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Accepting the call and overcoming the challenges: leadership practices of African American clergywomen

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ACCEPTING THE CALL AND OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: LEADERSHIP
PRACTICES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CLERGYWOMEN

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Michael J. Harris

December, 2018

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must, first and foremost, thank Almighty God! You are an awesome wonder! You are most gracious, perfect, holy, and deserving of all praise. I thank you for your indescribable love for me and for freely granting me salvation through my faith in the person and work of Christ Jesus. I thank you for your purpose and plan for my life, and for allowing your light and love to be put on display through me in the earth. Above all titles, above all distinctions, above all awards, above all acclaim I receive on this earth - I am most honored to be called "Child of God"!

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

Clergy leadership is identified as an immensely challenging vocation. This study proposes that challenges African American clergywomen face are exacerbated due to the combination of their ethnicity and gender. Forces such as patriarchy and gender discrimination are explicated in this study and identified as major sources of oppression for African American women in clergy leadership. This study provides historical background by exploring gender arrangements both on the African continent and in the United States, to allow the reader to understand frustrations that African American clergywomen experience as they encounter myriad challenges to emerging and thriving in clergy leadership roles within the Black church setting.

Social science literature, leadership and management studies, Theological studies, and biblical accounts are provided to offer the researcher propositions, theories, philosophies, and frameworks that aid in providing perspective and understanding of the research topic. The origin, prominence, and role of the historic African American church is also discussed extensively in the study. The African American church has been instrumental in advancing the liberation of African Americans at large, but is also directly complicit in the challenges African American clergywomen experience. As such, this study seeks to identify leadership strategies and practices employed by African American clergywomen to overcome the myriad challenges in their leadership roles. Furthermore, this study highlights how African American women in clergy leadership measure their success. The study also spotlights recommendations and lessons African American clergywomen offer to others in similar leadership positions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

A preponderance of literature on women and religion highlights male dominance in religious organizations (Barnes, 2006; Baron, 2004; Chaves, 1996; Chaves & Cavendish, 1997; Cody, 2006). Findings from such studies prevail despite the fact that many have identified clergy leadership as a feminizing profession (Nesbitt, 1995). Yadgar (2006) asserts that male dominance is due to the discriminatory nature of traditional religion. Women in religious leadership is persistently a topic of debate and contention despite the fact that the Bible is supportive of women in leadership. The Apostle Paul affirms women in leadership, and acknowledges their significance when addressing the church at Philippi:

> Indeed true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement and also the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. (Philippians 4:3, New American Standard Version).

Along with countless men who co-labored with Paul in his ministry, there were numerous women of significance whom he identified as "fellow workers" - people who were integral to the success of the early church. Despite this foundational truth, as stated in the Bible, there is still great resistance to women being accepted as counterparts or "co-laborers" with men in ministry. Some women are even finding it hard to receive ordination (Gilkes, 2001). Women who advance to clergy leadership commonly deal with the challenge of patriarchy, sexism, and classism (Bragg, 2011). These factors contribute to the difficulties faced by African American women pursuing senior clergy leadership. Both clergy and laity are often guilty of sexist attitudes and practices that manifest in very overt ways (Barnes, 2006; Cody,2006). Powerful denominational entities such as the Southern Baptist Convention, explicitly oppose the

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ordination of women, which represents an organized rejection of gender inclusivity in leadership positions, and perpetuates a culture of gender bias (Yadgar, 2006).

History

If the Bible supports women's participation in ministry, as indicated by the writings of The Apostle Paul and others, the question must be asked: "why is there still such resistance"? Answers to this question begin to emerge in the interpretation of various passages of scripture that views clergy leadership as a vocation that excludes women's participation. As evidenced in passages from the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul supported women in clergy leadership. However, he also gives fuel to those who oppose women in clergy leadership in letters referred to as "Pastoral Epistles". He writes that those desiring to be an Elder in the church should be the "husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2, 3:12; Titus 1:6, New American Standard Bible). The logic here is that only men can be a husband - therefore only men qualify for the role of church elder. The apparent contradictory statements by the Apostle Paul regarding the participation of women in clergy leadership has long been a cause of consternation for many religious leaders and scholars (Smith, 1989); many of whom are divided on the interpretation of the Apostle's writing, which requires an understanding of context and audience.

The issue of biblical contradictions on the subject of women's roles in church leadership has been extensively considered and researched by religious scholars and theologians (Kossie-Chernyshev, 2006). Reconciling the scriptural ambiguity on this matter (and other controversial issues) requires the application of a technique that aids in understanding what the scriptural text means. This technique is referred to as exegesis or the exegetical process (Osborne, 1991). The use of exegetical techniques is essential to biblical interpretation and requires the Bible student, reader, or scholar to examine and gain an understanding of the context in which the scripture was

written. In this sense, proper interpretation requires one to place herself in the cultural situation of the time that the scripture was written, and have knowledge about the language of that historical period (Fee & Stuart, 2014). Exegesis provides a systematic approach to biblical interpretation, however, it is not a panacea for the controversy that persists around the issue of women's role in church leadership. Exegesis is being approached from two disparate lenses: traditionalist or complementarians - those who interpret the scriptures as excluding women from teaching, ruling, or usurping the authority of men; and egalitarians - those who believe men and women are equal and oppose gender specific divisions of labor in religious vocations (Freeman, 1971).

Yadgar (2006) speaks rather broadly when discussing the discriminatory nature of traditional religion, but does not explicate the matter further by exploring possible denominational variations or racial differences. When considering the history and origins of sexism and gender discrimination in the context of the Black Church, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) argue that one shouldn't look any farther than the influences of European society under which Blacks were subjected during slavery and the Reconstruction era. Patriarchy was a relatively foreign concept to Africans prior to their arrival to America. On the continent of Africa, gender arrangements were more egalitarian (Cole, J., & Guy-Sheftall, 2009). In fact, many African societal contexts saw women in positions superior to men - leading in the marketplace, political sphere, and even in the military (Brockway, 1947).

Slavery effectively leveled the playing field for African men and women. Power and authority typically enjoyed by women in Africa - where they were priestesses, queens, midwives, storytellers (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990) - was no longer a reality on the American plantation. In America, African men subscribed to a philosophy and worldview about gender arrangements that

was consistent with that of the white slave master. According to Cole and Guy-Sheftall (2009) African men eagerly pursued opportunities to assert male dominance. Plantation life presented limited opportunities for superiority and dominance in relationships with Black women. However, the Black Church was a setting in which patriarchy emerged and prevailed. In fact, during slavery the Black Church became one of the only institutions that permitted Black men to rule and exercise authority (Cone, 1970). As such, many Black men began to imitate the authoritative practices of the slave master. African men failed to acknowledge the contradiction between their oppression of African women and the relentless domination they were subjected to, and lamented, from the white slave master. Unfortunately, Black male dominance came at the expense of his partner and the only ally he had during slavery - the Black woman.

In the centuries that have passed since emancipation, the African American woman has continued to endure and struggle in the Black Church under the subservient relationship of her former plantation partner. The remnants of slavery, and its devastating effects on gender relationship for the African American male and female, are quite conspicuous in contemporary African American culture and life. Because of how far removed African Americans are from the historical realities of slavery, one can surmise that many in the contemporary Black Church are unaware of the origins of sexism and gender discrimination. Moreover, one can deduce that many African Americans are oblivious to the fact that patriarchy as a practice is not indigenous to people of African ancestry. As a result, it should not be surprising that patriarchal ideals prevail to the extent that it does in the contemporary Black Church. There are other social-historical factors that contribute to sexism and gender discrimination within the Black Church, but it is crucial that its roots in slavery be understood.

The Black Church is identified as one of the more prominent social institution in the

Black community along with the school and family (Billingsley, 1991). It is credited as being a place that offers "valuable community networks that foster mutual support, nurture individual gifts, and validate individual identities" (Frederick, 2003, p. 4). Lincoln (1990) identifies the Black Church as central to the totality of Black existence in America as innumerable aspects of Black cultural practices, and countless social institutions - schools, banks, insurance companies - have origins in the Black Church. In addition, many Historically Black Colleges and Universities, such as Benedict College and Morehouse College, have Baptist origins and maintain Baptist affiliations. The Black Church serves as a tremendous resource to urban communities as evidenced by the fact that two-thirds of elderly African Americans reported receiving some form of support from the church (Taylor et al., 2005).

Black churches are commonly known to address pressing needs of the communities in which they are situated, particularly those that are economically blighted and poverty ridden. Some of the needs that the Black church provides include academic support and tutoring, job training and placement, health education, and housing assistance (Gilkes, 2001). Michael Eric Dyson, a noted religious scholar, activist, professor, and ordained Minister identifies the Black Church as one of the most valuable resources in the Black community and central to Black culture as a whole (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003). The church has been vital to the socialization process for African Americans - teaching standards for appropriate conduct and codes for morality that are applicable for home life, the workplace, educational settings, civic and community life (Lincoln & Mimiya, 1990; Taylor, Lincoln, & Chatters, 2005).

