomes brought great value to the research. At this point, the participants were engaged in the reflection of possibilities of how the ministry could be developed. The semi-structured open-ended questions guided the interviews to identify the practices already used within the conference in order to equip the DMs. In the same way, the five questions prompted the survey to extract the current candidates and the same for the approved pastors' perspective about the Conference's equipping for the pastoral ministry. One final yes/no question was set up to identify what kind of education the candidate had when first appointed. Such answer clarified whether the candidate is pursuing ordination or consecration position in church.

RQ #3. What are the best practices and strategies moving forward for equipping designated missionaries serving as pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church to increase their ministry effectiveness?

This question was approached by the prompts extracted from both perspectives, leaders, and participants, having the findings within the interviews and surveys along with the literature review.

Ministry Context

The current MTP approach was developed within an episcopal, conciliar, and connectional church, in a representative structured system. The bishops are the pastors of pastors and chairs of the bi-annual regional conferences. Today there are eight regular conferences, plus two missionary ones chaired by bishops. Together, the ten church leaders form the College of the Bishops. Ultimately, the conferences represented by half clergy and half laity delineates the church's journey with its plans and legislation.

Thus, the leaders appointed or elected are responsible for following the laws and executing their plans. Furthermore, the connectional issue is a great thing; therefore, itinerancy promotes the connection among communities, districts, and with the conference. The episcopal authority is critical in this context because he/she encourages the unit of the organization as one body under the same mission to accomplish the unique vision.

This project glimpsed to navigate in the ecclesiology issue of the Brazilian Methodist organization researching the ordination matter as it moved under minor changes during the last twenty years. The order of the elders is recognized as the most essential part of the church to strengthen the connection of local communities and the conciliar feature. Nevertheless, as a missionary church, the leadership understood that the tendency to keep

the status quo challenged the outreach, and consequently, it's growing. The reflection about the purpose of the church, its tradition and calling promoted renovation, and the leaders started to organically promote changes.

From this starting point, this process was discussed in many spheres all over the conferences. However, in the Sixth Conference, the very first to inaugurate the Designated Missionary position, the church pass through the experience in 2002 to the determination in 2009 that it would be the only way to start the eldership path.

The evangelical church in Brazil is growing, and the government office projects the impressive numbers of reaching 40% of the population up to 2030. Despite these numbers, the Methodist Church didn't follow the growth in the same speed but still grew. Within this context, movements from the local communities started to expand and to plant new churches, requiring new pastors to take care those groups. The appointment of lay people was a possible solution to that.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

The participants interviewed were the bishop and the District Superintendents, and the those who answer the survey were the designated missionaries, and also the group of elders and pastors who started as DM already approved. As mentioned in chapter one, the geographic delimitation was the border of the conference. All people involved directly in this process of starting the ministry through the effectiveness criteria were invited to participate. The pool of potential participants came from the yearly episcopal documents in between 2001 and 2020. Within this gap, there were 184 DM appointments in the Sixth Conference. The

survey was directed only for the active one's, namely, 41 approved DMs and 72 still in process DMs. From those still in process, 13 had their status changed to the provisional elders/pastors, however, for the research they were counted as still in process DMs.¹

The questionnaires that guided the interviews were directed to the two spheres of leadership, namely, to the bishop and the current team of District Superintends. The survey embraced two more substantial groups, namely, the DM's team and to the approved pastors and elders. Both were a goal for collection of data concerning the experiment, however, while the approved ones were a source of the implementation, the group still in process were a source of the consolidation, adjustments and confirmation of the fruitfulness project.

An invitation to participate was sent by email, to the total of 124 people. The two larger groups had to fill an online survey form, while the interviewed ones did that individually in person or through online meetings via Zoom applicative. Both ways of the interview were recorded with the interviewed awareness and authorization.

Description of Participants

There is no prejudice concerning the age, length of appointment, or gender. All DM and approved DM were invited. The significant division among them, namely, the Bachelor's degree in Theology graduates, and the non-graduates, does not affect the purpose of this research. In the conference process, it will make a difference in

¹ The two larger lists of missionary still in process and the missionaries already approved and elected clergy were drawn from the episcopal annual appointment documents (2001-2019), available in the Sixth Conference Office.

the position they will take after final approval. Nevertheless, no significant discrepancy in their routine of ministry exists.

The younger participants started around 23 years of age, and impressively, some missionaries started in their sixties. Still, in this case, common-sense states that they are not pursuing ordination/consecration, but taking advantage of the possibility to serve in full-time ministry. The selected group had no internationals. Diverse is a great word to describe the participants, and for that reason, the research was accurate in data collection.

Ethical Considerations

The fact that the four groups were clearly delineated made inessential the need to identify themselves individually, but only each group that they belonged to. The only exception was the interview with the bishop. A consent form was provided to each one of them with guaranteed confidentiality of the content of the data. A copy of the consent letter for the interviewees is attached as Appendix E, and a copy of the consent letter for the persons who answered the surveys as Appendix F.

The significant findings of this research were shared with the D.Min. program cohort and with the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky campus. The investigator also shared the most significant results with the Sixth Conference leadership. This team is a group composed of four clergies, including the bishop and four laypeople, all of them elected at the bi-annual conference, except for the bishop. No other information was shared by the researcher, just the relevant findings.

The electronic files of the recorded interviews were stored in the researcher's devices protected by a personal password, and no one has access to it except the researcher.

The hard copy questionnaire; transcriptions were kept in a securely locked room up to two years after the conclusion of the research project and finally destroyed.

Instrumentation

For this transformational project, the researcher designed two instruments used to collect the data. First were the interviews along with questionnaires, and the second was the survey using the Likert scale. With those instruments, the researcher collected data about how the DM's project began from its establishment, becoming the only way of starting the journey to ordination/consecration. Also, the instruments collected quantitative/qualitative data, revealing the best practices to acquire the best results.

First, the interview focused on leadership. Sensing declares, "the main purpose of the interview is to obtain a special kind of information" (104). In this case, the interviewed leaders were the primary source of history or how the adjustment of the process created a new understanding within the Conference, its accomplishments and difficulties. Guided by the purpose statement, the questionnaire was used in the interviews of the whole project. The model adopted was the semi-structured interview that Sensing described as using "specified themes, issues, and questions with a predetermined sequence" (107).

Second, the survey with two different sets of questions was conducted online between September and December with two different sets of people, namely, DMs still in process and DMs already approved. According to Sensing, "the purpose of a survey is to describe characteristics or understandings of a large group of people" (115). The forty-one Designated Missionaries approved in this process, and the seventy-two still pursuing ordination, formed a valuable source of information based on experience. The researcher was interested in comparing the perspectives of these two groups of pastors who serve

primarily under the same circumstances. Many categories are possible within that document, such as the large group who quit, another group who were discontinued, or the group who had their status promoted to the provisional period. Another important piece of information acquired was the average time the candidates took to reach their goal.

After the conclusion of the interviews, the outcomes were studied to find keywords and recurring themes that pointed to best practices and struggles in implementing the new ordination starting process of the Conference. Also, the opinions gathered from the survey served as accurate indications of the different perspectives. Findings from the literature review were synthesized with findings from the interviews, along with those from the surveys in the context of the organization of the growing process at the conference.

Expert Review

Since the researcher designed the assessment instrument of the questionnaire to guide the interview, and also the questions for the survey, an expert review was necessary. Three expert reviewers were engaged in this process, Dr. Ellen Marmon, Dr. Milton Lowe, and Dr. Burrell Dinkins were chosen to offer support to this task.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

In order to figure out the best source of information about the DM in the Sixth Conference, the researcher used reliable instruments of interviews and surveys. Both were administrated in a very consistent basis, searching for the best practices, and used to improve the effectiveness of the missionaries. Multiple sources of data were used, and the survey had a response rate over 75 percent. Expert reviewers checked this tool.

Also, the semistructured questionnaires for the interviews gathered valid and reliable information regarding the opinions of every DM's supervisor. The questions

were sent to them two weeks in advance. In transcribing the answers, notes were added about corporal behavior, emotions, and pauses, creating a substantial basis for qualitative research. The open questions were aligned with the RQs and guided the interview to what has been done and what hinders equipping the laity who were pursuing ordination.

Data Collection

The pre-intervention project used a qualitative survey and interviews as tools for collecting data. The survey was done using Survey Monkey and was sent to all the DM in-process, and also to all the approved ones. An email was sent letting them know the purpose of the research, with the consent letter and the timeline to answer it.

The interviews were scheduled individually through email. They were informed about the subject, the process, and the consent letter; most interviews were held in person. For those who were not able to meet in person, an online meeting was held through Zoom. Interviews, both in-person and online, were recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

Both instruments of data collection focused on investigation of the new process of starting the journey for ordination, aligned with the research questions figuring out what promotes and what hinders equipping them for ministry. Nevertheless, careful attention was given in searching for the larger perception on the subject within the conference.

Data Analysis

The four categories of people/positions intentionally chosen to express the different perspectives were kept all the time during data collection, offering four points of view. To be meaningful, the evaluation sought to focus on the core of the research.

After getting familiarized with the data through reading and reflection on it, the researcher organized it. The strategy was to categorize themes, categories, and patterns in subheadings with relevant topics to be analyzed. The subheadings for difficulties that hinder candidates from being equipped are listed under the theme, Equipping Barriers (EB). Another set of headings was listed under the title, Best Practices (BP).

Sensing declares that “data interpretation begins the first day you begin gathering data.” This statement was so real within the experience of collecting and analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data in this project. Immersed within the church context, some presuppositions were confirmed, and discoveries were made along the way. Moschella, suggests three ways to read the data: literally, interpretatively, and reflexively (qtd. in Sensing 196). These suggestions support a holistic approach within clear boundaries and solid resources; the data guided the researcher to achieve the purpose.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

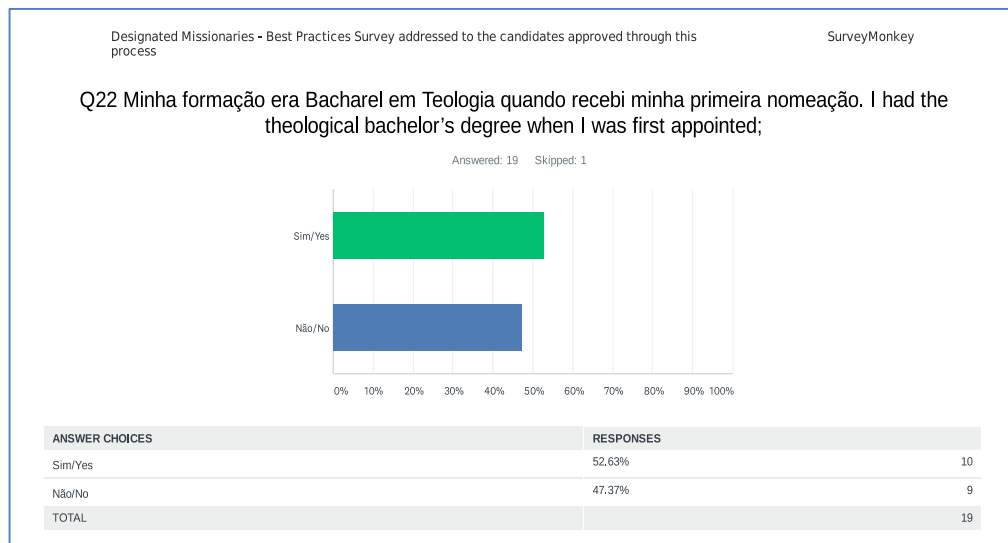
The Brazilian Methodist Church's Sixth Conference in 2002 faced considerable changes when it promoted a small move in the pastoral ordination process. Challenged by slow missionary expansion and struggling with a heavy and limited structure, the changes made the appointments (designation) easier. They reshaped the pastoral practice approach in its first years.

In this chapter, the researcher presents and analyses the interviews and survey outcomes, that seek to answer the RQs, in order to identify the best practices for equipping the Designated Missionaries. The changes sought better effectiveness, and their unfolding was realized and evaluated through some quantitative values, but mostly employed qualitative interpretation. The opinions of leaders who supervise the practice's nuances and the participants' feedback were a significant source of data about its development. The data collected from field research pointed out the five major findings listed at the end of this chapter.

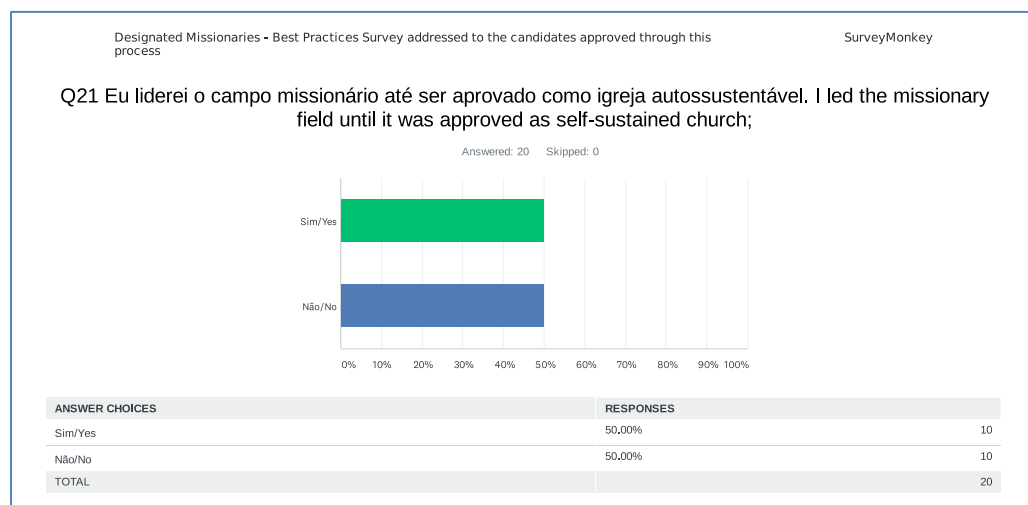
Participants

Forty-one ordained pastors were invited to answer the survey, and twenty of them complied. The most relevant information about the participants referred to their education, where 52% of the participants had a bachelor's degree when first designated (Figure 4.1). Also, the goal achievement, where 50% of the respondents got the high Conference's goal of taking the missionary field to an independent Church (Figure 4.2).