Background

While the Black Church continues to address a variety of needs for the entire Black community - including various experiences and resources of a social, spiritual, economic, and cultural nature (Williams, 2003) - Black women have a relationship with the Black Church that is unrivaled by any other group in the Black community. A Pew Forum study shows Black women having greater levels of attachment to the Black Church compared to men (2009). Some scholars attribute the increased level of need that Black women have for the Black Church to the rising number of single-parent households being led by Black females (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The church serves as a support system and network that provides moral and spiritual support, guidance, and tangible assistance (i.e shelter, clothing, and food) for those with great need (Brody et al, 1994). In this sense, the Black Church is indeed, a refuge today as it was during such times as the Civil Rights era when the church provided protection, solace, and strength during times of great social and political upheaval and turbulence (Williams, 2003).

In concert with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which aimed to advance the social and political status of marginalized groups in the United States, the Women's Movement was the impetus for widespread change that resulted in an increased presence of female visibility and participation in male-dominated arenas (Lightfoot, 1978). A social and cultural shift occurred in the decades leading up the Women's Movement. A generation of women were active participants in the workforce while men served in World War II. The traditional image of women as domestics was counterbalanced by images of women as factory workers, heads of families, and breadwinners (Friedan, 2010). Stereotypical notions about womanhood and femininity were challenged during the 1960s and 1970s.

Through marches, lobbying efforts, boycotts, and landmark Supreme Court decisions, women gained numerous victories including: the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the 1973 Supreme court Roe v Wade decision; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 that banned sex discrimination in schools; the Higher Education Act (1965); the Equal Rights Amendment. However, the quest for women's equality during the 1960s and 1970s was not limited or restricted to public sectors of society. A challenge to patriarchal structures also infiltrated theological seminaries and religious institutions. Over a ten year period - from 1972 to 1981 - women's enrollment in theological seminaries increased by 340% compared with men whose enrollment grew only 25% (Carroll, Hargrove, Lummis, 1983); this also corresponded with an increase in women's ordination to professional ministry (Anders, 1983).

The feminist movement served an essential role in highlighting the social and institutional forces contributing to the hardship and oppression of women. Moreover, the feminist movement raised society's levels of awareness about patriarchy and the debilitating impact of male domination in American society (Lightfoot, 1978). The Feminist Movement, sometimes referred to as the Women's Liberation Movement, was a watershed period in history as women began challenging traditional roles and ideals about femininity and women's roles, and proceeded to move into traditionally male-dominated institutions - including the church - in record numbers. Black women contributed to Women's Rights and benefited from the movement in countless ways. However, prevailing feminist ideologies of the Civil Rights era were not always consistent with the theology of the Black Church, nor were they conducive to the cultural imperatives of the Black community (Collins, 2002).

Feminism, as it has been communicated in the wealth of Euro-American feminist discourse, is driven by anti-male sentiment that runs counter to the values of the Black

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community. Feminism, as a secular movement with a secular cause, can perpetuate gender

divisions and exacerbate tenuous male-female relationships (Strauch, 1995). As such,

recognizing their experiences and needs as divergent from the White female experience, Black

clergywomen have subscribed to a Womanist Theology which affirms their connection to

feminism while simultaneously maintaining allegiance to Black community and recognizing the

invaluable role of Black men (Burrow, 1998).

Womanist Theology frame the subjugation and oppression of women as more than a

social and political issue, but also a theological issue. Womanist Theology views sexism and

gender discrimination as a sin against God (Burrow, 1998). Alice Walker (1983) conceived the

term "womanist" and used it to describe Black women as capable and courageous individuals

who are committed to the "survival and wholeness of an entire people, male and female" (p. 11).

As such, womanism is distinct from feminism as it does not presume negative motives and

intentions of males. Instead, womanism embraces men and recognizes the vital, collaborative

roles that men and women play in the development of the healthy communities (Wallace, 1989).

Womanist Theology, therefore, is a paradigm that offers a full perspective of Black women's

lives in ministry - as ones who are "agents of culture and community" (p.5) - rather than a group

of oppressed individuals (Gilkes, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, the same church that has supported the Black community throughout

their history in the United States, and has stood "between individual Blacks. . . and the State

with its racially alienating institutions" (Higginbotham, 1993, p. 9), has also presented

roadblocks for mobility and has become a source of frustration for African American

women aspiring to progress from mere ancillary and supportive roles in the church, into

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positions of leadership. The Black church remains an institution that is led overwhelmingly by African American males who have made it a practice - by word and deed - to relegate women to periphery positions in the church (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2009).

To a large degree, men who subscribe to a male dominant interpretation of scripture (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2009), continue to lead from a patriarchal viewpoint that refuses to accept that woman can be their equal in all aspects of the church, including the pulpit. A landmark study conducted by Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) showcases this when a survey of Black clergy from 2,150 churches showed a meager 15% of male clergy responding "strongly approve" when asked if they approve of female clergy.

Black women in America deal with what has been labeled the triple threat of racism, sexism (Talleyrand, 2006), and classism (Collins & Yeskel, 2000). The combination of multiple marginalizing identities present tremendous challenges for Black women. According to bell hooks:

No other group in America has had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women. We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from Black men, or a present part of the larger group 'women' in this culture. When Black people are talked about the focus tends to be on Black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women (hooks, 1981, p. 7).

This same issue is put into theological context when Guy-Sheftall asserts:

The focus of Black theology is to liberate the Black community from the oppression of racism. Unfortunately, Black men often seek to liberate themselves from racial stereotypes and the condition of oppression without giving due

attention to the stereotypes of oppression against women (1995, p. 324).

Furthermore, religious scholarship perpetuates a gender bias as research on lived experiences and leadership practices of clergy persons is primarily from the male perspective. Studies on women represent a paltry sum of extant literature. Accounts of experiences of African American clergywomen is disproportionately minuscule (Hardy, 2012). Very little research exists on African American women highlighting their successes and triumphs. Typically, religious scholarship spotlights Black women's supportive and complementary roles in the Black church, the challenges they face in pursuing leadership, and their role as a pastor's wife (Chaves, 1996). Black liberation "cannot treat Black women as if they are invisible or on the outside looking in" (Guy-Sheftall, 1995, p. 331). African American women are at the forefront of leadership in all societal spheres, including religion – including the Black Church. They are not invisible, yet their stories – their trials and triumphs – have not received worthy attention.

The silencing of the Black woman's voice shows the extent to which sexism and gender bias have been normalized both in the Black Church and the academy. Baron (2004) laments that because women do not have sanctioned authority on a broad scale within the Black church, they are not able to use speech, language, and voice to articulate the range and depth of their concerns on matters related to their marginalized status. Lincoln & Mamiya have highlighted the glaring disparity in the rate of female-male perspectives in religious scholarship (1990). It is rather disheartening to see that the majority of research centers on the experiences of men in leadership. Throughout American History, voice - which is the power to engage in discussion, communicate dissent, and support thoughts - has been instrumental in ameliorating oppressive practices and institutions (Myrsiades, 1998).   Inseld & Fernald (2004) believe voice is essential to women gaining the status and social positioning, and leveraging power to change their

marginalized status.

Purpose Statement

African American women are advancing as clergy leaders despite the history of slavery

and other social-historical factors. Over the decades African American women have consistently

embraced the Black church despite its complexities and imperfections. They have managed to

"move beyond the problem and limitations of the church, not because the church is perfect; for

them their faith is real; complicated but real" (Frederick, 2003, p. 4). In 1970, nearly 3% of U.S.

denominations had assigned women to clergy leadership. By 1990, the percentage had increased

to 19%, and was over 50% in 2005 (Barnes, 2006). However, there are still very serious

challenges for women in some denominations. A 2009 study of clergy leadership in American

Protestant churches showed women holding only 11% of senior clergy leadership positions

(Barna Group, 2009). In fact, as a rule, leaders in the Southern Baptist organization prohibit

women from serving in clergy leadership positions (Ledbetter, 2000). This decision is based on

the belief that a woman's responsibilities are first to family and her husband, and that positions

of authority - particularly in the church - should be reserved for men. Southern Baptist Church

president, James Merritt, went on record with the following statement on the matter: "God would

never call a woman [to serve as pastor]. If she believes that she received such a call, she is

misled. God is bound by His own word and He will never issue a call that is unbiblical" (Wyatt,

2002, p. 102).

Drawing from various sources, Adams (2007) provides a picture - which I believe is a

useful framework - that constitutes the types and levels of involvement for women in religious

organizations. He identifies four categories: participation, general leadership, seminary

education, congregational preaching, and head clergy. Listed below are the categories and his

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findings:

1. *Participation* - women are by far the largest proportion of religious participants, (Bruce 2002; Miller and Hoffman 1995; Sherkat 1998; Smith et al. 2002)

2. *General leadership* - this role may involve teaching and leading small groups of other women (Chaves 1999; Wallace 1992).

3. *Seminary education* - women are attending and graduating seminary in great numbers, but are less likely than men to obtain jobs (Chaves 1997; Sullins 2000).

4. *Congregational preaching* - Women's preaching from the pulpit corresponds with the general level of conservatism or in a congregation (Purvis, 1995; Wallace, 1992)

5. *Head clergy positions* - studies show that in many cases women are appointed to these positions when other options are limited to a congregation (Konieczny and Chaves 2000).

Gilkes (2001) emphasizes a striking contradiction in American churches whereby women surpass men in church attendance and as financial contributors, but are scarcely permitted to partake in decision-making. Despite this tension and resistance to fully accept women as senior leaders, women continue to pursue their calling in the clergy. Women are making progress toward receiving ordination, and are even experiencing success as pastors, despite ongoing resistance from men and fellow women.

This study proposes that African American women have faced significant challenges in becoming clergy leaders, and assumes there is much to be discovered and learned about leadership strategies and practices employed by those women to overcome the challenges they face. As such, the purpose of this study is to identify challenges African American women face

in their clergy leadership roles and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those challenges. Furthermore, this study highlights how African American women in clergy leadership measure their success; and the recommendations and lessons African American clergywomen can offer to others in similar leadership positions.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) were addressed in this study.

- RQ1 - What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?

- RQ2 - What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?

- RQ3 - How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?

- RQ4 - What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership roles have for emerging leaders in similar roles?

Significance of the Study

This study bridges the gap in the literature on the lived experiences of African American women in clergy leadership. Through this study, the following will be accomplished:

1. Add to a limited body of work available on the lived experiences of a group that has been traditionally excluded in religious leadership studies.

2. Contributes to existing literature that highlights challenges associated with women breaking the glass ceiling and overcoming barriers to success in male-dominant, patriarchal institutions.

3. This research aspires to inform and inspire emerging leaders from all backgrounds in both spiritual and secular industries.

4. This study has the potential to impact the social, political, and spiritual direction of African American clergywomen in their immediate churches and surrounding communities.

Assumptions of the Study

Since the goal of this study explores the leadership practices and strategies that African American clergywomen employ to address challenges in their leadership roles, the first assumption of this study is that scripture affirms the ordination of women in various ecclesiastical leadership roles. Therefore, no attempt will be made to argue or affirm the ordination of women because it is assumed that both men and women are called by God to the clergy. A second assumption is that clergywomen are cognizant of the history of sexism and gender discrimination in their profession and have unique experiences dealing with and overcoming these oppressive forces.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation associated with the phenomenological approach is associated with the requirement to access participants for interview sessions which results in large quantities of notes that must be analyzed (Lester, 1999). Additionally, Breakwell et al. (2006) explain that because the phenomenological approach renders the researcher an overt participant in data collection, researcher effect can become a limitation. Furthermore, the researcher's "demeanor, accent, dress, gender, age, and power" (p. 248) are characteristics that may bear influence on participants' readiness to take part in the study and may affect the quality of responses. An additional limitation is related to the fact that this research focuses on African American women exclusively. Therefore, voices of other non-Black women are not included in the study. A future study could include other racial and ethnic groups.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the definitions of terms are offered to clarify how select terms were used in the research. The definitions are also provided to assist the reader with terms that may be unfamiliar. Additionally, the definitions are offered to provide a consistent, congruent vocabulary throughout the study.

- *African American*: Citizens of the United States who are non-Hispanic and classified as Black by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. African Americans may be inclusive of individuals descending from any of the Black racial groups of Africa (Nettles & Perna, 1997).

- *Black Church*: C. Eric Lincoln in *The Black Church in the African American Experience* identifies the Black Church as "churches that minister predominantly to Black congregations in the United States" (1990). The term expresses the centrality of the Black Church in Black communities. The church is the basis from which morality and values (socially redeemable and acceptable characteristics) are obtained for the other institutions in the Black community, and is therefore thought to be of utmost importance in the Black community. Historically, the church is seen as a primary socializing agent for Blacks in America.

- *Clergy leadership*: Called, commissioned, licensed, and/or ordained individuals who occupy a religious leadership role within a church (Campbell, 2000). Clergy leadership positions are pastor, bishop, elder, evangelist, minister, and deacon.

- *Congregation*: Cnaan and Boddie (2001) define congregation as a religious gathering using the following seven criteria: (a) unified with a common identity, (b) regularly meets, (c) focuses their attention on worship and collectively follows the same teachings and

practices, (d) meets at a designated location, (e) meets at a location separate from their living or work space, (f) has an recognized leader, and (g) has a formal name and structure.

- *Denomination*: A religious organization defined by its devotion to their set beliefs and practices (Perl & Chang, 2000).

- *Exegesis*: is to explain or interpret a text or portion of Scripture (Graduate Theological Union, 2002).

- *Glass ceiling*: Identified as an invisible, institutional barriers that restrains or prevents women from experiencing mobility within an organization (Vianen & Fischer, 2002). Myriad barriers and roadblocks may come in the form of prejudice, gender discrimination, male dominance, sexism, gender roles, heterosexism, and organizational structure (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Schaefer & Schaefer, 2004). Findings from other qualitative studies (Brown, 2007; Doll, 2007; Meistrich, 2007) demonstrate that women who have pierced the glass ceiling possess transcendental personal qualities and superb leadership abilities.

- *Leadership*: is defined as a process that is used to motivate individuals, or in the case of this study a congregation, to work together to accomplish great things within the church or community (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Leadership in the church context can be a tool to inspire a range of positive or negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Barnes, 2004).

- *Ordination*: is "a solemn setting apart of such persons to their respective offices as have been previously elected by the suffrages of the disciples, according to the standard of qualifications laid down by the Holy Spirit" (Milligan, 1960, p. 352).

- *Pastor*: a religious leader who is considered a shepherd, leader, or overseer of a religious

flock (Chaves, 2002; Ingram, 1981; Nelson, 1993). Typically the position requires that

one be trained, licensed, commissioned, or ordained.

- *Stained-glass ceiling*: will be used to denote an invisible, but relevant barrier for women

    navigating the process of being clergy (Lee, 2004). The original term, the glass ceiling,

    was used to identify the barriers present for women in reaching executive positions in an

    organizational or corporate setting (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Chapter Summary

Chapter one provides the theological and socio-historical background needed to address

the research topic. The chapter articulated patriarchy and gender discrimination as major sources

of hardship and frustration for women in clergy leadership and traces the roots of patriarchy to

European influences during slavery. The chapter also explained how African American men

perpetuate sexism against African American women within the Black Church. In the face of

such challenges, the chapter highlights that African American women continue to pursue their

call to the ministry and are serving in pastoral positions in great numbers.   In sum, this chapter

effectively explained the purpose of the study and the problem that it seeks to address in

highlighting the experience of African American women in pastoral leadership, offering

particular insights to best leadership practices and strategies employed in an overwhelmingly

male-dominant context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

The following literature review takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding challenges African American clergywomen face in their leadership roles and the practices employed to overcome challenges. Social science literature, leadership and management studies, Theological studies, and biblical accounts offer the principal researcher propositions, theories, philosophies, and frameworks that aid in providing perspective and understanding of the research topic.

Historical Leadership Perspective of Black Women In Africa

Black women in leadership roles was not uncommon in ancient Africa where women were "priestesses, queens, herbalist, and tribal mothers" (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p. 276). Patriarchy was a relatively foreign concept to Africans prior to their arrival to America. On the continent of Africa, gender arrangements were more egalitarian (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009). Fossil records trace the origins of humanity to Africa (Tobias, 1983). This fact presupposes that the African woman were first to give birth, which implies that all life starts with the African woman. This historical foundation is the basis for the immense respect Black women are conferred in pre-colonial Africa (Finch, 1991). Although foreign invasions, colonialism, and myriad challenges have tainted certain ideals and practices that were native to ancient Africa (resulting in the diminishing status and increasing marginalization African women) remnants of its original culture remain (Diop, 1987).

The following is a look at various contexts in which African women served and thrived as leaders. The sections are divided into the three leadership areas: Economic Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, and Political Leadership.

Economic Leadership

In traditional African society African women were critically important to the economic development of their communities. Their business acumen, savvy, and sophistication was well regarded. Women were integrally involved in all spheres of the economic marketplace, including production and distribution of goods and services. Women had important roles to play in establishing trade agreements, which, among other things, included negotiating and establishing market taxes and tariffs (Diop, 1987).