4.1 Bachelor's Degree When First Designated - Approved

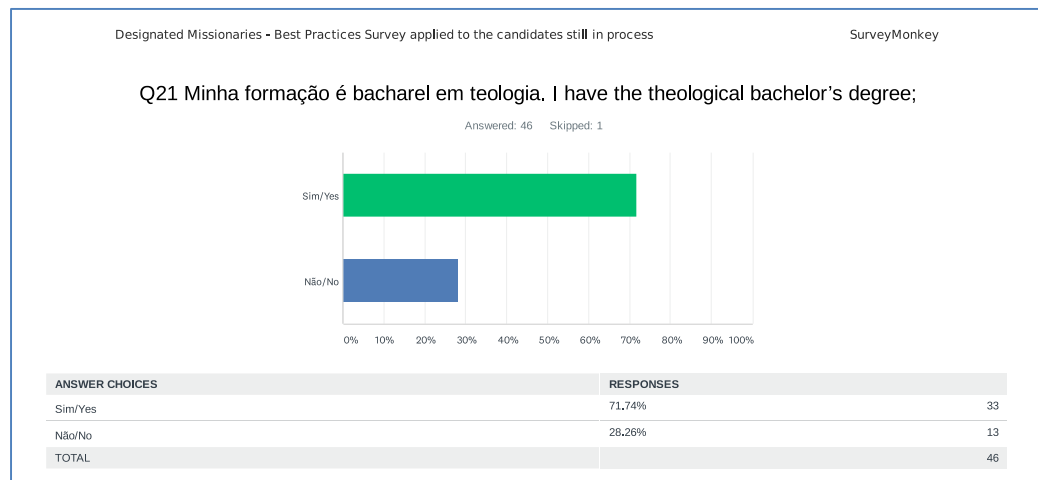


4.2 DM who reached the highest goal - Approved

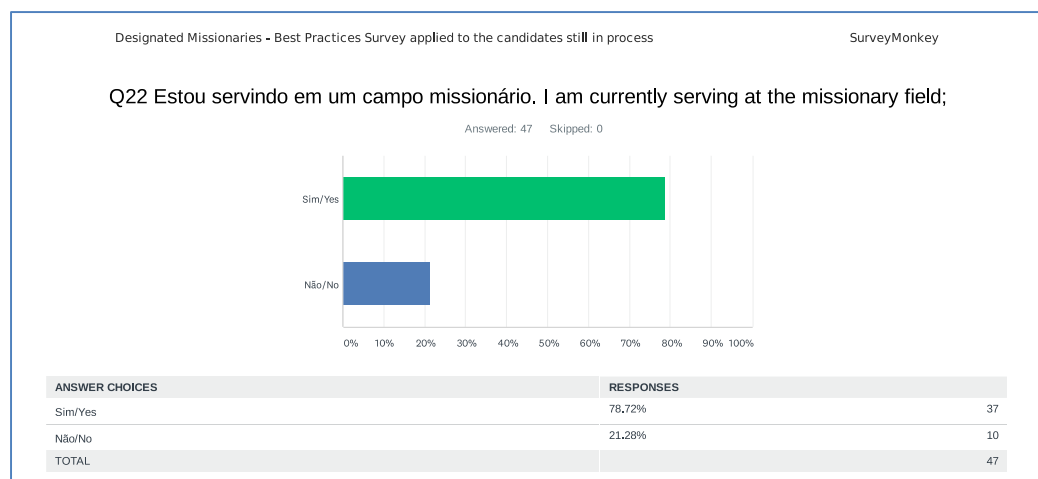


The second set was the seventy-two DM invited to answer their specific survey. Forty-seven of them answered it. The most relevant information concerning this group of participants is as follows: 71.74% had their bachelor's theology degree when first designated (Figure 4.3), and 87.72% are currently serving in a missionary field (Figure 4.4). The other 21.28% are designated to a local autonomous community with the characteristic of a missionary field in terms of attendance, finances, and structure.

4.3 Bachelor’s Degree When First Designated – Still in Process



4.4 Numbers About the Missionary Field – Still in Process



In addition to that information, the researcher got 100% participation from the proposed interviewees. The bishop and two other district superintendents were interviewed in person, and eight of them attended the interview via Zoom. The bishop is quoted by his position, and the DSs are mentioned by the numerical order in which they were interviewed.

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

In the opinion of the bishop, district superintendents, designated missionaries serving as local pastors, ordained pastors and consecrated pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church, what promotes the equipping of designated missionaries serving as pastors to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration?

In gathering the data, both the questionnaires and surveys that answered RQ#1 were oriented within the odd-numbered category. The data selection came through the repetition of common themes and similar approaches.

Learning by practice: The interviewed leaders agreed on the importance of learning by practice concerning pastoral experience. The Conference's experience of having maintenance pastors in stagnant communities was frequently mentioned; "they see themselves as pastors appointed to keep the church as it is," mentioned DS#3. It is a deeper level of probation where the candidate "serves in the pastoral position with the authorization to perform sacraments within their boundary's jurisdiction," mentioned the bishop. It is they are expected to act according to their lay leadership experience, a requirement for the designation, endorsed by the local church recommendation.

The Mentoring Supervision: The small group strategy is easily realized within the Conference's routine and is regarded as an essential tool for a pastor's pastoral care and ministry development. It is also expressed as an equipping tool for the DM. The follow-up is promoted by the pastor's mentor, usually the one who was the inspirational leader from the mother church. "The best equipping happens in the local church, in their practice, even before the designation," said DS#4. The role of a Brazilian DS has its peculiarities and requires some clarification. The DS is a full-time lead pastor with the

unique role of supervising an average of around twenty other pastors/communities, and is expected to be the key person in the pastoral care and leadership orientation of the Designated Missionaries. Such a responsibility is clear to the leaders, “my role is to help them,” mentioned DS#2. DS#3 shared his approach strategy: “my main question always is – what can I do for you,” he states.

July for Jesus Program: A yearly one-week evangelistic program uses a holistic approach where the Conference chooses one missionary field and deploys an army of lay people to endeavor as missionaries in it for an entire week. They serve different needs as construction, VBS, street evangelism, etc. The Conference leaders understand such a program as a missionary opportunity and seedbed for new Designated Missionaries. Many pastors realized their calling in this program and later on started their journey to pastoral ministry. The perspective about this program as an equipping tool was especially highlighted by DS#7.

Pastor of Five: This program was also quoted as an equipping element by DSs #4, #5, #7, and #9. Nevertheless, it was not designed for this purpose. This program sets up a small group of pastors, organized by their geographical closeness. They are put together to walk as close as possible for mutual support. The bishop nominates its leaders with the responsibility of facilitating its functioning. There is no administrative role for it.

Board of Ordained Ministry: It is meaningful hearing this committee was considered an equipping instrument. The primary role is to follow up with the candidate throughout the process of ordination. It is worthy of mention, in the Sixth Conference, that the bishop has delegated to this committee the task of following up the Designated Missionary. Guided by question #5 of the questionnaire about intentional actions for equipping the

DM, DS#5 said, “the role of the Board of Ordained Ministry also works as an equipping tool in this process.”

Pastoral Ministry Retreat: Twice a year, the Conference promotes an exclusive retreat to the pastors. In the year of the ordinary Conference, it happens just once. However, since the DMs are not elected members of the bi-annual Conference, they are invited to a unique retreat. The interviewees also highlighted it as an outstanding program for equipping the DM. DS#5 mentioned that these retreats are “part of the intentional equipping actions.”

Theology Formation Changing: This does not affect those already in the field; however, recognizing the lack of specific formation, the church’s leadership has asked the institution in charge of theological formation to include the church planting discipline as a foundational requirement. As a response to this request, they promoted events in which the DM had the chance to get involved even after their designation. Such a perspective was realized in the bishop’s interview.

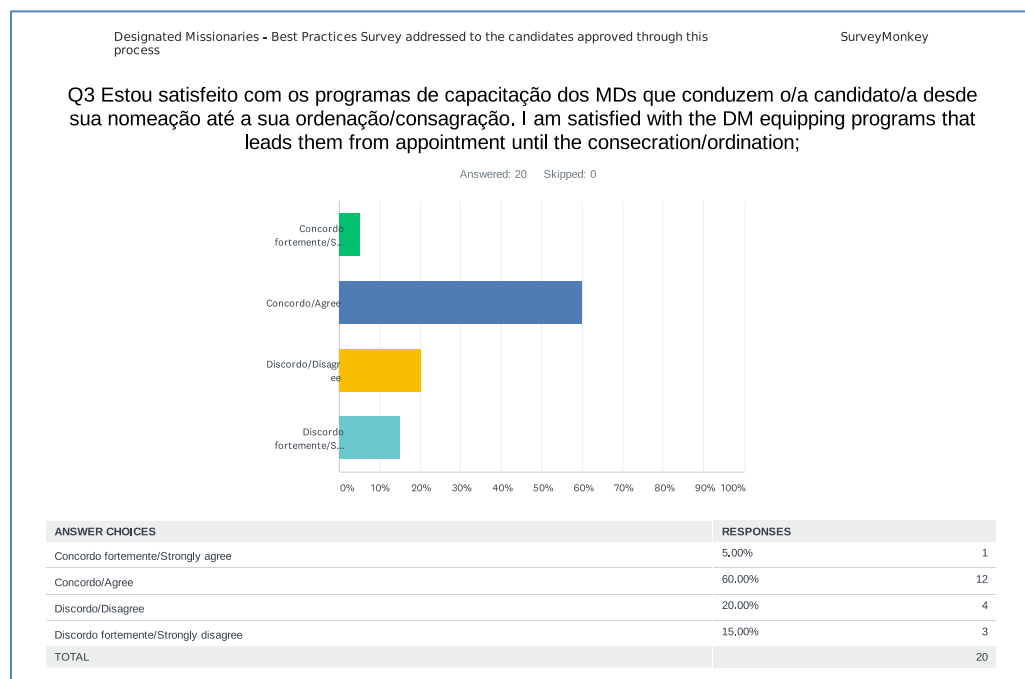
District Ministry Retreats: Some Conference initiatives took advantage of the district structure, network, and geographical closeness. Most of them were set up to equip pastors and lay members. Those trainings were designed to cover the four most relevant areas: administrative, missionary, education for adults and children, and other various subjects such as pastoral health family, etc. All the DSs remembered and quoted this event at a point during the interview.

Voluntary Initiatives: The District Superintendents and the bishop mentioned some voluntary initiatives led by lay leaders and clergy within the Conference. Two of them were highlighted, a coaching training program built in partnership with the Conference’s

seminary and the AMDA (Mentoring new pastor’s project). Those initiatives offered some support to the DMs who were willing to participate. Adherence was voluntary.

The perspective of those who experienced the process was very important to the researcher's holistic interpretation. Their understanding of the equipping process, as promoted by the Conference, is important to consider. Chart 4.5 reflects the approved one's opinion.

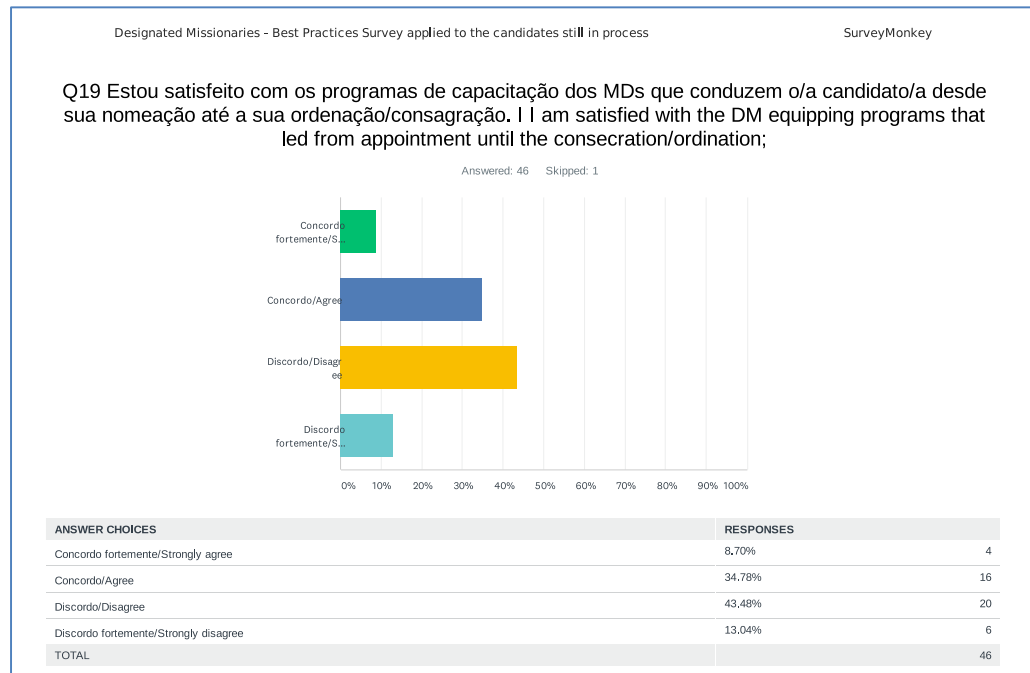
4.5 Satisfaction with the DM’s Equipping Process - Approved



Their answer reflected a 60% agreement rate, against only 5% opting for the offered programs' highest score. It also reflects 35% dissatisfied with the equipping process promoted. The numbers are still lower when the survey heard the DM still in process.

Chart 4.6 shows it:

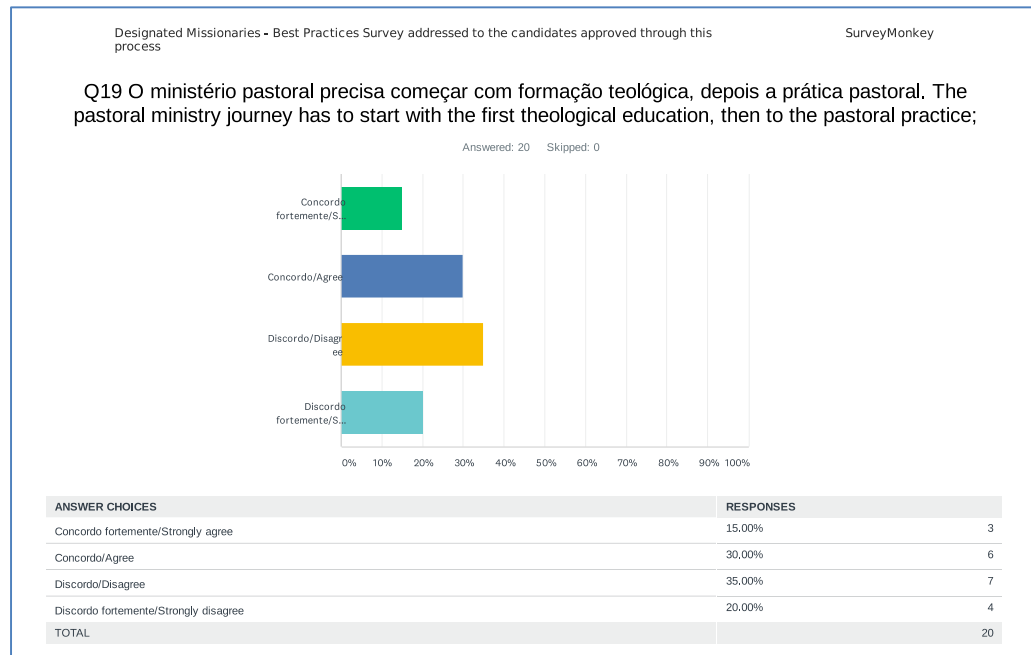
4.6 Satisfaction with the DM’s Equipping Process – Still in Process



While the percentage went higher to the best score, the sum of those who are unhappy with the equipping process reached 56.52%. It is necessary to realize that those candidates express the variety of programs spread all over the Conference.

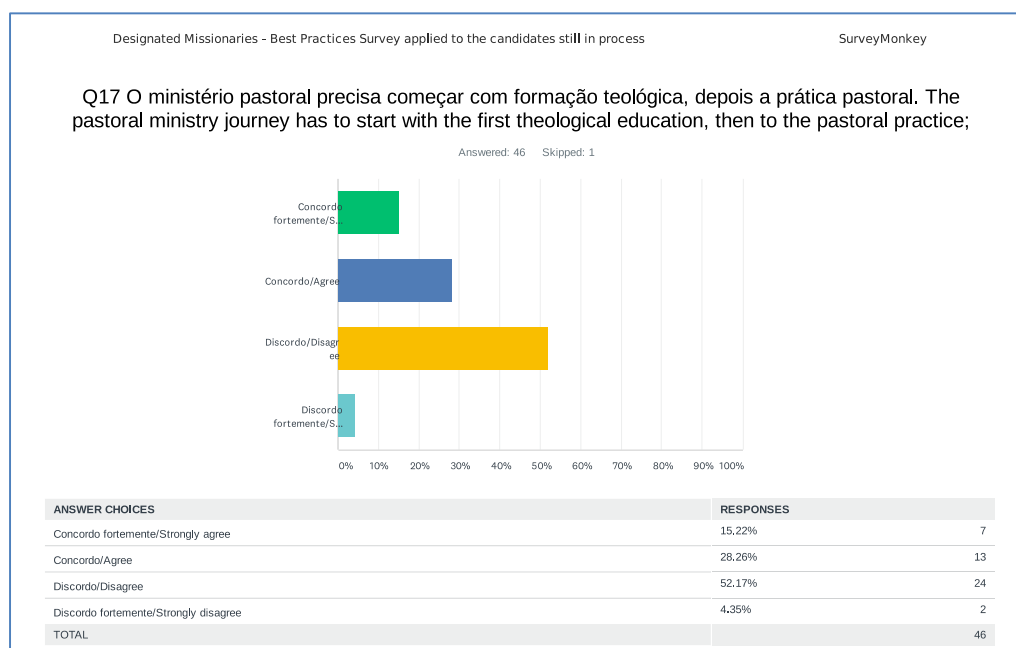
The core of present research was transforming from the normal format of theological education to a new model where theory was put side by side with ministry in practice to reach clergy status. No DM has no theological training. The minimal requirement had to be fulfilled for someone to be designated. The survey’s responses on this subject were very interesting, as follows:

4.7 Personal Opinion: What should come first – Approved



The sum of those who disagree and those who strongly disagree reached 55% of the respondents. They preferred experience, where pastoral practice comes first. Nevertheless, this group already reached its goal. The next chart, 4.8, reflects the answers of those who are still pursuing such an objective.

4.8 Personal Opinion: What Should Come First – Still in Process

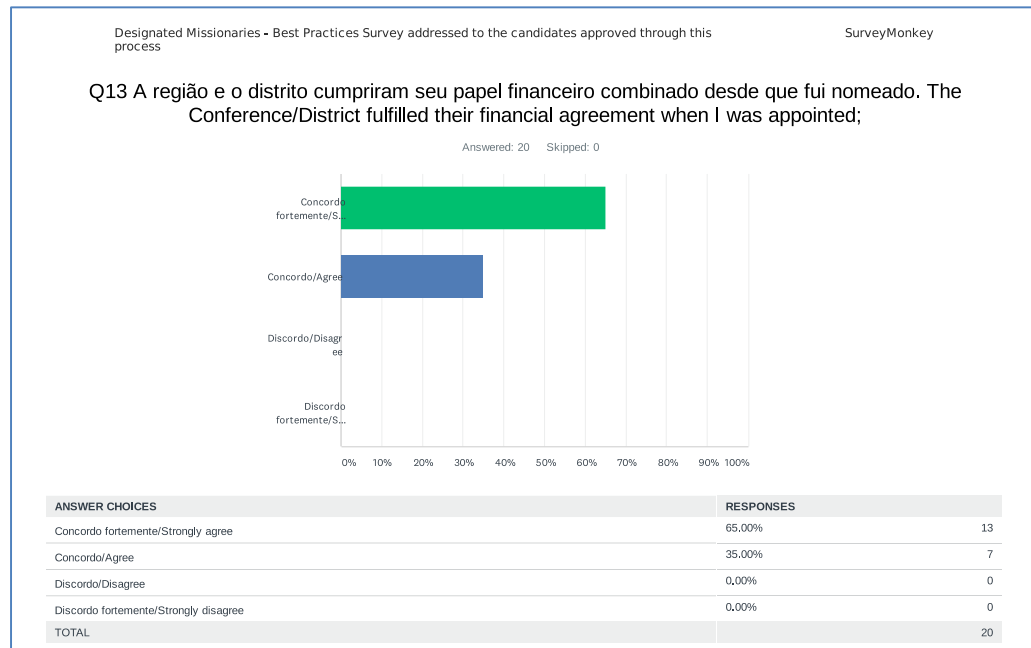


The number of those who endorse the Conference’s approach reached 56.52%.

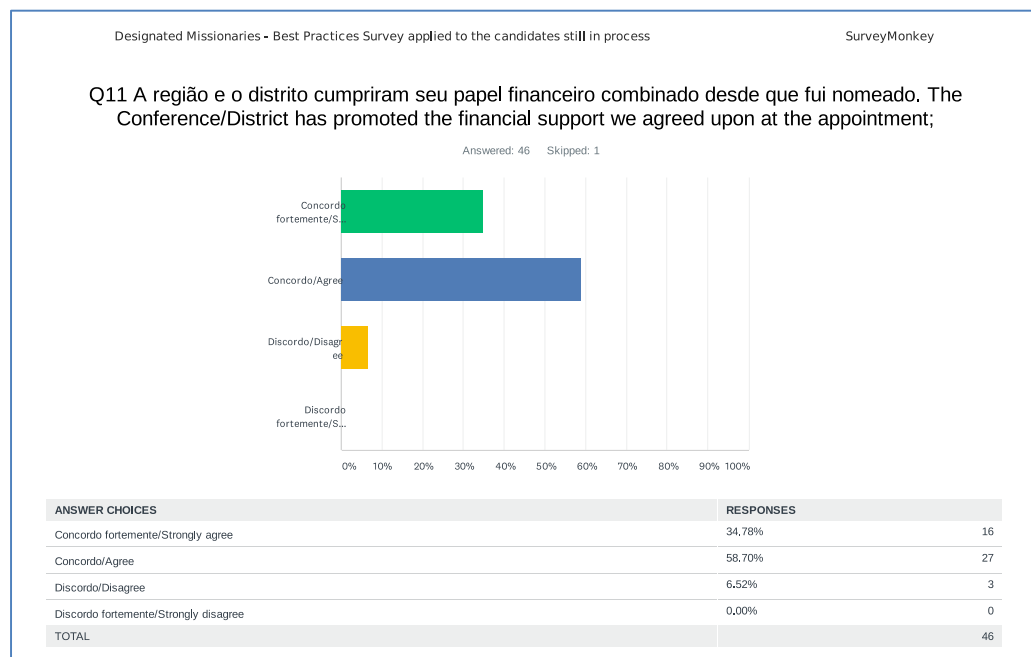
This is the sum of those who disagree and strongly disagree with the old model of theological education first, and then pastoral practice.

Financial issues: Within the initiative that mostly promoted the change with DM, the conference itself committed financially to support all the missionaries on the field. The conference is their primary sponsor. When asked about the budget, the bishop revealed the Conference’s commitment to guarantee the missionaries’ salaries. “For the year 2020, we will be spending R\$414,831,17 on the missionary fields. Such amount refers to only the Conference’s partnership participation. Around 15% of the Conference’s budget is directly addressed to the DMs’ salaries.” The survey answers endorsed this information.

4.9 Financial Issues - Approved



4.10 Financial Issues – Still in Process



Among those already approved, the sum of those who agree and highly agree is 100%. Nevertheless, among those who are still in process, the same question score

reached 93.48%. Despite a small percentage of disagreement, the Conference reported that the financial commitment was entirely met.

The surveys and interviews had an isolated and important opinion worth noting. DS#10 did not follow the pattern of the answers in general. He did not see any intentional and specific equipping process toward the Designated Missionary. Looking at the minimal theological formation they had, required for the designation, this respondent stated that they do not need training. “If they need extra training, so do we,” he stated. When the interviewer asked about the minimal formation, the respondent said it should not be stated as minimal because “it was regulated as enough to be a Methodist pastor accordingly with the Book of Discipline.” His opinion will be necessary also for RQ#2, as follows.

Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

In the opinion of the bishop, district superintendents, designated missionaries serving as local pastors, ordained pastors, and consecrated pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church, what hinders the equipping of designated missionaries serving as pastors to increase their ministry effectiveness as a prerequisite for ordination/consecration?

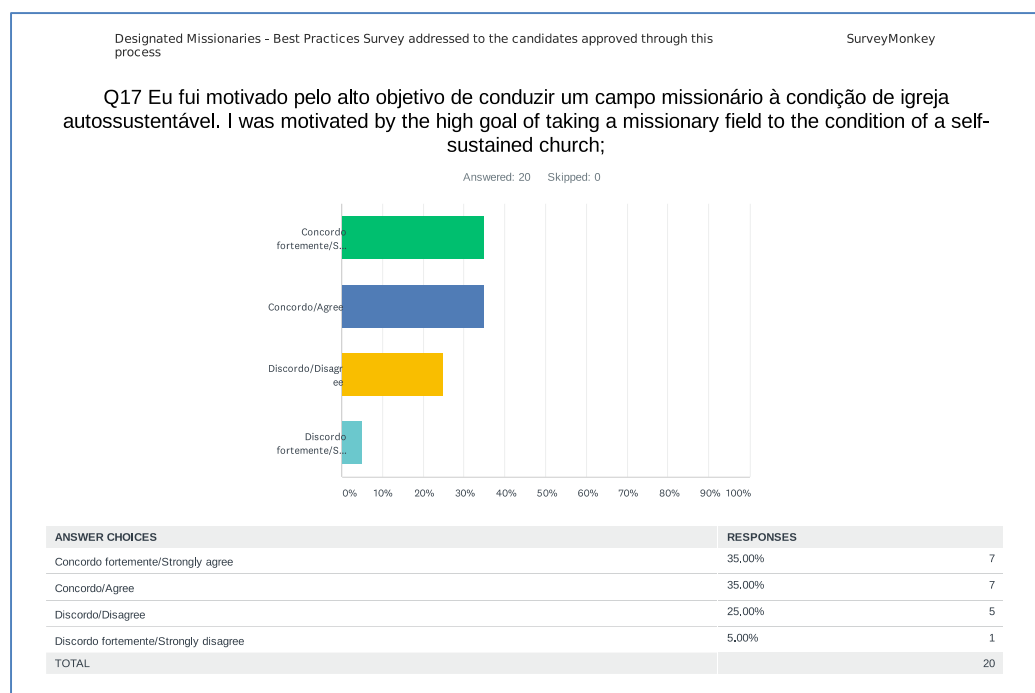
In order to answer RQ#2, I identified similar themes and common understandings extracted from the interviews along with the surveys. The questions that investigated what hinders the equipping action were set up among the general conversation guided by the odd numbers.