Spiritual Leadership

It was not uncommon for women to be found leading spiritual systems and faith communities in ancient Africa. In many cases, African women were the most powerful and prominent group of spiritual and religious leaders. Persons in these positions held an elevated status in African society. Spiritual leaders had the tremendous responsibility of performing sacred rites, conducting ceremonies, and carrying out rituals. The spiritual leaders were also counselors, mediums, and oracles. Much of their power was predicated upon the perceived power they had to place or remove curses. In effect, these spiritual leaders were able to influence the fate and fortune of those in the ancient African community (Mbiti, 1990)

Political Leadership

African women were instrumental in both the development and administration of micro-level and macro-level political organization and governance. African women created systems within their communities to ensure the protection and maintenance of their families and other members of their communities. On a larger scale, Africans were active participants in a dual-sex political system and served as Queen Mother - a role complementary to the King whose responsibilities included administering large and complex government institution such as the

education system. In some exceptional cases, women ruled African nations and had supreme rule (Diop, 1987).

Black Women in Leadership and Black Manhood

As seen from the above accounts, gender roles in African society were quite fluid and complex in comparison to roles African American men and women adopted in America. While on the African continent, men and women did what was needed for the success of the family and community (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009). Consequently, it was not unusual for women to be in roles superior to men in politics, government, and family life. However fluid the roles were, gender arrangements were rather egalitarian in Africa, and the dignity of men and women was affirmed (Lincoln, 1990). Slavery marked a dramatic shift in gender arrangements and, quite naturally, the dignity of African men and women was significantly damaged. Black men suffered the greatest form of emasculation as they were no longer able to defend and protect their women and children from the brutalization of the white slave master (Dryden & Walker, 1993). The post-emancipated Black male's response of control and dominance of the Black woman is natural, and perhaps justifiable, as it was merely an effort to "reclaim his women and children" (Guy-Sheftall. 1995, p. 325).

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was another watershed time in American history, as African Americans fought for and made tremendous strides in breaking barriers of discrimination. African American men and women both played integral roles in the success of the movement, but the men – led by luminaries like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – received most of the attention and credit for the strides made; although some argue that female leaders such as Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Jo Ann Robinson, and Mary Fair Burks were not given the credit they deserved (Standley, 1941). Black women organized and created clubs to

advance their collective consciousness and advance their social position. Kienzle & Walker (1998) says these clubs were instrumental in Black women deconstructing patriarchal ideals that had penetrated African culture during slavery and still permeated their post-emancipated lives.

Individuals who were intimately acquainted and involved with the Civil Rights movement knew that a dark reality – a contradiction – existed that mirrored Black men and women's experiences from slavery. Moreover, Kaba (2008) acknowledges the significant contributions of African American women to the development of America, and Black life in particular, are often overlooked or discarded. African American men and women were oppressed by the dominant institution led by white males, and each was pursuing freedom. However, Black males were guilty of compounding the oppression of Black women by engaging in sexist and discriminatory practices (Cone, 2012).

Black male leaders held the view that the movement was best served by having Black women in supporting and auxiliary roles, which typically meant championing the movement from the background or at home. The 1964 Civil Rights Act, which aimed to ameliorate economic and political discrimination based on sex, race, or ethnicity, gave women more opportunities. However, because of the separation of church and state, this vital piece of legislation did not apply to the sacred space of religious institutions, where gender bias and discrimination affected Black women most (Lehman, 1985).

The Black Church

The Black Church is part of a larger network of religious organizations characterized by a faith-driven goal and purpose, and is comprised of the following seven major Black Protestant denominations: (a) the National Baptist Convention, (b) the National Baptist Convention of America, (c) the Progressive National Convention, (d) the African Methodist Episcopal Church,

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(e) the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, (f) the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and (g) the Church of God in Christ (Brisbane, 1970; Brockway, 1947). The Black Church is identified as one of the more prominent social institution in the Black community along with the school and family (Billingsley, 1991). It is credited as being a place that offers "valuable community networks that foster mutual support, nurture individual gifts, and validate individual identities" (Frederick, 2003, p. 4).

Lincoln (1990) identifies the Black Church as central to the totality of Black existence in America as innumerable aspects of Black cultural practices, and countless social institutions - schools, banks, insurance companies - have origins in the Black Church. In addition, many Historically Black Colleges and Universities, such as Benedict College and Morehouse College, have Baptist origins and maintain Baptist affiliations. The Black Church serves as a tremendous resource to urban communities as evidenced by the fact that two-thirds of elderly African Americans reported receiving some form of support from the church (Taylor et al., 2005).

Black churches are commonly known to address pressing needs of the communities in which they are situated; particularly communities that are economically blighted and poverty ridden. Some of the needs the Black church provide includes academic support and tutoring, job training and placement, health education, and housing assistance (Gilkes, 2001). Michael Eric Dyson, a noted religious scholar, activists, professor, and ordained Minister identifies the Black Church as one of the most valuable resources in the Black community and central to Black culture as a whole (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2009). The church has been vital to the socialization process for African Americans - teaching standards for appropriate conduct and codes for morality that are applicable for home life, the workplace, educational settings, civic and community life (Lincoln & Mimiya, 1990;

Taylor, Lincoln, & Chatters, 2005).

Although African people have practiced Christianity for centuries (Bediako, 1995), the Black Church in America emerged during the 18th and 19th century (Blankman & Augustine, 2004). It provided a place for African Americans to uniquely express their faith and it served as an escape from the devastating reality of slavery (Williams, Keigher, & Williams, 2012). The Black Church has historically worked to promote social change and the betterment of life for African Americans. The Black church was vitally important in the organizing efforts of the Civil Rights Movement, and is often credited for inspiring the prevailing ideals and messages that were communicated during the movement (Calhoun-Brown, 2000).

Black Women and The Black Church

Black women have served in every capacity imaginable in the Black church: usher, soloist, Sunday School teacher, food server, deaconess, pastor's aide, clerk, missionary, evangelist, prayer warrior, nurse (Wiggins, 2005; Zikmund, Lummis, & Chang, 1998). The Black woman has long been considered the backbone of the Black Church. Hoover writes: "Truly women are the glue that held the churches together. The church was their home away from home, the social orbit in which they met the right people" (Hoover, 1966, p. 296). While the Black Church has been at the forefront of the fight to combat injustices against marginalized groups, it has also been criticized for its complicitous stance in the marginalization of Black women (Clardy, 2011; Mananzan, 2012; Taylor & Merino, 2011).

The Black church has historically been resistant to the ordination of Black women in clergy leadership. However, the church has found creative ways to affirm the gifts and indispensable talents of Black women. In addition to some of the aforementioned functions that Black women perform in the church, a most prominent role that comes with significant

distinction and influence is that of "Pastor's wife". Many Pastor's wives essentially serve as co-pastors to their husband - the senior pastor. Kieren and Munro (1989) identify this function as a twenty-first century phenomenon that has gained immense popularity.

The Black woman's relationship with the Black Church is stronger than her male counterpart. This fact is highlighted by research indicating that Black women place a greater emphasis on their need for spiritual guidance, compared to Black men (Lugo et al., 2008; Mananzan, 2012; Taylor & Chatters, 2010). Validity of these claims has been supported by Levin & Taylor (1993), who studied levels of religiosity among Black men and women. After controlling for education, marital status, and employment status, the researchers discovered that Black women still excelled Black men's level of religiosity. Some scholars attribute Black women's increased need for - and connection to - the Black Church to the rising number of single-parented, Black female-headed households in the Black community (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In effect, the church serves as a support system and network that provides moral and spiritual support, guidance, and tangible assistance - in the form of shelter, clothing, and food - for those with great need (Brody et al, 1994).

Despite Black women's connection to, support of, and affinity for the Black Church, men disproportionately monopolize positions of prominence and leadership (Baer, 1993). In studying preference and perceptions of members of various congregations, Fogarty (2009) found that many assume Black men to be better suited for the roles and responsibilities that come with clergy leadership. Other researchers have explored perceptions that congregants have of leadership effectiveness and competence, and found that Black men rate more favorably than Black women (Cohall & Cooper, 2010; McDaniel, 2003; Stansbury, 2011).

Pioneering Black Clergywomen

The earliest record of Black women preachers was during the 18th century. A number of women - slave and free - acted as preachers and evangelists although their slave status and gender prevented them from being ordained. The following is a synopsis of the lives of such women taken from Collier-Thomas (1998) Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and their Sermons:

Elizabeth

The earliest Black female preacher was a woman known simply as Elizabeth. She was born a slave in 1766 to parents who were devout Methodists and engaged in regular Bible reading and prayer. As was the case with many slaves during this era, Elizabeth was separated from her family, and was sent to another farm at the age of eleven. This event grieved her immensely. She suffered from long emotional bouts of depression as she was forbidden to visit or make contact with her family. On one occasion, being overtaken with despair and having a longing to see her family, Elizabeth ran away and returned to visit her family. She was immediately recognized by the overseer and suffered a horrific beating.