Culture: Culture was highlighted as an important theme within this approach. The expression “comfort zones” was repeated many times during the interviews. It did not

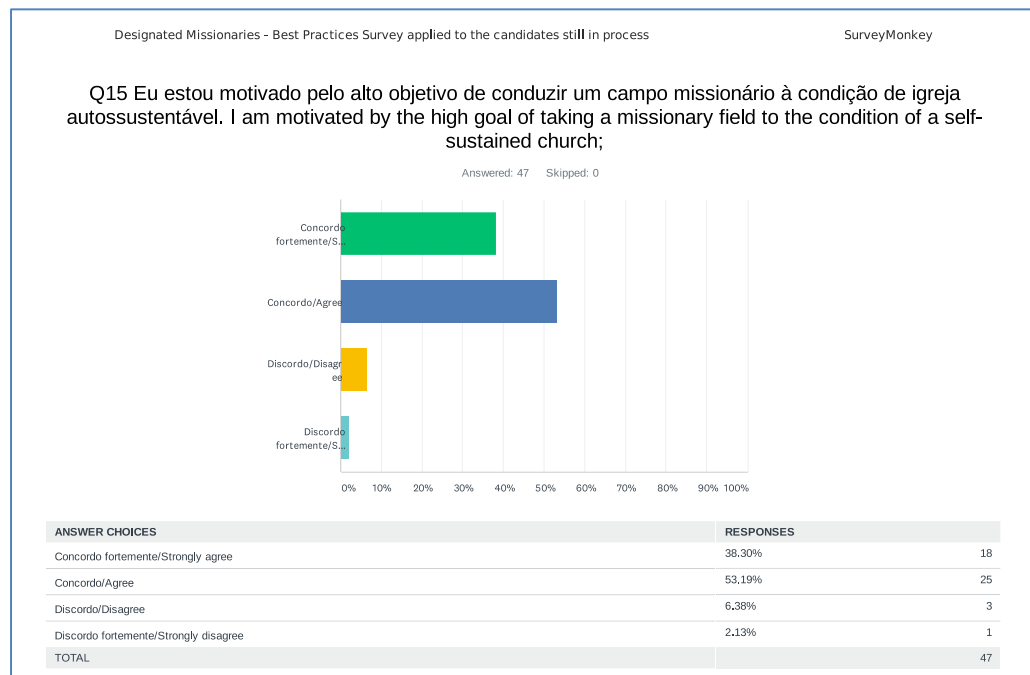
reflect the DM welfare. However, it expressed the reality of apathy when they stop pursuing the primary goal. “It is evident that many pastors do not go beyond in seeking any equipping process,” said DS#7. Such an issue was mentioned toward the clergy in general as well. Motivated by the high goal of taking the missionary field into an autonomous church or a stagnant community into a vibrant and self-sustaining one, the Designated Missionary starts a journey. However, they stop pursuing the goal and “nurture the expectation of a transference to move on in his/her process,” mentioned DS#4.

The following charts are helpful concerning their initial motivation:

4.11 Motivation - Approved



4.12 Motivation – Still in Process



The approved clergy had 70% of agreement and high agreement as Chart 4.11 shows, and Chart 4.12 shows the impressive number of 91.49% of the sum of agreement that the high Conference’s goal made them motivated to pursue the goal.

The candidates reflect the Brazilian culture of “lack of proactivity and the habit of procrastination,” said DS#2. Thus, the first evaluation of the culture issue deals with the candidates’ behavior, which tend toward complaining, apathy, ineffectiveness, and quitting. It is “the law of the best acquirement with the less effort” present in Brazilian culture, mentioned DS#10.

Also, DS#3 emphasized “the lack of transcultural approach training.” The Sixth Conference embraces two states with a plurality of cultures. However, no specific equipping training is provided for those who are designated to cross cultural boundaries. “Building trust has been challenging in a different culture,” said DS#5. It was mentioned how valuable it would be to have the candidates’ profile available to the leaders to support them for the most assertive designation within this specific subject. This second

highlight within the theme embraces the need for specificity in the equipping process for the candidates who will face the high challenge of planting a church. One more characteristic relies on polemic issues of our day, says DS#1. For that reason, “I agree in the process of equipping those who are serving within those missionary contexts.” The DS#3 added: “I see the need for cross-cultural training.” Within the Conference, all the DMs serving in the state of Santa Catarina came from Paraná state, and despite the closeness geographically, there is a substantial cultural distance. “There is a big challenge of identifying the right people to the right place,” mentioned DS#6

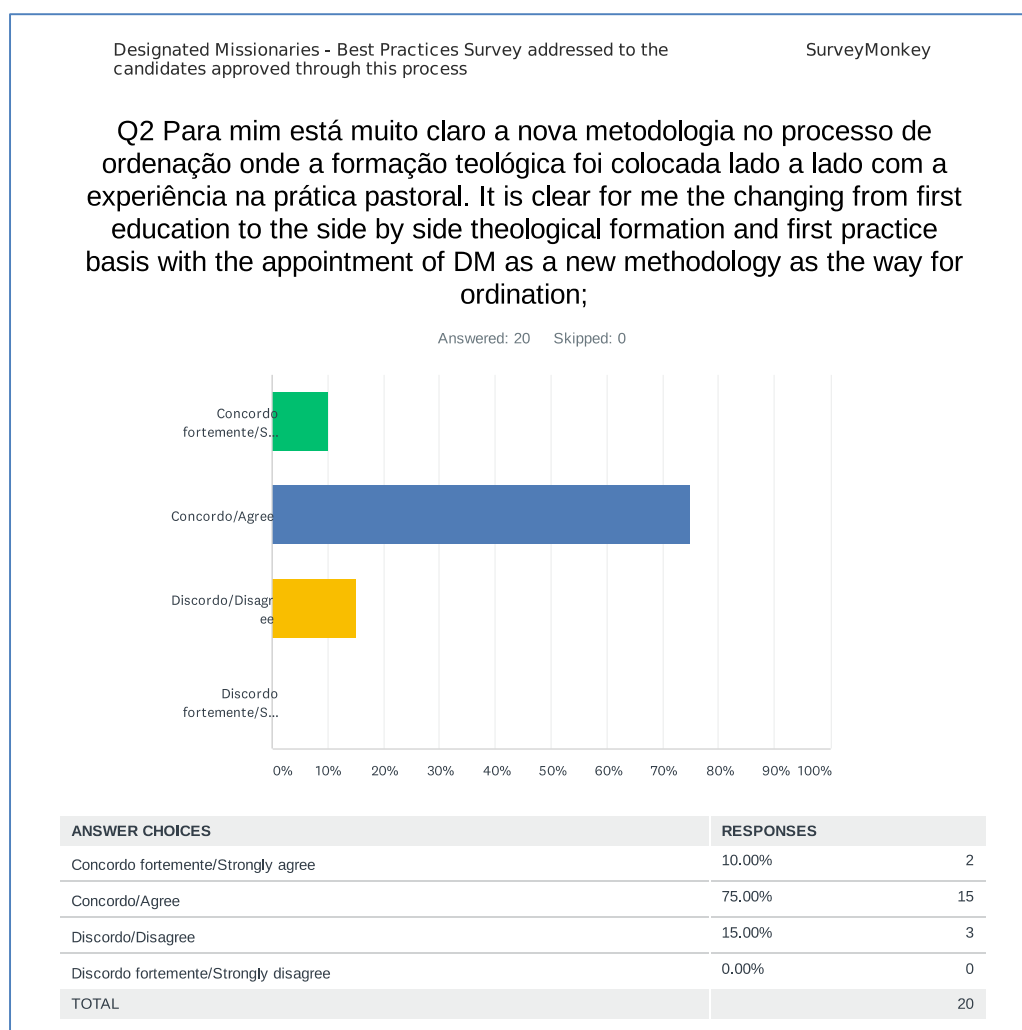
Finally, people do not have an in-depth understanding of the differences between clergy and a DM. Culturally, the missionary is their pastor, no matter the title. “The designated candidate has to know it,” mentioned the bishop. Quickly, the candidate is tempted to skip the process because, culturally, he/she is considered clergy. This cultural tendency refers to the community or missionary context where the DM serves.

Clarity: The second issue highlighted in the interviews refers to clarity. “It is not written, but everybody knows,” said the bishop referring to the high Conference’s missionary challenge. That information was confirmed because the statement “give me a church and I will give you a title” became a famous saying within the Conference. It was mentioned in the district superintendents’ answers and also quoted once in the survey’s commentaries. Nevertheless, the issue relies on the practice where DMs are treated by the communities as if they were fully ordained pastors. Their maintenance approach offers only pastoral care for a tiny group of people for months or even years. “The missionary does not comprehend the process,” said the DS#4, “they want to be ordained too soon.” At this point, accountability is interpreted in the wrong way. Instead of “the eager

learning mindset, their expectation relies on the church’s recognition,” completed the Superintendent.

There was a specific question on the survey about clarity. Let us start with Chart 4.13:

4.13 Clarity – Approved



Among those who are already clergy, 75% agree, and 10% strongly agree that the new process was straightforward. Chart 4.14 evidenced the opinion of those still in process.

4.14 Clarity – Still in Process



The sum of those who agree and strongly agree about the clarity of the process reached 80.85%. Despite those agreements by all four perspectives, something was still obscure. The issue, said DS#10, refers to the timeline because, when “they do not show productivity, we still keep them. We do not dismiss them.” The 24th question for each survey was an opportunity for the respondents to express anything not covered by the preset questions. There is no evidence of lack of clarity in such an opportunity, although the DS#3 affirmed, “they see themselves as pastors to keep the community as it is” compared to the right vision to make it grow.

Probationary - There are multiple levels where the calling has been tested along a minister's path. From the first signs at the home church until the struggles the ordained elder goes through, the timeline of the designation works as the practitioner test. The time has come to overcome personal limits, and pursue personal and community growth in order to advance to the next step. "There is no doubt the DM works as a calling probation," mentioned the bishop. There is no minimal or maximum limit of time for this probation. "Such an issue has to change," mentioned DS#10. There are DMs passing ten years in this category, he concluded.

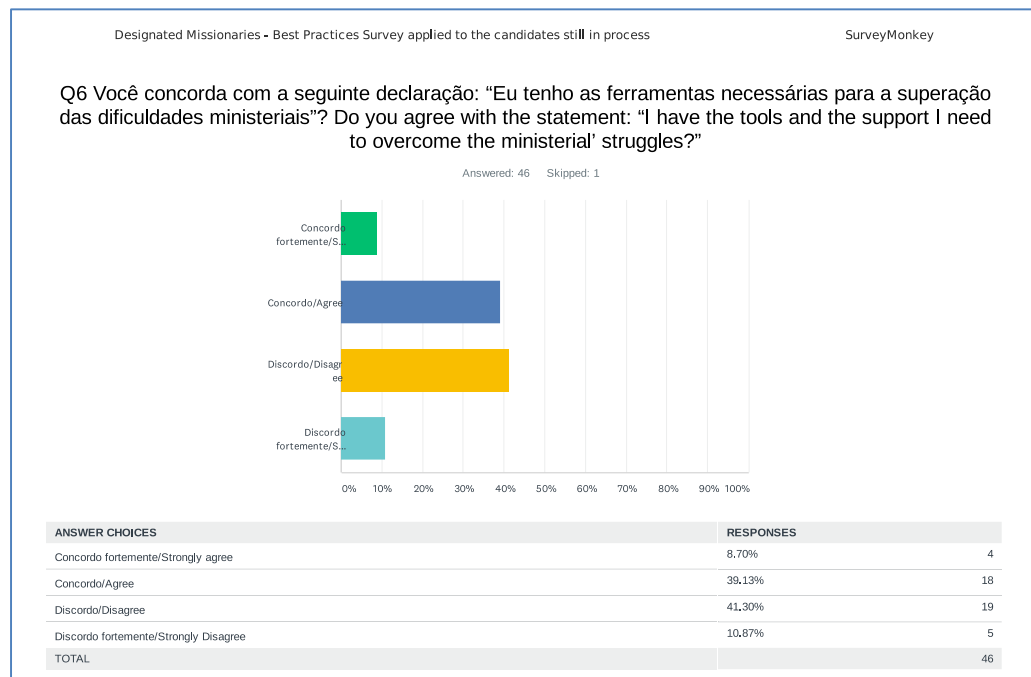
Financial barriers: Financial needs are another issue mentioned that hinders the equipping process. The Conference makes a great effort to keep the candidate in the field, but the resources to equip them are limited. Asked about compensation, the candidates and approved clergy answered the survey as follows.

Chart 4.15

The sum of those who disagree and strongly disagree on this chart exceed 50%. Chart 4.15 deals specifically with those who look back in their history to see the tools they received to support them in their task, and recognize that the DM has done great things with minimal resources.

4.15 Ministerial Support - Approved

4.16 Ministerial Support – Still in Process



Again, similar to those still in process, 52.17% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they had the necessary tools to help them accomplish their goals. Financial scarcity still is common in the missionary field.

Criteria: On one hand, the primary goal is clear, namely, to take the community to the status of a self-sustaining church, with the exception of when the DM was serving in a local church with a missionary field status and performing an exceptional job. On the other hand, no clear criteria exist for when the status ought to be changed. The bishop has the sole authority to make this change. As stated above in Chart 4.2, only half of the candidates reached the primary goal. The respondents of question 24 in the survey, both approved and still in the process, mentioned increasing discouragement among them promoted by the lack of detailed criteria.

Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

What are the best practices and strategies moving forward for equipping designated missionaries serving as pastors in the Sixth Conference of the Brazilian Methodist Church to increase their ministry effectiveness?

Signs of the maturing process are evident within the Conference concerning the project with Designated Missionaries starting with celebrating twenty years since it began, passing through the changing of the church's culture, and eagerly looking at the expansion in ministry with leadership multiplication.

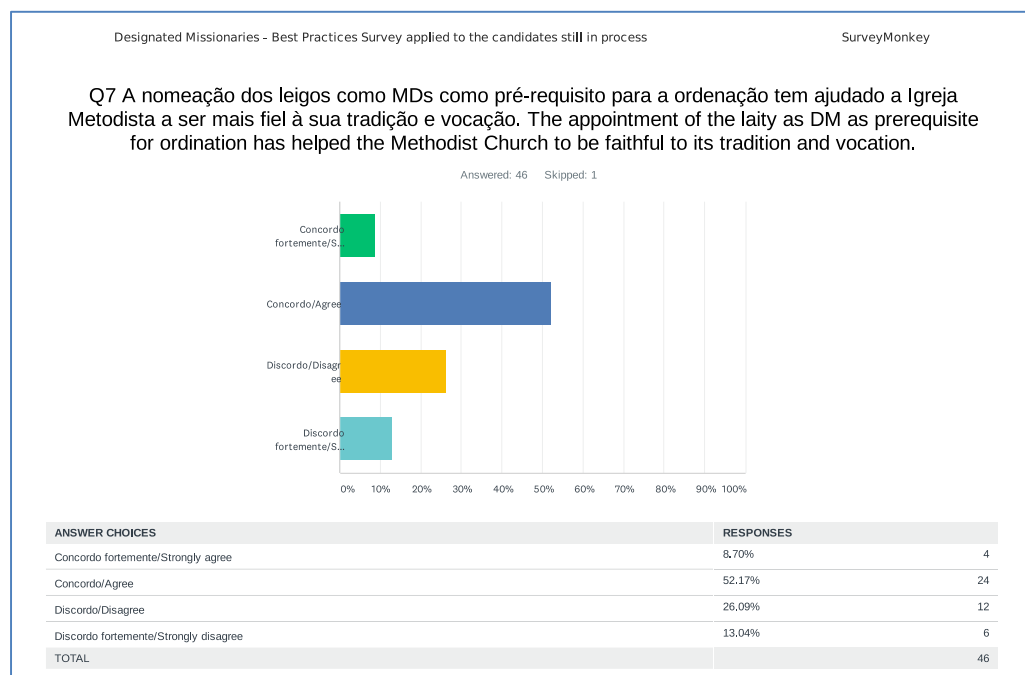
With a structure that started in the sixties when the Sixth Conference got its independence, any change ought to be made at a low speed, like turning a loaded ship. Thus, twenty years appears to be reasonable, considering the official decision was taken only in 2009. When asked about the candidates' deficiencies, the bishop stated: "the project is relatively new, Officially, 11 years. We are all learning." Such an open mindset shows itself as fertile soil for growing in maturity.

Renewal by back-to-the-roots mindset: The word that best represents such a behavior is *designation*. However, in the church's routine, missionaries are "appointed" to a specific placement to serve. By nurturing this renewal, the church was remembering the innovation performed by John Wesley when Methodism was still a movement. At that time, the "appointment" of laypeople to perform tasks that the official church considered duties only for the ordained, also took a long time to mature. John Wesley used to check fruitfulness as confirmation for the calling, so the Conference retained this practice.

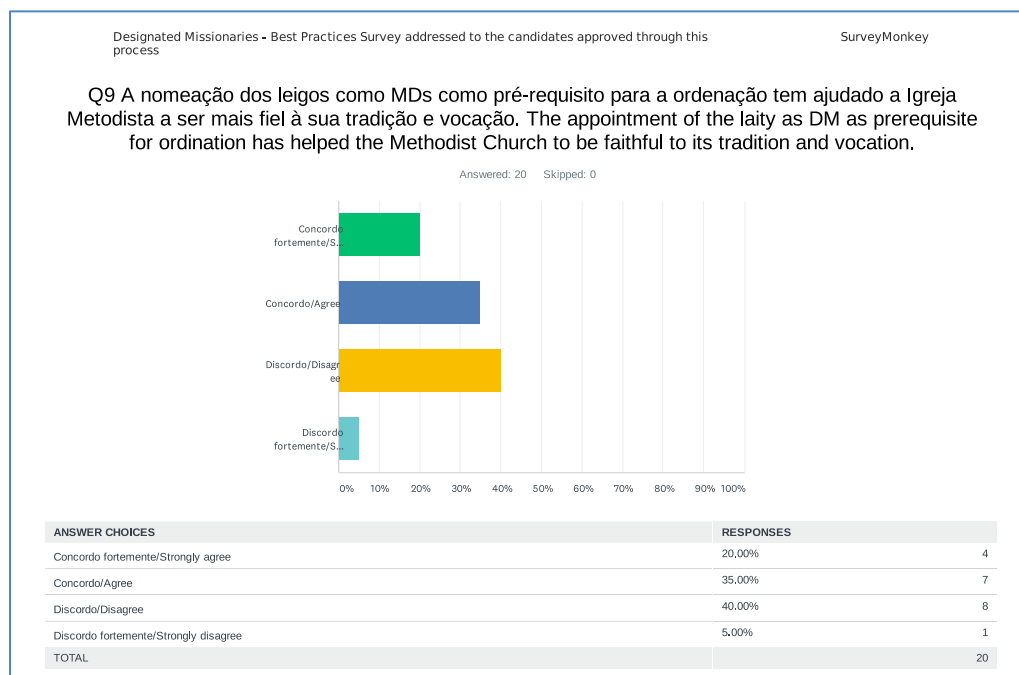
One specific question addressed this matter in the interview:, "Did this new approach help the Methodist Church to be faithful to its tradition and vocation?" The bishop answered it by mentioning historical criticism toward those who, in boldness,

acted in expansion. He remembered the book “To Spread the Power,” the critic to the missionaries leading the advance of Methodism toward the West. The missionaries’ answer to the critic became a hymn, “you can criticize, but we are opening twice a day.” Thus, the answer was ‘yes,’ this new approach pushed the church toward its roots concerning the missionary expansion. The same question was addressed in the surveys.

4.17 Back to the Roots – Still in Process



4.18 Back to the Roots - Approved

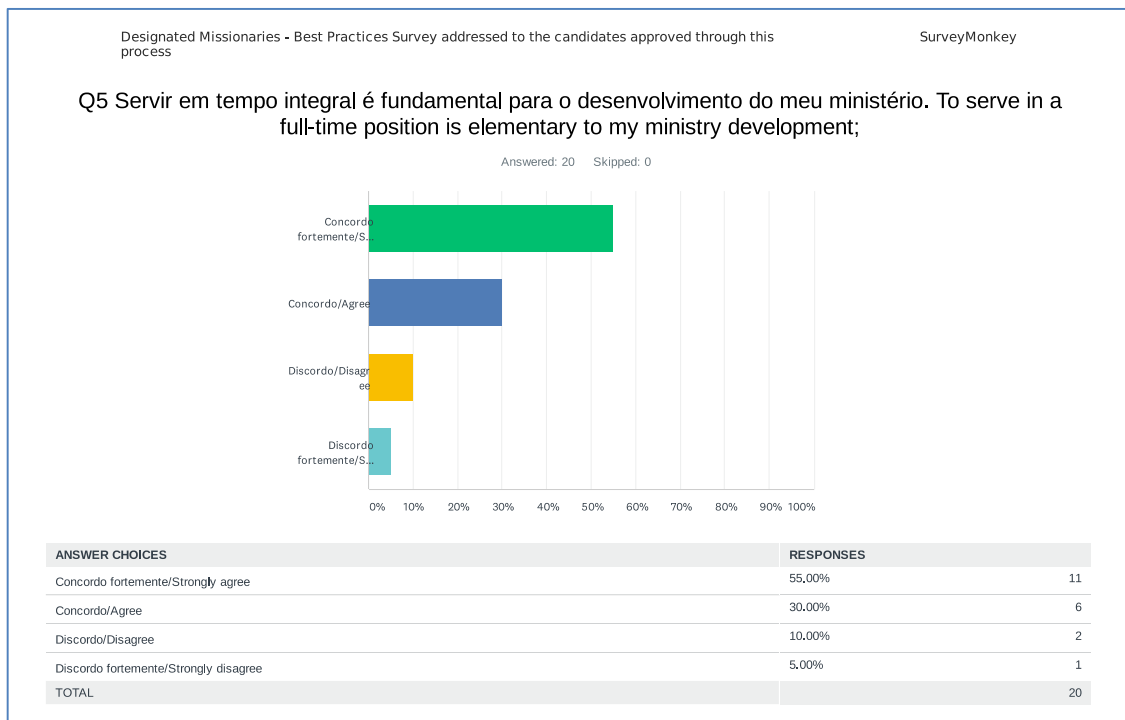


Leadership focus in church expansion requires alignment with those in the field. Chart 4.17 shows 60.87%, and Chart 4.18 shows 55% agreement that the strategy of appointing DMs was helpful to make the Methodist Church more faithful to its tradition and vocation. Despite the higher percentage of agreement, the number of those who did not get the idea is still too large. To nurture the back-to-the-roots mindset, the small groups' strategy should be strengthened. This was an important strategy of historical Methodism and will improve effectiveness if well used today.

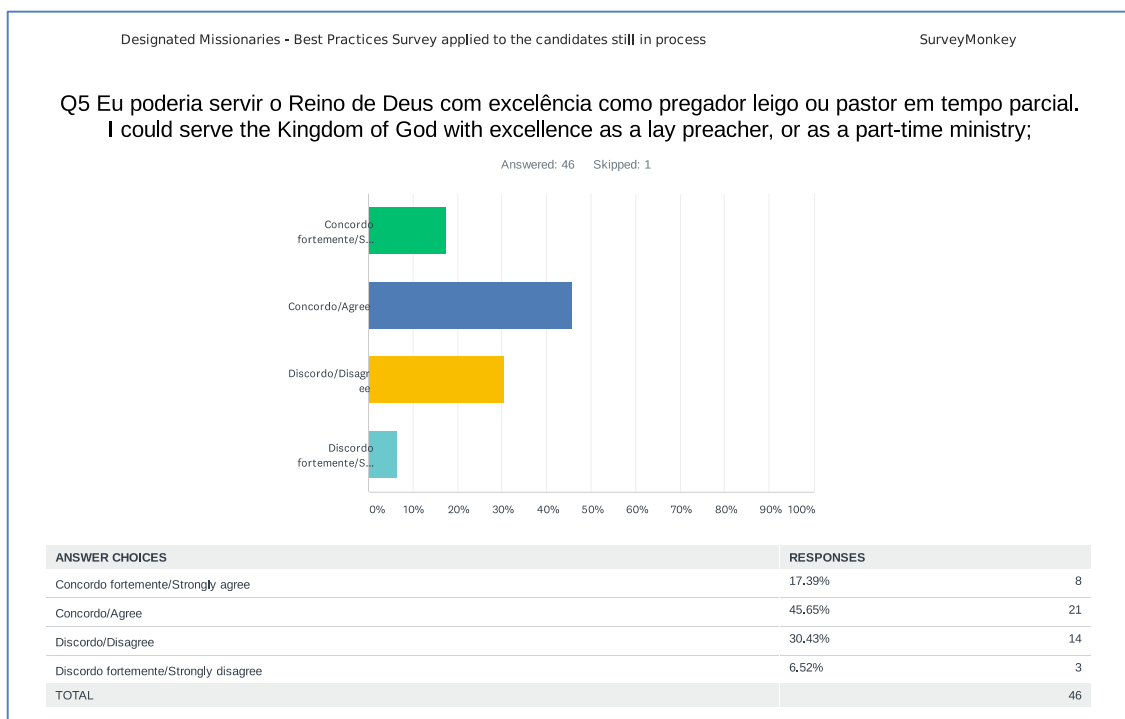
Passion for missionary expansion: The District Superintendents highlighted two laypeople's skills during the interviews, generosity and servanthood. Church growth effectiveness occurred through lay army engagement. Clarifying processes to empower people for leadership will strengthen the church.

One major evidence of the laity's missionary passion was the answer about serving in full-time ministry. Chart 4.19 reflects the 85% who agreed or highly agreed that their ministry required a full-time position.

4.19 Full-Time Ministry - Approved



4.20 Full-Time Ministry – Still in Process

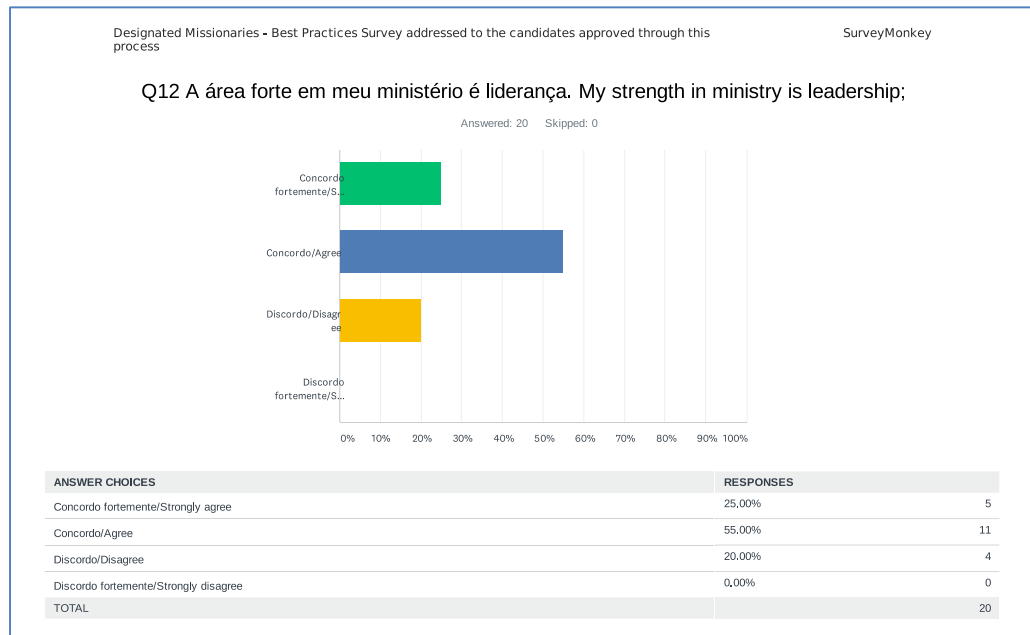


Concerning idea that a full-time position was important, 30.43% disagreed with the suggestion that serving part-time is essential. Nevertheless, it is a considerable number, the 45.65% who agreed and the 17.39% who highly agreed evidenced that they see a part-time position as a barrier to the full ministry of those who are in the missionary field.