Elizabeth's actions posed an undeniable risk to her well-being. Before sending Elizabeth away, her mother encouraged her with the following words "none in the world to look to but God" (Collier-Thomas, 1998, p. 41). Elizabeth took her mother's words to heart and devoted her life to building a relationship with God through perpetual prayer. She felt the sense that God was calling her to preach during this difficult and trying time. But, it was not until after 1796, when she was set free, that she devoted her life to the ministry. Lacking sufficient literacy skills and knowledge of the Bible, Elizabeth sought guidance from other Christians. However, she met persistent opposition and was consistently opposed by those who did not believe that God would

call a woman to preach. Moreover, she was told that women were ill-equipped for the rigors of travel associated with being an itinerant preacher.

The persistent opposition burdened Elizabeth to the core. Thoroughly disheartened, at one point she contemplated abdicating her goal of becoming a preacher. But, she did as her mother taught her to do when confronted with hardships and challenging circumstances - she prayed. Her perseverance and faith ultimately led to her becoming a preaching woman in 1808 in the Methodist tradition. She held regular meetings in Baltimore and traveled throughout the North and South, preaching and lecturing wherever she was invited. The opposition never relented. When confronted by her opponents, and asked about her authority to preach, Elizabeth would commonly retort "Not by the commission of men's hands; if the Lord had ordained me, I needed nothing more" (Collier-Thomas, 1998, p. 42).

Jerena Lee

Jarena Lee was born free in Cape May, New Jersey on February 11, 1783. She was the second Black women known to preach. There is very little biographical information on Jerena's parents. At an early age, she was hired out to work as a servant for another family. It was this experience that afforded her the opportunity to learn how to read and write. It was during her tenure as a servant that Jerena was introduced to religion. At the age of twenty-one she had what she would describe as a religious awakening when listening to a Presbyterian preacher recite words from the book of the Psalms. It was during this time in her life, that Jerena left for Philadelphia and began attending a Methodist church with an all-white congregation.

After three months with this Philadelphia Methodists church, Jarena Lee noted "there was a wall between me and a communion with that people, which was higher than I could possibly see over, and seemed to make this impression upon my mind, this is not the people for you"

(Andrews, 1986, p. 27). Lee joined the African Methodist Church, and within five years, she felt

a call to preach. Reverend Richard Allen, who founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church

in 1794, was directing the Philadelphia church that Lee was attending. Allen was unwilling to

license Lee at the time, and again years later, when Lee renewed her request. Allen would

compromise to Jarena Lee's dissatisfaction. She would be allowed to hold prayer meetings and

exhortations to promote church growth and membership, but was not allowed to preach.

Jerena remained unwavering in her commitment to preach the gospel. The prominence of

Bishop Richard Allen, and his unwillingness to authorize her ministry, would not deter Jerena

Lee from pursuing her goal. She is quoted as saying:

> If a man may preach, because the Saviour died for him, why not the woman?
>
> Seeing he died for her also. Is he not a whole Saviour, instead of half one? As
>
> those who hold it wrong for a woman to preach would seem to make it appear
>
> (Andrews, 1986, p. 36).

She enjoyed an illustrious career as an itinerant minister, launching her career in

Philadelphia and expanding it as far as New York, Baltimore, and Ohio. Her audience included

all genders, white and Black. As her career advanced, she would ultimately travel with Bishop

Richard Allen and was given preaching engagements to speak in numerous churches that he

oversaw.

Zilpha Elaw

Zilpha Elaw was born free in 1790 and grew up in Philadelphia with a Quaker family.

She attended religious meetings on a regular basis, but was not particularly influenced by the

teachings of the Quakers. At age twenty she married a man by the name of Joseph Elaw whom

she described as worldly and non-Christian. Despite the fact that her husband enjoyed partying,

dancing, and other pleasure-seeking activities - and attempted to coax Zilpha into renouncing her Christian beliefs - Zilpha described her husband as an otherwise respectable young man. Her marriage to Joseph, a non-Christian, presented Zilpha with a painful spiritual conflict. She would often warn unmarried Christian women to avoid such arrangements (Andrews, 1986).

Elaw was twenty-seven years of age when she attended her first camp meeting where she enjoyed her initial religious experiences. Zilpha was first presented with the notion that she would preach by her sister who was gravely ill. While nearing death, her ill sister communicated to her a vision that she had of Zilpha preaching. Zilpha rejected the idea for years, certain that such a lifestyle would prove problematic for her marriage. It was not long before Zilpha began to see in herself what her sister had seen. She continued to attend camp meetings regularly. She was eventually overcome by a strong spiritual conviction that she was being commissioned to preach. Casting aside concerns for her husband, she prepared herself for the inevitable reproach of family and friends, and wholeheartedly embraced her mission. There are accounts of Zilpha Elaw preaching through the southern United States and eventually traveling to England where she published memoirs, and likely lived the remainder of her life (Collier-Thomas, 1998)

Amanda Berry Smith

Known as one of the great African American women preachers of the nineteenth-century, Amanda Berry Smith was the second child of Samuel and Miriam Berry born on January 23, 1837. Although a slave at birth, Amanda maintained no recollection of slavery as her father bought her family's freedom when she was very young. Smith had minimal formal education, but she taught herself to read and write. In 1850 Amanda moved to Pennsylvania where she worked as a domestic and frequented a Methodist Episcopal Church. Over the next twenty years, Amanda would marry twice: her first husband, Calvin Devine, would die in the Civil War;

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her second husband, James Smith, perished in 1869.

Amanda Berry Smith immersed herself in ministry and began conducting revivals after the death of her second husband. She also did missionary work throughout the Northeast United States. Like most preaching women of her time, Amanda encountered great resistance from those who did not believe in women preachers. She did not challenge the status quo about women's ordination, but was content to know that God had called her to preach. Black male preachers appeared threatened by her growing prominence and notoriety as a preacher. Some questioned her motives and ambitions. She was also the target of disparaging remarks and was mistreatment by the wives of notable male preachers.

Amanda's resilience, persistence, and drive led to her having the distinction as one of the great leaders of the Methodist Church. Her accepting the call to ministry and enduring countless obstacles - including the death of two husbands - allowed her to understand the plight of those she would encounter in ministry who were less fortunate. There was a noticeable social justice component to Amanda Berry Smith's work in ministry. She was involved in foreign missions in Africa and India. She was also involved in the early women's rights and suffrage movements. She opened a home for Black orphans in Chicago, IL. Some saw her in the same light as the great abolitionist and activist, Frederick Douglas, because of her impressive oratorical skills and leadership abilities.

Sojourner Truth

Born Isabella Baumfree in 1797, Sojourner Truth is perhaps the most venerated Black female preacher of the nineteenth-century. Sojourner Truth changed her name in 1843 after a spiritual conversion experience. Her name aptly describes her life's work and mission as an evangelist. "Sojourner" refers to someone who is traveling or passing through a land not their

own, and "Truth" represents the infallible word of God which preachers are called to preach. History lauds Sojourner for her strength, intelligence, and commanding presence. However, during the earlier years of her life, Sojourner dealt with feelings of inadequacy and inferiority that was linked to her slave background. It was not until she was nearly thirty years of age that she gained her freedom - escaping the plantation with her infant daughter. Unfortunately, she had to leave her older children behind because they were not legally freed per the New York State Emancipation Act which stipulated that servants were bound to their masters into their twenties.

Her name change to Sojourner Truth corresponded with the conversion experience she had upon being introduced to the Methodist faith. She told friends that a calling was on her life to proclaim the abolition of slavery (McCleary, 2015). She was also noted for her speeches about women's issues. To this day, Sojourner's "*Ain't I a Woman*" speech resonates with feminist and human rights activists. Like many African American clergywomen, Sojourner Truth's influence outside the church was just as significant as the work she did within the church. Her abolitionist activities included recruiting Blacks troops to join the Union Army and fight during the Civil War. She traveled to Washington, D.C. to contribute to the National Freedman's Relief Association. Sojourner Truth also had the distinction of meeting with President Abraham Lincoln to share her life experiences as a slave. It is believed that Truth and others, like Frederick Douglas, were instrumental in giving President Lincoln the insight, perspective, and understanding needed to approach the emancipation of Black slaves with decisiveness and urgency. Before her death in 1883, Sojourner Truth continued her efforts to advance the civil and human rights of Black people. Other areas of activism included women's suffrage, prison reform, and desegregation of public institutions.