Mentorship and modeling practice: As mentioned under the participants' subheading, 44 pastors approved through the DMs were invited to answer the survey, only 20 responded. Despite being a reasonable number for research purposes, clearly they did not realize how important their opinions could be. Taking advantage of the experience of those who "suffered" the implementation phase can be better explored by the Conference. Closeness to the DS or even to the lead pastor who sent the candidate to the theological seminary was highlighted as an important behavior in the implementation phase. It can be the key to the next step.

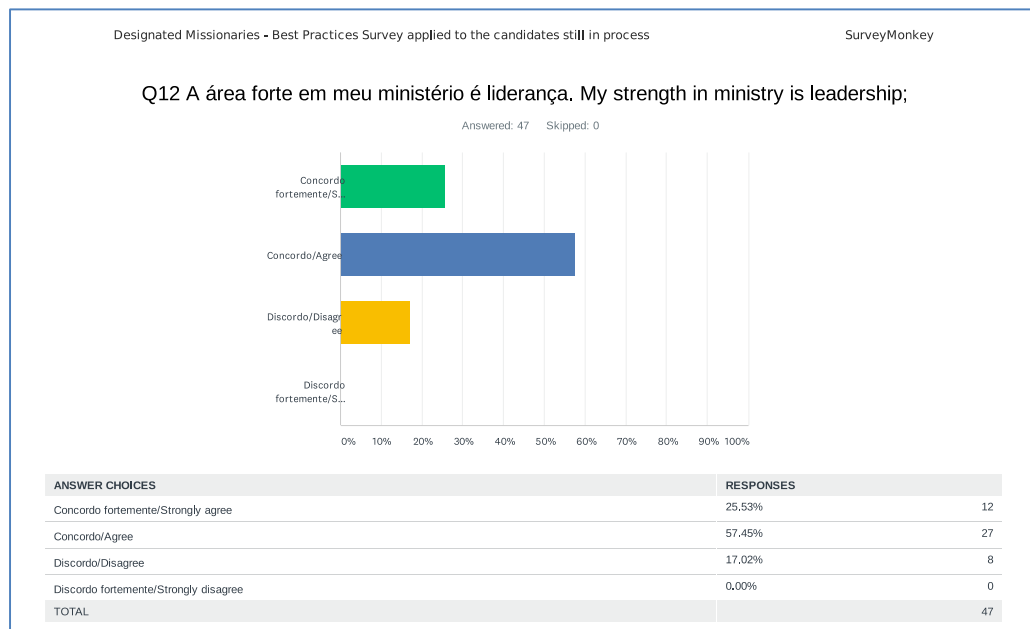
The Gifts and Ministries philosophy: Placing the right people in the right place is foundational to accelerating the growth process. The following four charts will show a piece of information that can be part of a profile for those in charge of the designation and supervision. Asked about their leadership, 80% of the respondents saw it as their greatest strength.

4.21 Leadership Strength - Approved



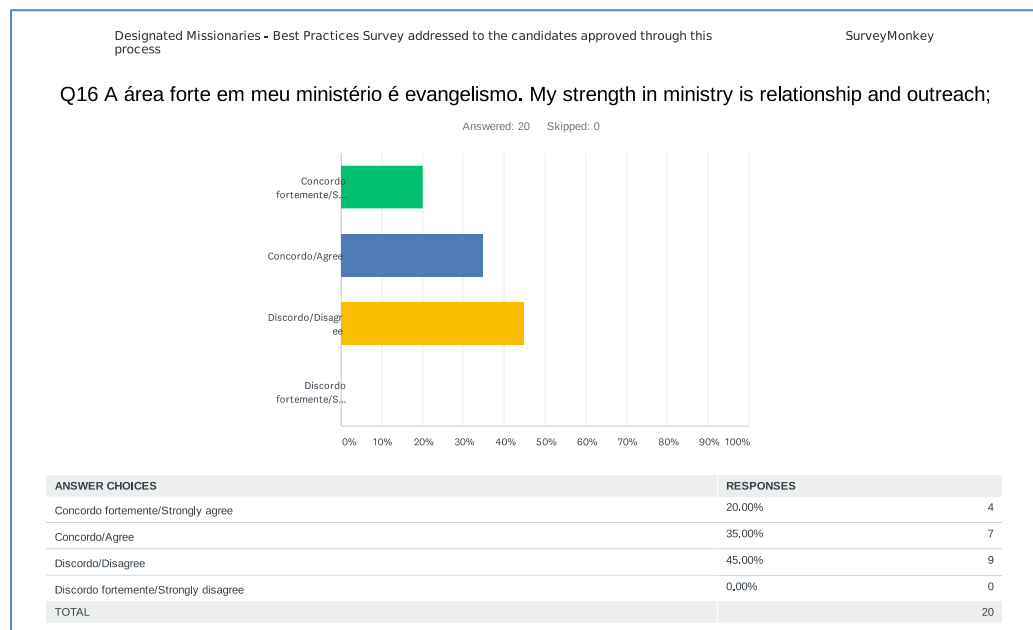
The same question asked of missionaries still in process reached an even greater number, showing that they see themselves as skilled people in the leadership area. See chart 4.22.

4.22 Leadership Strength – Still in Process



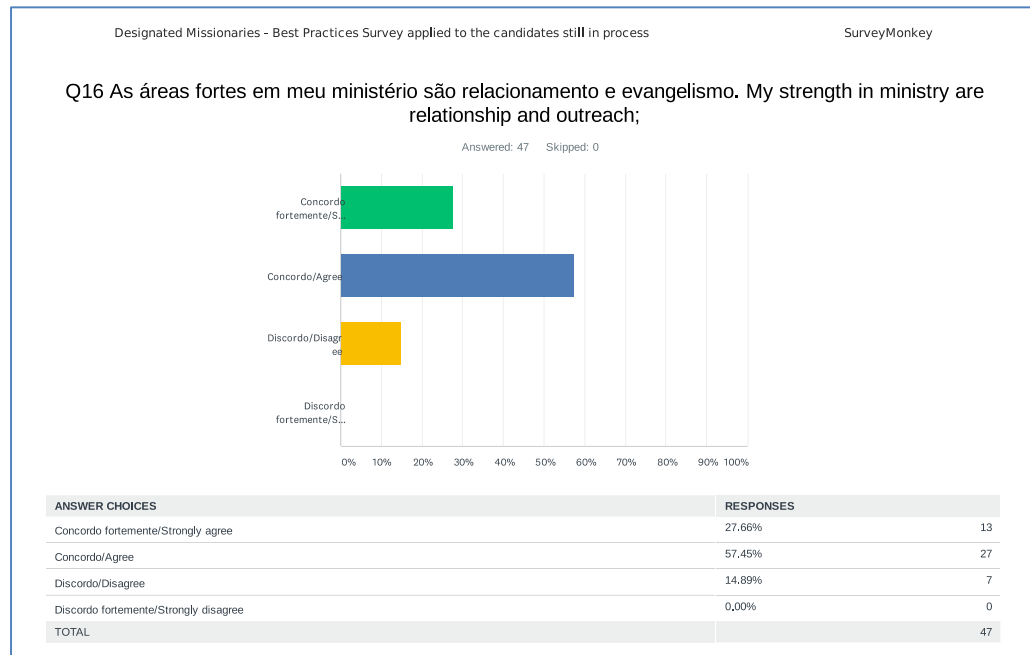
In the same direction, focused on the expansion, the survey searched for their self-perception concerning evangelistic abilities. Forty-five percent of the approved pastors did not see themselves as evangelists, while the sum of those who agree or highly agree reached 55%.

4.23 Evangelism Strength - Approved



The number of those who recognize themselves with evangelistic skills is even higher among those still in process. Over fifty-seven percent agree that relational evangelism is a strength, and 27.66% strongly agree with that statement as the following chart shows.

4.24 Evangelism Strength – Still in Process



The Gifts and Ministries program changed Brazilian Methodism in the 80's. Nevertheless, it still underused practical aspects of the church's ministry such as the designation of pastors who are pursuing ordination. Build a profile based on assessments can be a very useful tool to the entire process.

Summary of Major Findings

The researcher came up with several findings from the data analysis along with the tools used to interpret it. The most important findings are listed below:

1. Mentors and models offered the best support and guidance for those who were pursuing ordination.
2. Service in the missionary field brought a new breath to missionary expansion and the church planting initiative.
3. Improvement in the evaluation process is necessary through the use of effectiveness as foundational to the ordination process.
4. Specific equipping is needed for Designated Missionaries.

5. Diving into ministry placement requires cross-cultural training in order to reach success in the journey.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Candidates for ordination in the Sixth Conference of the Methodist Church of Brazil are first designated as missionaries to serve in a missionary field with the challenge of leading it until autonomy. Some are designated as missionaries to a church that resembles a missionary field. Such a pattern was started in 2002. This study investigated the best practices for equipping the DMs who serve as local pastors.

This chapter identifies five major findings from the project sustained by the literature review, biblical and theological foundations, and my observations. Then, the ministry implications are mentioned. The limitations of the study and unexpected observations are also described.

Major Findings

The support and guidance of mentors

The concept of discipleship has mainly been explored in the Sixth Conference. A committed relationship shows itself as a path for growth, and the pastoral journey has not been an exception. Mentors and models offer the best support and guidance for those pursuing ordination.

Closeness to the most experienced pastors reflected the most excellent resource for designated leaders in my observation. The process regularly started in the local church, long before any theological formation. The future candidates were shaped by their lead pastor and began to follow his/her leadership model. I also realized some migration along the way, where a different set of leaders were positioned to support and

guide even without formal organization. I also discovered in the interviews and surveys how the candidates had valued mentors and models. Some of them took advantage of the Conference's regular programs, such as the *Pastor of Five*. Others explored the District Superintendent's closeness and support, or even the bishop's availability with his missiology expertise.

The literature review primarily supported the mentoring model as an element for the beginners. I chose to explore biblical times, historic Methodism, and the contemporary Church. From biblical times, under the subheading of *the teaching along the way*, I analyzed John 13-17, where Jesus mentored his disciples, teaching them by his example. Concerning the historic Methodism phase, Smith says that the Selected Societies were groups where ministry leaders were trained. They were a place and a program for mentoring new leaders. Finally, from the contemporary Church, The Episcopal College reaffirms that the Church's Charisma is more important than the individual's. Thus, committed relationship forms community, and is elementary toward the excellent way for ordination.

The biblical framework also supported this finding. Discipleship examples from Jesus and Paul, the apostle, were primarily explored. Starting with Torrance's quote, who said that the word *priesthood* in the New Testament relies entirely upon the person of Christ, the High Priest, thus, the best model of any mentoring journey in Jesus' earthly ministry model. Another noteworthy character from the New Testament is the apostle Paul. However, in Sanders' opinion, the ideal of leadership is seen more in Christ than in Paul, for "Christ is the leader par excellence." (Sanders 32) In agreement with that, I also quote John Stott, who said that part of our Christian calling is to serve. Mentors and

models require such a level of understanding because effectiveness in Christian leadership is difficult to achieve, ignoring this principle. It works when leaders are willing to serve their peers.

The biblical framework for this finding can be summarized here with two quotes: Philippians 4:9 “Practice these things: whatever you learned, received, heard, or saw in us,” and John 13:14 “If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other’s feet.” In the first one, Paul is giving instructions to the beloved church in Philippi. His speech pattern reflects the mentoring behavior, namely, someone who teaches by word and example. The second quote is from Jesus teaching his disciples how to lead by serving. In both ways, the biblical experience shows mentorship as a model for equipping and pastoral leadership formation.

Missionary Expansion and Church Planting Initiative

The words *missionary community* have been present in the Brazilian Methodism logo for many years. The entire sentence is beautiful, as follows: *Missionary Community Serving the People*. The approach of such a meaningful sentence goes toward the holistic nature of the church. Nevertheless, the missionary term was better assimilated by communities focused on evangelism.

Growing churches most of the time became synonymous with being a missionary church. Despite the proclamation's nature, the emphasis became concentrated in a centralized structure. The researcher's perception realized that the primary goal was to build a large church. Advance and expansion became limited by this centralization. During this research, this perception became clearer during the interviews. The bishop highlighted the natural inclination of God's people to go against God's will, as in Genesis,

where the building of the tower and the Jerusalem church experience both went against God's will to spread his people all over the world. The contemporary church follows the same inclination. Instead of advancing toward expansion, the called missionary communities make all the effort to grow internally. Bishop Lopes mentioned the centripetal forces against expansion. God's will for his people has always been to spread them all over the world, but they went in the opposite direction. He realized the same attitude in the Conference he leads. Churches were closing missionary spaces to concentrate the movement within larger buildings.

The designation of missionaries to serve as local pastors pushed the expansion. Based on my observation, how the church established its presence in multiple places by this attitude is clear. Another sentence overused in the Conference's routine is *Methodist's presence*, meaning sites where there is no formal church or even an appointed person; however, some people, a small group, or a family receive some pastoral care. Today any *Methodist's presence* that shows itself interested in growing can easily build partnership and receive a full-time DM. The most regular partners are small groups, local churches, districts, and the Conference.

Historical Methodism confirmed its missionary expansion through the lay preacher's ministry. Motivated by the message centered on the proclamation of salvation, Methodism grew exponentially. In the same way, lay preachers brought new breath to the movement. As I visited the ecclesiology theme, I met John Stott's statement that every Christian needs to belong to a local church and share in its worship, fellowship, and witness (165). Thus, promotion of communities' multiplication cannot be neglected, and any strategy that promotes an increase in this direction has to be valued.

The theological reflection supports this major finding under the subheading *means of grace*. The experience of God's love is an expression of prayer that leads to missional engagement, said E. A. Heath (35). A missional church does not stay within its walls but goes beyond its borders, multiplying the ministry.

I explored the image of fruitfulness from Jesus' parables within the biblical reflection. The same idea helped support this finding by looking at the fruits as a means to the ultimate goal: the multiplication of the trees themselves. Thus, the growing church does not reflect its principal objective, but a means to expand the ministry by planting new communities to create spaces to engage in ministry.

Despite the deep connection between the parables' images, the book of Acts and the Pauline experience are the ones that teach about church ministry expansion. The statement made by Quicke about Timothy, Paul's disciple, charged to preach in continuity with the apostolic commission, mandated the sent with the responsibility to strengthen and plant communities (Kindle Loc. 131).

Effectiveness

Since effectiveness is foundational to the ordination process, an evaluation's improvement became necessary. In its documents, the Methodist Church of Brazil recognizes the importance of effectiveness. Because of the Wesleyan heritage, the Church should ask its candidates the three great questions as the process starts: Do they know God as a pardoning God? Do they have gifts? Do they have fruits? My observation on this finding saw the Church ignoring its tradition, allowing people to move on in their journey toward ordination with no proof of qualification for the aimed position. Nevertheless, it was easy to realize along the years, waves of attempts to resume some

effective practices from historical Methodism; after all, it pushed the Church to exponential growth. Questions emerged as the changes started: How the new process is going to be? Why promote such a change? How am I going to be affected by that? The Church's documents are clear, stating that as long as the candidates have fruits, gifts, and a personal experience with God's grace, they are called of God to serve – but how to measure fruitfulness?

In my observation, the Church used to fear asking for numbers to use as performance identifiers. Thus, the conference reached a point with a larger number of elders than available churches to appoint them to. The changing process started organically with the evangelist consecration's improvement, inviting them to serve as local pastors. Years later, the experiment was transformed into the official path for ordination, and the outcomes became clear criteria to stepping on to the next phase.

Supporting this finding, I found a similar experience in the South Georgia UMC, that in 2012 required a specific project from their ordination's candidates. The project should demonstrate fruitfulness in carrying out the Church's mission of making disciples. Two pillars supported their decision, Jesus' words about being known by the fruitfulness, and Wesley's big question, “Are there fruits?” (SGUMC)? It is meaningful to apply the same approach to such a different context.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul had his apostleship tested and authenticated through his hearers' changed lives (Quicke). The apostle developed a team ministry and shared with his fellow missionaries the glories and honors of completing the task, said bishop Lazier (*Carisma*). Similarly, H. D. Lopes helped find balance in this

subject, saying that life precedes the ministry (*Tito e Filemon*). Nevertheless, the performance was still necessary.

Historically, we have a great endorsement of this major finding. In the beginning, John Wesley was resistant to the idea of laypeople performing clergy duties. His mother, Susanna Wesley, referred to the lay preacher Thomas Maxfield, who advised John: examine what have been the fruits of his preaching. It was not the only action that took Wesley to a discipline to the movement leaders, where the outcomes used to be frequently measured and evaluated.

Once more, Jesus' words are the most outstanding biblical support for this finding. The authors Schwarz, Figueira, and Farr, agree in theme on the natural development of the Church. "You will know them by their fruits, and that is the most critical statement from Jesus on this matter (Matt. 7:17). Outcomes are fruits that testify to the calling.

Equipping Specifically

This major finding was the key to make this project transformational. The researcher observed from four sources of data some degree of agreement on the lack of a specific equipping process. The different ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 are clearly stated as tools to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ.

I observed the leadership mindset in the process of changing. While to equipping was always the core of the Methodist church in enabling people to serve in the various aspects of the mission, equipping the DMs required more attention concerning the task entrusted to them. I realized a lack of sense of ownership of the project. To revitalize, establish new communities, and promote the Methodist organization's expansion was the

heart of the change – *give me a new church, and I will give you a title* – nevertheless, the application of it required more significant engagement. The pattern had exceptions when the church needed pastors to establish communities and promoted DMs who did not accomplish it. Thus, some DMs put the expectation in the exception instead of focusing on the goal.

I also observed the fact that the local community does not see the significant need for equipping. Since the missionary is recognized as a pastor, people assume they qualify for it. It manifests as a limiting behavior because there is no local support for such a purpose.

The literature review supported this finding in multiple ways. It started with the College of Bishop's regulation, stating the need for minimal education for the DMs' ministry and remembering Hender's approach to the pastoral-theological formation to help the candidate develop charisma (6). Thus, contemporary leaders and professors argue on behalf of appropriate equipping. John Wesley took a while to surrender to the power and importance of his lay preachers. Moreover, Wesley trusted that they would have a high standard of knowledge. In their defense, he argued they could be tested at the same level that the candidates to the ordination would take.

Bevins highlights Wesley's ability to select, train, and gather lay leaders around him (Kindle Loc. 902). Concerning this historical experience, this research noted failure in the specificity of equipping the chosen people for the specific tasks. With the explicit goal of establishing a new community, evangelistic skills must be developed for those positioned to be church planters. The literature review evidenced the Wesleyan

rediscovery of biblical redemption, and based on biblical authority, the passion for evangelism is justified. Those characteristics show the way for specific equipping.

The biblical-theological foundation sustains this finding. God entrusts tasks to people and enables them to accomplish those tasks. Lima has a particular perspective on Paul's equipping process where his focus was not primarily on the position but on personal development (3). Timothy became one example of such a development since selection with the invitation to join a missionary team (Acts 16), passing through teaching, follow-up, delegation, and accountability. The next finding will be even more specific, namely cross-cultural equipping toward the missionary challenges.

Cross-cultural training

I have observed the struggles of pastors and communities around the subject of cultural adaptation. The cultural context of the Conference is incredibly diverse. The major frontiers are among the two states that make up the Conference. Santa Catarina state is the missionary one and has only a few self-sustaining communities.

Consequently, many DMs have been sent to that placement. At the same time, most of them are originally from Paraná state, with the highest self-sustaining community concentration. I did not realize a practical and specific concern to equip the missionaries toward this need in my observation.

The various spheres of equipping and training can go deeper into this subject. This shift is imperative. Leaders well-trained culturally have more chances to acquire success in their features. Peter Drucker says that *culture eats strategy for breakfast*. The eagerness to establish a new church has not been enough to energize communities where there are cultural relational struggles. Despite realizing multiple cultural nuances, in the

interviews I understood most how equipping servants for an assertive cultural approach can improve ministry in the Conference.

The literature review supports this finding. Diversity is the beauty of the church. Rainer and Geiger have four words from communities that are doing well—clarity, movement, alignment, and focus ()—all seeking to build the simple. Alignment is the word that touches the cultural theme because the temptation for uniformity relies on it. People with different backgrounds can work together if they align themselves around a clear vision.

“Culture refers to norms of behavior and shared values among a group of people” (Kotter 148), or “it refers to the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, and definitions that characterize organizations and their members” (Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn). Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn recognized that many organizations' endeavors failed due to cultural incompatibility, and the church is not different. Its leadership will succeed more as they are better trained to face cultural issues. In this way, effectiveness goes through the understanding to adopt the missionary approach.

Jesus' incarnation supports the biblical/theological endorsement to this finding that connects ministerial effectiveness to the cultural approach. "Though he was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit. But he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and by becoming like human beings" (Phil. 2:6-7 CEB). There is no more significant support than that. Nevertheless, Paul's words can be easier translated to a transcultural missionary endeavor. He said, "I act weak to the weak, so I can recruit the weak. I have become all things to all people, so I could save

some by all possible means. All the things I do are for the sake of the gospel, so I can be a partner with it (1 Cor. 9-22-23)

Ministry Implications of the Findings

This meaningful project has changed the Sixth Conference of the Methodist Church in Brazil and influenced other conferences concerning ordination, and it has to be celebrated. While performing research, I realized that the church is acting as if "fixing the plane while flying." The church's focus has not been on evaluation for improvement, and this is understandable.

With the Conference soon reaching the twentieth year since the first person was designated as a missionary, this researcher calls attention to the changes already promoted. The ordination of pastors in the Sixth Conference now has a new starting path, and the track of this process must be understood, evaluated, and improved. It has to be celebrated, and for celebration, I mean to highlight, to collect numbers and testimonies, and continuously evaluate for improvement.

The second implication from this transformational project refers to the church's missionary nature and its natural tendency of setting back of the expansion. Structures are useful and necessary for the mission as bones are necessary for the body (Yancey and Brand 65). Those structures have to be continuously evaluated and, if necessary, renewed. Despite the project with designated missionaries initially being pushed by the various needs, it touched an elementary aspect of the church, namely, functional structures.

The third implication refers to the equipping itself. The world's dynamic has changed quickly and dramatically, and the church ought to be attentive to that. While

promoting a change opened a perfect space for growth and expansion, being intentional, and specifically equipping people involved, became imperative. An approved pastor knows how to grow and run a church, which is the premise of the Designated Missionary. He/she is entrusted with the appointment's privilege, which is attached to great responsibility and a considerable challenge. This research discovered that people in such a position seem to be like the fig tree of Jesus' parable, "Lord, give it one more year, and I will dig around it and give it fertilizer" (Luke 13:9; CEB); if it's not working, try one more year of training.

Limitations of the Study

The plan was to cover the subject while getting the broadest perspective from all people involved. The cancelation of some events due to the Covid-19 pandemic changed the strategy along the timeline. While in the regular conference as first planned, I had 99% of the DM responding to the survey, although the online format got only 59%. A lower percentage happened in the survey with the already ordained/consecrated ones. The expectation of 99% of respondents in the retreat turned into 45% in the online survey. Regardless, the changes did not interfere with the study findings' generalizations.

I explored the data from all DMs from the start of the project. The significant outcomes are attached as Appendix G. Now, I think I should have included in the questionnaires at least three more questions, first about their age, second about gender, and third about the timeline since their first appointment. I think those questions would have offered an assertiveness concerning to the participants. It would match exactly the sample of the respondents.

In the meantime, of the research, I idealized and started another project that offers support to the DMs. We are a team of fourteen pastors mentoring more than forty missionaries every year. Fearing the new and facing language barriers, I chose to get the data from the surveys and interviews only; however, today I am convinced that a focus group would work well with the stated purpose of this research.

Unexpected Observations

It was interesting to observe how many candidates for ordination showed themselves willing to improve the process. The candidates recognized the DMs' project implementation as an excellent thing for the church's mission, and they manifested the need for improvement.

Recommendations

This transformational project accomplished its purpose, but there are some features mentioned worthy of further exploration:

First, the cultural issue is a universe in itself. Nevertheless, beyond equipping servants for immersion in a different culture, the candidates themselves belong to a particular culture, the Brazilian one. Assessments and research can be done to add expertise to the candidates about themselves. Brazilian people have their own peculiarities and studying the kingdom's culture as the pattern for the ministry is a great subject. True to our roots, Methodism evidenced a passion for evangelism, and church planting and social ministry as well. Those aspects of the culture deserve more in-depth attention.

Second, the local church as the nursery for new pastors is also mentioned, but with not enough space and attention that it deserves.

In third place, how the candidates' families fit in this entire process can also be researched more deeply.

Reflection on lighter and functional systems where people can grow in their leadership is also a great subject.

Finally, I remember how intentional I was when I started thinking about the length of time the candidates used to take to pass through the entire process. A period of about fifteen years was not uncommon. Nevertheless, this subject requires a specific approach, and as I narrowed the research, I left this critical issue aside. From my perception, it has been the highest source of pain to the participants in general and deserves further investigation.

Postscript

My journey through this project was full of joy and strange anxiety. Since the day I shared a Mexican meal with my mentor, Dr. Dinkins, in Nicholasville, KY, I was blessed with joy with the project's idea, and again, I am so thankful for his support and multiple insights. Parallel to this idea and long conversations, I enjoyed the journey with my fellow DMs who are serving shoulder by shoulder in Brazilian lands. To serve with them in the mentoring project worked for me as an informal focus group along with the research.

It is also time to recognize my inclination to procrastinate and how such behavior created tremendous anxiety in me. I counted on many supporters to overcome this personal barrier which worked as a lesson for future features.

Finally, this journey changed me in many ways. As a student, I learned the importance of being surrounded by the right people, to be equipped with the best tools

and the most relevant literature. As a pastor, I gained even more awareness that the ministry is running regardless of me. As husband and father, I learned the importance of being organized to be effective. After all, it is all about effectiveness. As a classmate and friend, I learned to share tools, offer and receive support, and embrace diversity-seeking unity. It was an incredible journey that makes me curious about what is next.