The Earliest Ordained Black Women

The first ordination of a woman in the U.S. Protestant tradition occurred in 1853. It took nearly four decades for an African American woman to gain ordination. In 1894 and 1895, respectively, Julia A. Foote and Mary J. Small were ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (LaRue, 2005, p. 4; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Minister Foote had been serving in ministry for over fifty years until being ordained at the age of 71, as she neared the end of her career. Minister Small, on the other hand, was entering the prime of her life when she was ordained. Collier-Thomas refers to Small's ordination as a "watershed event in the struggle of preaching women" (1998, p. 23) because she assumed a position of authority in the prime of her life. Small led a congregation that was predominately male, and she eventually assumed the role of Elder in her denomination. Harriet A. Baker was also a late-nineteenth-century Black woman preacher who, unlike Small and Foote, assume the role of church pastor.

The following is a synopsis of the lives of Mary J. Small, Julia A. Foote, and Harriet A. Baker taken from Collier-Thomas (1998) Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and their Sermons:

Mary J. Small

Born to Agnes Blair on October 20, 1850, Mary J. Small grew up in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Very little is known about Mary's formative years, and biographical sources do not mention her father. In 1873 Mary was married to a minister who became a prominent figure in the AME Zion Church. Her husband, Bishop John Bryan Small, was supportive of Mary and benefited from her working with him in ministry. Bishop Small was instrumental in Mary becoming a licensed evangelist and missionary in the year of 1892. Mary earned ordination as a deacon in 1895. She progressed rapidly in the AME Zion Church and became an elder in 1898 -

the first woman to hold that title. Her husband, and staunch supporter, Bishop Small died in 1901. Despite her credentials, Mary faced numerous roadblocks to mobility after her husband's death. There is no evidence of her ever pastoring a church.

In 1912, Mary J. Small became president of the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society (WHFMS). Her influence and notoriety came primarily from the work she did with this organization whose main goal was to promote missions for the spread of the gospel to lost souls throughout the world. As one who broke the gender barrier by becoming an elder in the AME Zion denomination, Mary J. Small was greatly admired and respected by Black women and missionaries. She is noted as saying "the only true service which can be rendered to God, can only be accomplished by serving our fellow creatures" (Collier-Thomas, 1998, p. 93)

Julia A. Foote

As the fourth child of former slaves, Julia A. Foote was born in Schenectady, New York in 1823. From age ten to thirteen she lived with a prominent white family and was educated in an integrated school. Julia moved to Albany, New York and married George Foote at sixteen years of age. Shortly thereafter, she and her husband moved to Boston and joined the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. It was at this time that Julia experienced her call to the ministry and began her controversial pursuit to preach the gospel. Julia's convictions led to conflict with many within her church. Friends and family were also among those who challenged her right to preach. However, she would not allow her opponents to stop her from pursuing and acting upon the call on her life. She served as an evangelist and would take every opportunity available to exhort and encourage those around her. Her oratory skills and eloquence as an evangelist was on par with, and often surpassed, men that rivaled her. Men and women - Black and white - would often come in great numbers to hear her preach at camp meetings, revivals,

and various churches that would open their doors to her (Collier-Thomas, 1998).

Julia A. Foote was ordained as a deacon in 1895, and in 1899 she was the second woman ordained as a minister in the AME Zion Church. There was a clear social justice emphasis in the teachings and preachings of Julia A. Foote. She spoke out against racism, patriarchy, and various societal issues. She was noted as a strong adherent to the holiness doctrine, which emphasized righteous living and the pursuit of moral and spiritual perfection. Julia A. Foote served six additional years in ministry after her ordination before dying in 1901.

Foote and Small are among many women who choose to pursue clergy leadership despite overwhelming opposition because of a sense of the "call of God" on their lives. Collins-Thomas (1998) refers to the call as a spiritual awareness and compulsion that God is commissioning one to serve others. Bonhoeffer (1995) asserts that the call refers to a mandate to be a disciple of Jesus Christ - to carry out the Great Commandment of making disciples and spreading the gospel message. Accordingly, Bonhoeffer says that the call may come more than once, providing ample confirmation needed for a person to know that a Divine source is leading them to a greater purpose. The call of God on the lives of Mary J. Small and Julia A. Foote was affirmed by leading denominations that eventually licensed and ordained them to the ministry.

Harriet A. Baker

Born to William and Harriet Cole in Havre de Grace, Maryland in 1829, Harriet A. Baker is noted as perhaps the first Black woman to ever pastor a church. The road to the pastorate was marked by bitter opposition from all obvious parties, namely the church. However, her family and husband were also among those who opposed her. She announced her intention to preach in 1872. The pastor of the church voiced his displeasure from the pulpit and made attempts to dissuade her in private conversations. However, neither the pastor nor her husband, were able to

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change her mind. In the immediate years that followed her announcement, resistance intensified

from the church leadership. Harriet even faced excommunication as she was asked to leave the

church. She did not consent. The church grew weary of her persistence, and ultimately

authorized her to preach in 1874 (Acornley, 2016).

Overcome by a strong sense of calling and purpose, an act of blind faith led Harriet A.

Baker to leave her husband and three children and set out on an adventure to discover her place

in ministry. She boarded a train with no particular destination in mind, and eventually made her

way to Brownstown, Pennsylvania. It was there that she met Reverend Brown, the pastor of the

Evangelical Church. Reverend Brown and Harriet became friends, and he allowed her to preach

in his church. Harriet preached to a primarily white audience during this period and was

welcomed with open arms. Her preaching was transformative and countless people were

converted and inspired by her ministry.

After her stint in Brownstown, Harriet returned home and shared her experiences with her

church and family. Individuals were astonished at her success and amazed at the reception

Harriet received from white people. It was clear to them that God had, in fact, called Harriet to

preach. As a result, the church sanctioned her ministry, and ultimately the AME Conference

appointed her to pastor St. Paul's Church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Harriet A. Baker died at the

age of eighty-three in 1913.

Black Female Leadership in The Church

The presence of women in church leadership has increased since 1977 (Carroll,

Hargrove, & Lummis, 1983), although the ratio of women to men in leadership has been

disproportionately skewed in favor of men. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) details that well into the

20th century there was still a relatively meager number of denominations regularly ordaining

women. Baer (1993) says the race and class structure of America, which prevents mobility of minority groups, contributes to Black men's efforts to monopolize positions of leadership within the Black church, and prevent women from accessing leadership, since it is the only institution in the Black community built, owned, and operated by Black people.

During the 1970s numerous mainline congregations - both within and outside the Protestant tradition - adopted ordinances and practices that were more favorable and accepting of women in leadership. However, it was Pentecostalism that really set the standard and led the way with its policies of inclusiveness and gender egalitarianism in the clergy ranks (Press & Swatos,1998). It is within the Pentecostal tradition particularly that African American women have pursued roles and designations that represent the highest rank of clergy leadership - Bishop, Elder, Pastor.

African American women comprise the numerical majority in the Black Church, yet she is typically in a subordinate role (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Men are vastly outnumbered by women, yet women are rarely seen in the pulpit (Lowen, 2000). A study of mainline congregations in traditional Black Churches report that women preachers are often prohibited from delivering sermons from the pulpit - which is typically an elevated platform and considered a sacred space. Instead of occupying the pulpit, women are forced to preach from the floor of the sanctuary at a podium or lectern (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). This blatant marginalization of women is a practice that explicitly demonstrates the perceived subordinate and inferior status of women in the eyes of many clergymen and congregants.

It is important to note that women's presence is appreciated and deemed invaluable to the church's success. Male clergy and parishioners often refer to women as the backbone of the church. According to Hoover (1966):

The women worked, yet found time to be Sunday school teachers, sing in the

choir, and support the church's program in every way. The women found time

and energy to be active in the women's missionary societies and to serve as

counselors or sponsors for the youth group.... The church was their home away

from home, the social orbit in which they met the right people. (296)

However, as the backbone of the church, many African American women have been

relegated to the background and are regularly forced to take a backseat. The Black Church has in

many ways perpetuated the perception of women as self-sacrificing subordinates to their men

(Marbley, 2005). Burns identifies sacrifice as an admirable leadership trait that is pivotal to

leadership emergence (1978). A sacrificial leader demonstrates the willingness to forego or lay

aside personal interest for the collective goals of the organization. Women have perfected this

practice in religious organizations, and in many cases, their sacrificial practices is not

accompanied by advancement and upward mobility. Because of the overt and pervasive nature

of sexism and gender discrimination, even when women are accepted in leadership roles, many

perceive their presence to be token umbrellas to conceal the discrimination that sits at the core of

the organization (Barnes, 2006; Chaves, 1996; Cody, 2006).

The African American Female Pastor

 African American women who are ultimately ordained and secure pastoral assignments,

often struggle to advance beyond entry-level appointments. Because of the dearth of

opportunities, many women are forced to accept assignments with smaller congregations in

marginal urban or rural areas. Men are usually sought out for churches with large congregations,

which typically come along with greater compensation (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The African

Methodist Church can be considered the most progressive among the Black Church. On July 11,

2000 this denomination elected Dr. Vashti McKenzie as its first Bishop. Dr. McKenzie more than met the minimum requirements for the role and excelled many of her male counterparts in training and education. She attended the historic Howard University, in Washington, DC, and received a Master's of Divinity (M.Div) degree. She furthered her education by earning a Doctor of Ministry degree from Union Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio (Turner, 2010).

Challenges Black Clergywomen Face

Gender discrimination is a common practice in the occupational setting of the clergy. Bragg (2011) asserts that patriarchy, sexism, classism, and gender barriers all contribute to the difficulties faced by African American women pursuing senior pastoral leadership. Both clergy and laity are often guilty of sexist attitudes and practices that manifest in very overt forms (Barnes, 2006; Cody, 2006). Powerful denominational entities such as the Southern Baptist Convention, explicitly opposes the ordination of women, but allows local churches autonomy in matters pertaining to church governance.

Despite this freedom granted to local churches to exercise control over their religious affairs, there remains what appears to be an organized rejection of gender inclusivity in leadership positions (Hoffmann & Bartkowski; Yadgar, 2006). There is a parallel between challenges faced by African American women in the secular workplace and the Black Church. Grimes (2005) brings attention to four areas where the similarities can be seen: (a) under-representation; (b) lack of power to change their situation; (c) prejudgments based on both race and gender; (d) and gender segregation resulting in isolation and, therefore, a lack of potential to collectively address the problem.

Gender Role Congruity

Role congruity theory suggests that challenges women face in terms of advancing in male-dominant professions can be related to the perceived lack of symmetry between gender roles and the leadership demands (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Gervais & Hillard, 2011). According to Boyce and Herd (2003), "Role congruity theory offers an explanation for the gender stereotyping of leadership positions by maintaining that perceived gender roles may conflict with expectations regarding leadership roles, especially when an occupation is held predominantly by one sex" (p. 367).

Cody (2006) highlights that women are often at a disadvantage because of misunderstandings and lack of consensus about what constitutes appropriate dress for clergywomen. Many women are criticized for either being too feminine or too masculine in their appearance. Kwilecki's study (1987) shows the challenges women have with regard to striking the proper balance between being passive (i.e. affiliative) and aggressive (i.e. authoritative). A prevailing stereotype exists in the church that suggests that women's interests and competencies are in contrast to the leadership roles required of clergy leaders (Gervais, Hillard, & Vescio, 2010). Women are thought to be fragile, emotional, and dependent, and these traits are less desirable than stereotypical male gendered traits such as logical, reasonable, and strength (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Bernard (1964) admits that both men and women experience role conflict in ministry and secular professions. However, the challenge appears far more acute for clergywomen with families as the work of ministry presents exclusive and extensive demands. As such, the competing demands of home and church life, coupled with expectations from parishioners and family members, can create overwhelming levels of stress for women. This role conflict can

ultimately manifest in clergywomen feeling compelled to choose between career or family. Women who persist in clergy also feel pressure to change to an inauthentic leadership pattern that mirrors styles consistent with traditional male leadership. The compulsion for women to adapt or "fit in" is considered both a trap and recipe for failure (Kelan, 2008; Kulich, et al., 2011; Lantz, 2008).

Stained-Glass Ceiling

Management literature is replete with data showing the institutional challenges associated with women's upward mobility within organizations. The U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1991 is the guiding legislation for the U.S. Department of Labor's Glass Ceiling Commission which researches, investigates, and prepares recommendations for Congress to address gender discrimination, and ameliorate barriers to women's advancement to upper and senior management in the workforce (Insch, McIntyre, & Napier, 2008). The challenges that women experience within the church mirror their challenges in secular society.

The term stained-glass ceiling was introduced to describe the phenomena relative to the opposition women face while endeavoring to rise to higher level positions within the church (Sullins, 2000). Some of the specific challenges faced by clergywomen include male dominance, sexism, racism; and the lack of mentoring, networking, and role models (McKenzie, 2002). The stained-glass ceiling essentially amounts to opposition to gender egalitarianism in religious organizations. The institutional roadblocks to ordination and the highest ecclesiastical positions within religious organizations is comparable to, if not worse than, the resistance that women encounter as they pursue managerial and executive positions in the secular workforce (Barnes 2006; Chaves, 1996; Cody, 2006).

Limited Opportunities

The Association of Theological Schools (2007) showed women leading the way at 54% of those enrolled in graduate-level programs designed to prepare individuals for professional ministry. Comparatively women clergy have a 71.8% graduation rate with men at 57.8% (Deckman, Crawford, Olson, & Green, 2003). The rise in the number of women seeking ordination and subsequently pursuing clergy leadership position is in direct proportion to the rate of women attending and graduating seminaries and theological/divinity schools (Chaves & Cavendish, 1997).

Since desegregation Black women have surpassed Black men in education attainment 2 to 1 (Kaba, 2008). Unfortunately, theological training has not resulted in a commensurate increase in opportunities for church leadership as males are more likely to receive job offers upon graduating (Finlay, 2003). Furthermore, the opportunities that women get in the clergy are often inferior to those that clergymen land in terms of compensation (Konieczny & Chaves, 2000). Moreover, women are also likely to be appointed to congregations that are smaller in size (Carrol, 2006) and in rural locations (Cody, 2006).

Biblical Ambiguity

Proper interpretation of scripture requires one to place herself in the cultural situation of the time that the scripture was written; and have knowledge about the language of that historical period (Fee & Stuart, 2014). Exegesis provides a systematic approach to biblical interpretation and is used to understand what the biblical text means. Although this process is tantamount to understanding biblical texts, it is not a panacea for the controversy that persists around the issue of a women's role in church leadership, nor does it remove the fog of ambiguity that persists. Exegesis of scripture related to the role of women in church leadership is being approached from

two disparate lenses: traditionalist/complementarians - those who interpret the scriptures as excluding women from teaching, ruling, or usurping the authority of men; and egalitarians - those who believe men and women are equal and reject gender specific divisions of labor in religious vocations (Freeman, 1971).

There is robust scriptural support for the egalitarian and the complementarians views. In support of the egalitarian view, Patterson (1993) points to the book of Genesis, the starting place and first book of the Bible, where God describes woman as being made in His image and likeness. Because this is the same description given to man - a God image bearer - Patterson infers that woman is endowed with the same God attributes as man and is thereby capable of serving her God and humankind in similar ways as man, despite the sexual differences. Using the same passage of scripture, Straunch (1999) interprets the Genesis account of creation to mean equality for male and female. He says that male and female are distinct and unique, but their differences are not intended to be used as a basis for superior or inferior treatment or placement within the body of Christ. Both man and woman were given the same commission; scripture commands both to be fruitful and take dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28, New American Standard Version). As such, it is Straunch's argument that God intended man and woman to share authority and rule collaboratively and cooperatively.

Bacchiocchi (1987) provides a divergent perspective from Patterson (1993) and Strauch (1999) that aligns with complementarians, who believe that differences in biology should correspond to differences in theology. In other words, men and women should have different roles in the church solely on the grounds of their biological and sexual differences. He advances the case in opposition to women in leadership by pointing to Jesus, who appears to have only selected men as disciples and apostles. Bacchiocchi (1987) argues that Jesus is the example all

should follow when identifying and selecting leaders for the local church. The example of Jesus presupposes that men should lead and women are to operate in supportive roles.

Bailey (1998) says the Bible provides substantial evidence that he believes refutes the claim that Jesus only chose men to be His disciples. He isolates four text from New Testament scriptures:

In the following passage, a woman disciple of Jesus - called Tabitha - has fallen ill and died. In a later verse she is restored to life and full health. The emphasis in this passage is on the use of the term "disciple" used by the New Testament writer of the book of Acts - widely known as Luke, another disciple of Jesus:

Acts 9:36 - In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. (New American Standard Bible)

The example provided here by another of Jesus's disciples, Matthew, records an occasion when Jesus was ministering to a group of people inside a residence. At some point, Jesus is interrupted by someone who informs Him that members of His family had come to see him and were waiting outside. In Jesus's response, he gestures [points] to the crowd [his disciples] to whom he's speaking, and addresses them using male and female identifiers:

Matthew 12:46-50 - While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said,

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"Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (New American Standard Bible)

In the following passage the writer, once again Luke - an original disciple of Jesus - includes women in the company of Jesus's disciple, who followed and supported Him in various ways:

Luke 8:1-3 - After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. (New American Standard Bible)

Lastly, the Bible details the special relationship Jesus had with sisters, Martha and Mary. The two were sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11). In the following passage, Martha and Mary are afforded the honor of having Jesus and other disciples as house guests. Martha, in her best attempts at hospitality, retreats to the kitchen and preoccupies herself with food preparation. Mary, on the other hand, is described as sitting at the feet of Jesus - assuming the posture of a pupil - a position only reserved for those who were disciples of Jesus Christ (Bailey, 1998):

Luke 10:38 - As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said (New American Standard Bible).