APPENDIXES

A. Bishop's interview

1. How did the DM's project get started? Where did the inspiration come from?
2. What has been the major problems for equipping DMs in the Sixth Region?
3. How did it come to be the prerequisite for ordination in the Sixth Conference?
4. What has been done to overcome the major problems for equipping DMs in the Sixth Region?
5. What has been the intentional actions by the church for equipping DMs to become successful? What training is provided?
6. How are local churches deficient in this process?
7. Did this new approach help the Methodist Church to be faithful to its tradition and vocation? If so, how?
8. What are the candidate's deficiencies in this process?
9. What percentage of the Conference's budget goes to support the DM?
10. Brazil, with its culture and context, has its own peculiarities. How have those issues affected the DMs' equipping process?
11. Is there something else that should be contemplated in this conversation? What would you like to do to make the process better?

B. District Superintendents' interview

1. How did the DM's project get started? Where did the inspiration come from?
2. What have been the major problems in equipping the DMs in the Sixth Region?
3. How did it come to be the prerequisite for ordination in the Sixth Conference?
4. What has been done to overcome the major problems in equipping the DMs in the Sixth Region?
5. What have been the intentional actions by the church in equipping DMs to become successful? What training is provided for the DMs? Are there some specific actions of the District office in this direction?
6. How are the local churches deficient in this process?
7. What was your role in helping the DMs develop in the process? And, what are your major responsibilities as a DS with regard to the DMs, since you are the closest leader to whom they are accountable?
8. What are the candidate's deficiencies in this process?
9. What does the District do to equip the DMs, and what are the most helpful tools to equip them?
10. Brazil, with its culture and context, has its own peculiarities. How have those issues affected the DMs' equipping process?
11. Is there something else that should be contemplated in this conversation? What would you like to do to make the process better?

C. Clergy's Survey

This survey was directed to the clergy, who started their journey process through the new approach as Designated Missionaries. The survey will be done at the annual pastoral retreat in June of 2020.

1. The Methodist Church intentionally equipped me to be a DM;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
2. The change from first education to side-by-side theological formation and first-practice basis with the appointment of DM as a new methodology for ordination is clear to me;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
3. I am satisfied with the DM equipping programs that led from appointment until consecration/ordination;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
4. I had the appropriate training for the ministry I was expected to do;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
5. My calling to pastoral ministry has to be developed into a full-time position;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
6. Certainly, you can identify your greatest struggles: Do you agree with the statement: "I had the tools and the support I needed to overcome such struggles."
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
7. I could serve the Kingdom of God with excellence as a lay preacher, or as a part-time pastor;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree

3. Agree
4. Strongly Agree
8. Most of my struggles through this time as a DM were personal (particular);
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
9. The appointment of the laity as DM, as prerequisite for ordination, has helped the Methodist Church to be faithful to its tradition and vocation.
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
10. Most of my struggles through this time as DM were with the church members;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
11. I received the support I needed from the District and from the Conference to accomplish the goals;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
12. My strength in ministry is leadership;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
13. The Conference/District fulfilled their financial agreement when I was appointed;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
14. My strength in ministry is biblical knowledge;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
15. The development of my effectiveness through the years was promoted by the Conference;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
16. My strength in ministry is relationship and outreach;

1. () Strongly disagree
2. () Disagree
3. () Agree
4. () Strongly Agree

17. I was motivated by the high goal of turning a missionary field into a self-sustained church;

1. () Strongly disagree
2. () Disagree
3. () Agree
4. () Strongly Agree

18. I had the theological bachelor's degree when I was first appointed;

1. () Strongly disagree
2. () Disagree
3. () Agree
4. () Strongly Agree

19. The pastoral ministry journey has to start first with theological education, then to pastoral practice;

1. () Strongly disagree
2. () Disagree
3. () Agree
4. () Strongly Agree

20. The development of my effectiveness through the years was helped by other institutions, initiatives and seminars;

1. () Strongly disagree
2. () Disagree
3. () Agree
4. () Strongly Agree

21. I led the church until it was recognized as self-sustained;

1. () Yes
2. () No

D. Designated Missionaries' Survey

This survey is directed to the designated missionaries who are still in process pursuing consecration to become part of the clergy team of the Sixth Conference of the Methodist Church of Brazil. Such survey will be done at the annual pastoral retreat in June of 2020.

1. The Methodist Church has intentionally equipped me to be a DM;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
2. The change from first education to side-by-side theological formation and first-practice basis with the appointment of DM as a new methodology for ordination is clear to me;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
3. My calling to pastoral ministry has to be developed into a full-time position;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
4. I had the appropriate training for the position I was appointed to;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
5. I could serve the Kingdom of God with excellence as a lay preacher;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
6. Certainly, you can identify your greatest struggles: Do you agree with the statement: "I had the tools and the support I needed to overcome such struggles."
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
7. The appointment of the laity as DMs as a prerequisite for ordination has helped the Methodist Church to be faithful to its tradition and vocation.
 1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
8. Most of my struggles while in the position of DM have been personal;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
9. I received the support I needed from the District and from the Conference to accomplish the goals;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
10. Most of my struggles while in the position of DM have been ministerial;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
11. The Conference/District has provided the financial support we agreed upon at the appointment;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
12. My strength in ministry is leadership;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
13. The development of my effectiveness through the years has been helped by other institutions.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
14. My strength in ministry is biblical knowledge;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
15. I have been motivated by the high goal of turning a missionary field into a self-sustained church;
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree

4. Strongly Agree
16. My strengths in ministry are relationship and outreach;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
17. The pastoral ministry journey has to start first with theological education, and then to pastoral practice;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
18. The path to consecration/ordination was clear to me when I started the pastoral journey;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
19. I am satisfied with the DM equipping programs that led from appointment until consecration/ordination;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
20. The development of my effectiveness through the years has been mainly promoted by the Methodist Church;
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly Agree
21. I have the theological bachelor's degree;
 1. Yes
 2. No
22. I am currently serving at a missionary field;
 1. Yes
 2. No

E. Informed Consent Letters – Interviews

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

FRUITFULNESS AND ORDINATION:

MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ORDINATION

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Edney Joaquim a **doctoral student** from Asbury Theological Seminary. You were invited because you participated actively in the implementation of the Designated Missionary strategy at the Sixth Conference, which changed the starting process of the journey to ordination.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to answer an interview guided by open questions exploring your knowledge and experience with the subject. We will try to meet in person at the best place for you, however, if it is not possible, we can perform the interview through the Zoom app. There is no financial compensation for such participation.

Confidentiality of your answers is guaranteed, and the files written and recorded will be kept in a safe place for up to two years and destroyed after the conclusion of the research. The interview will be done individually.

The Sixth Conference is the pioneer in the implementation of the Designated Missionary strategy, and this study will be helpful for a good reflection since 2021 will mark 20 years since its implementation. The church structure is also organic; evaluation and change are part of the process. It will be very beneficial to point out decisions from a deeper study like that.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please tell Dr. Milton Lowe who can be reached at Milton.lowe@asburyseminary.edu. 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 without penalty. If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me at edney.joaquim@asburyseminary.edu.

Signing this paper means that you have read this, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Participant Signature

Date Signed

F. Informed Consent Letter / Surveys

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

FRUITFULNESS AND ORDINATION:

MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ORDINATION

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Edney Joaquim a **doctoral student** from Asbury Theological Seminary. You were invited because you participated actively in the implementation of the Designated Missionary strategy at the Sixth Conference, which changed the starting process in the journey to ordination.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to answer a survey with around 20 Likert Scale questions exploring your knowledge and experience with the subject. You will be asked to do that online. The survey can be answered in less than 30 minutes. There is no financial compensation for such participation.

Confidentiality of your answers is guaranteed, and your name will not be exposed at any time.

The Sixth Conference is the pioneer in the implementation of the Designated Missionary strategy, and this study will be helpful for a good reflection since 2021 will mark 20 years since its implementation. The church structure is also organic; evaluation and change are part of the process. It will be very beneficial to point out decisions from a deeper study like that.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me at edney.joaquim@asburyseminary.edu.

Signing this paper means that you have read this, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Participant Signature

Date Signed

G. Sixth Bi-annual Conference Appointment Data (Excel)

Part1

Designated Missionary	Current Status	Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Y/N	Status Changed (Years)
			1	2	3	4	5	6	PR	DT	7	8	9	CO	9	10	QT	11	12	13	14	15	16
001 Missionary	PR	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	PR													Y	6
002 Missionary	DT	M	1	2	3	4	5	DT														N	
003 Missionary	IN	M	1	2	3	IN																N	
004 Missionary	PR	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CO										N	9
005 Missionary	QT	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	QT							N	
006 Missionary	QT	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	QT												N	
007 Missionary	IN	M	1	2	3	4	IN															N	
008 Missionary	PR	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	PR		Y	16
009 Missionary	PR	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO												Y	7
010 Missionary	PR	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO												Y	6
011 Missionary	ER	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO												Y	4
012 Missionary	DM	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				Y	16
013 Missionary	QT	M	1	2	3	4	QT															N	
014 Missionary	PR	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO												Y	6
015 Missionary	QT	F	1	2	3	4	QT															N	
016 Missionary	ER	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO												N	6
017 Missionary	ER	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	CO													N	5
018 Missionary	ER	M	1	2	3	4	CO															Y	3
019 Missionary	PR	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	CO													Y	5
020 Missionary	DM	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				Y	13
021 Missionary	QT	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				N	11

Legend
DT = Death
QT = Quit
PR = Pastor
ER = Elder
DM - Designated Missionary
IN = Interrupted
CO = Consagrado/Ordenado

Part 2

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	
022 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	4	CO											Y	4	
023 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			N	14
024 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	3	QT												N	
025 Missionary	PR	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	CO								Y	8
026 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	QT							N	
027 Missionary	PR	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	CO	Y	13	
028 Missionary	QT	F					1	2	3	3	QT											N		
029 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	CO										N	4	
030 Missionary	PR	M					1	2	3	4	CO											Y	3	
031 Missionary	PR	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	CO									Y	5	
032 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	3	QT											N		
033 Missionary	DM	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			Y		
034 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	3	QT											N		
035 Missionary	DM	F					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			Y		
036 Missionary	ER	F					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	CO							N	7	
037 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	3	CO											Y	2	
038 Missionary	QT	F					1	QT														N		
039 Missionary	DM	F					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				Y		
040 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	CO												Y	2	
041 Missionary	PR	M					1	2	3	4	5	CO										Y	4	
042 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CO						Y	6	
043 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	CO												Y	2	
044 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	4	5	CO										N	4	
045 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	CO												N	2	
046 Missionary	ER	F					1	2	3	CO												Y	2	
047 Missionary	DM	F					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11					Y		
048 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	QT						N		
049 Missionary	DM	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11					Y		
050 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	QT						N	7	
051 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	3	QT											N		
052 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	4	5	CO										Y	4	
053 Missionary	ER	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	CO									Y	4	
054 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	QT							N		
055 Missionary	DM	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11					Y		
056 Missionary	DT	M					1	2	3	3	DT											N		
057 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	3	QT											N		
058 Missionary	PR	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	CO	10	11					Y		
059 Missionary	DM	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11					Y		
060 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Q						N		
061 Missionary	QT	M					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	QT						N		
062 Missionary	QT	F					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	5	QT						N		

Part 3

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
063 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	QT				N	5
064 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	QT	N	
065 Missionary	QT	M										1	QT									N	
066 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	QT				N	
067 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	CO							Y	3
068 Missionary	QT	F										1	2	3	4	QT						N	
069 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	CO	8	9	Y	4	
070 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Y	9
071 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO			Y	7
072 Missionary	PR	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CO	Y	
073 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	CO							Y	2
074 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	QT	N	
075 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	CO					Y	4
076 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Y	10
077 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	QT				N	
078 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	CO					Y	4
079 Missionary	QT	F										1	2	3	4	5	6	6	QT			N	6
080 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	CO					Y	4
081 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	QT							N	
082 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Y	8	
083 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	QT			N	
084 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	CO				Y	5
085 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	QT						N	
086 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	QT				N	
087 Missionary	DM	F										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Y	7	
088 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Y	7	
089 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Y	7	
090 Missionary	QT	M										6	7	CO								N	5
091 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	QT							N	
092 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Y		N	
093 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Y		7	
094 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	CO			Y	4
095 Missionary	QT	F										1	2	3	4	5	6	QT				N	
096 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6					N	
097 Missionary	DM	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Y		N	
098 Missionary	DM	F										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Y		Y	
099 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	5	6	QT				N	
100 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	CO					Y	5
101 Missionary	QT	M										1	2	3	4	QT						N	
102 Missionary	QT	F										1	2	QT								N	
103 Missionary	ER	M										1	2	3	4	5	CO	7	CO			N	4

Part 4

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
104 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	4	5	QT			N	
105 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	QT					N	
106 Missionary	DM	M											1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	Y	7
107 Missionary	ER	M												1	2	3	4	5	CO			Y	4
108 Missionary	QT	F												1	2	3	4	5	QT			N	
109 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	QT						N	
110 Missionary	DM	F												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	Y	
111 Missionary	ER	M												1	2	3	4	CO				Y	4
112 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	QT					N	
113 Missionary	DM	F												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	Y	
114 Missionary	ER	M												1	2	3	4	CO				Y	3
115 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	Y	
116 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	Y	
117 Missionary	DM	F												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Y	8
118 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Y	
119 Missionary	QT	M												1	QT							N	
120 Missionary	ER	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	CO	CO	Y	5
121 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	QT					N	
122 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
123 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	4	QT				N	
124 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
125 Missionary	PR	M												1	2	3	4	5	CO	CO	Y	Y	5
126 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	6
127 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	6
128 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
129 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
130 Missionary	QT	F												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
131 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
132 Missionary	QT	F												1	2	3	4	5	QT	QT	N	N	
133 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
134 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	Y	
135 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
136 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
137 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
138 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	4
139 Missionary	QT	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
140 Missionary	PR	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	3
141 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
142 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	
143 Missionary	DM	M												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		Y	
144 Missionary	QT	F												1	2	3	4	5	6	Y		N	

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