The most ardent support for women in leadership roles that egalitarians use to solidify their position, comes from the passage of scripture from Galatians 3:28, which reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (New American Standard Bible). Where complementarians refer to I Corinthians 11:3 which shows the biblical model for hierarchical relationships: "But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (New American Standard Bible).

These divergent interpretations of scripture have been a source of strife and contention within churches and denominations, and between these groups. Halverstadt (1991) expresses concerns that these contentions have resulted in a norm of competition and conflict that is unhealthy for a spiritual community. He asserts that cooperation is at the core of any viable organization, but especially the church, which is supposed to model appropriate interpersonal relationships. As such, in his book Managing Church Conflict, Halverstadt (1991) places strong emphasis on the necessity of church leader's recognition of the complementary and indispensable roles of both men and women to the success of the church.

Also, as previously stated, it is important to analyze and make judgments on the role of women in the church with an understanding of the cultural context in which the Bible was written. Sawyer (2002) finds it worth noting that the first-century woman had her life predetermined before she was born. Culture mandated that women's roles involve the care and maintenance of the family and home. Without women working to transform raw materials from animals and the land into products for home use, in addition to rearing children, the family would not have survived. Education and theological training was a world in which most women were unfamiliar (Wyatt, 2002). As such, many women were neither equipped for, nor were they

interested in, religious leadership.

Denominational Challenges

Black clergywomen also face the seemingly insurmountable prospect of dealing with resistance and barriers from denominational bodies. Merriam-Webster's (2009) describe denomination as *a religious organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices*. The Southern Baptist Convention is recognized as the second largest religious body in the United States (Adherents.com, 2005). The SBC explicitly opposes the ordination and appointment of women to the pastorate on the basis that a woman's responsibility is first to her husband, and that women should not be in positions superior to men (Ledbetter, 2000). However, local churches are given autonomy in their decision-making, and it is not unusual for traditional SBC churches to appoint women to leadership positions (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Churches that engage in practices that are not in congruence with denominational values and beliefs, such as ordaining and appointing women to pastoral positions, may face negative repercussions. Sanctions come in many forms, including the loss of financial support (Cody, 2006). As a result, many progressive churches with egalitarian ideals chose to break from conservative denominations and join independent organizations that are more accepting and supportive (Konieczny & Chaves, 2000).

Black Female Patriarchy

It is not just traditional and conservative clergymen who oppose female leadership. Lay members and congregants are among the host of opponents to women serving in church leadership roles, particularly pastoral leadership (Lehman Jr., 2002). Some congregants - including women - perpetuate gender discrimination. The phenomenon of women not supporting the advancement of clergywomen in the Black Church is known as Black female

patriarchy. Black female patriarchy glorifies the position of men in positions of leadership.

Westfield (2006) states that Black female patriarchy emerges when Black women assume

majority status in the participation ranks of the church and subsequently perpetuate the status quo

of male domination and power and privilege of men. Carpenter (2003) says that married and

unmarried female congregants derive feelings of comfort and satisfaction from having men in

positions of authority. Because women are often the numerical majority in the Black Church,

and invariably have higher levels of contact with pastors, their preference is to have a strong,

powerful, and highly successful male figure in the highest leadership position (Wiggins, 2005).

Leadership Approaches

Despite the abundance of research in leadership studies (Avolio, 2007; Bass, 1985, 1990;

Burns, 1978; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Judge, Bono, Illies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Lord, De

Vader, & Alliger, 1986; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Zaccaro, 2007), consensus has not yet been

established on a particular definition for leadership. Vroom & Jago (2007) have synthesized the

wealth of literature and describe leadership as a process employed to motivate groups and

encourage their collaboration in order to accomplish a shared goal or vision (2007). Burns

(1978) adds that "leadership is exercised when individuals marshal institutional, political,

psychological, and other resources to activate, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers" (p.

18). Leadership includes the articulation of visions and values that provide the basis for attitudes

and behaviors needed to accomplish organizational goals (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994).

Yukl emphasizes the importance of a leader's ability to influence, motivate, and empower

individuals to participate in the accomplishment of maximum organizational effectiveness and

efficiency (2013).

Sung (2011) points out that women's involvement in male-dominant industries, such as

religion, results in traditional leadership styles of both genders interacting in such ways that women may be inclined to alter their leadership patterns in order to conform with masculine ways of displaying power and authority. Inauthentic behavior modification is often done with an aim to gain legitimacy and conform to male standards and expectations. This is a common practice for women (Eagly, 2005). Because of their cultural and historical roots, coupled with biblical tradition, Cummings and Latta (2010) express that this dynamic exchange between male and female gender patterns of leadership is none more pronounced than in the Black church.

Transformational Leadership

An examination of leadership styles and practices by women in pastoral leadership (Hamman, 2010) show styles that are in congruence with transformational leadership. Women are often recruited to pastor and lead congregations in need of restoration and reinvigoration. With an emphasis on charisma, vision, and inspiration as quintessential leadership traits, transformational leadership emerged in organizational literature in the 1970s and is considered a relatively new leadership paradigm. Transformational or charismatic leaders demonstrate the ability to elevate followers' lower needs (i.e. need for safety and belonging) to higher levels in the Maslow's hierarchy (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership is an approach that describes a number of leadership practices. Northouse (2018) admits to there not being a succinct definition for transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are adept at appealing to a sense of morality and are thereby successful at inspiring followers to abandon self-interest for the benefit of group goals (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). Kuhnert (1994) adds to this line of thinking when he suggests that transformational leaders appeal to intrinsic rewards and values to inspire followers to embrace a goal greater than themselves. According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders are

highly concerned with learning and satisfying the motives and interests of followers. The

transformational leader is usually a gifted orator and can effectively articulate a vision that

followers embrace and wholeheartedly pursue. Leadership profiles show women to be more

relational than men, as such the transformational style of leadership has been attributed to them

(Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Patelis & Sorenson, 1997).

Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership, a style that is commonly employed by women leaders, is in

stark contrast to a transactional leadership style which is commonly employed by males in

leadership positions (Eagly & Johannseen-Schmidt, 2001; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Whereas

transformational leaders are inclined to be affiliative, relational, and democratic in their dealings

with followers, transactional leaders tend to be impersonal, authoritative, and task oriented.

Transactional leaders place a strong emphasis on structure, boundaries, and chain of command

among team members (Eagly & Johannseen-Schmidt, 2001); they are often strong adherents and

advocates of superior/subordinate hierarchical systems (Stewart-Thomas, 2010).

Furthermore, transactional leaders are very pragmatic. They place emphasis on roles or

expectations; provide incentives or rewards for meeting expectations; and use incentives and

contingent rewards to foster motivation (Toth, 2000). According to McKenzie (1996), women

tend to lead from the center - sharing power, encouraging participation, getting others excited,

and enhancing the self-worth of followers. From the center, a leader is not restricted by

hierarchical boundaries, and is thereby able to connect more seamlessly with team members.

Transformational leaders utilize exceptional interpersonal skills and charisma to motivate and

transform the motives of followers, and establish influence (Fiol, Harris, & House, 1999;

Hepworth & Towler, 2004)

Colarelli (2007) indicates that pastoral leadership requires one to be loving, empathetic, and a good listener. Perhaps this explains the conclusion drawn by Nesbitt that the clergy is a feminizing profession (1997). These are all attributes consistent with transformational leadership. These attributes, however, can be at odds with the necessity of being outcome-driven, demanding, strategic, and competitive which are qualities of traditional, male-oriented church leadership (Martin, Harrison, & Dinitto, 1983; Oswald & Kroeger, 1988). Kwilecki (1987). It is not uncommon for women to mimic these stereotypically masculine, transactional characteristics (Wilson, 2014). Moreover, the approach to church leadership and human development was taken from traditional secular approaches whereby dominant-subordinate relationships are accepted and considered the norm (Gardner, 2011).

Authentic Leadership

Authentic Leadership refers to a style that is genuine and real (Northouse, 2018). This leadership approach is still in its formative stages of study by researchers. However, a retrospective into the earlier scholarly works show evidence of leadership practices consistent with authentic leadership (Bass, 1990; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns, 1978; Howell & Avolio, 1993). Consensus has not yet been established on a definition of authentic leadership. Contemporary scholars vary in their viewpoints. Generally, authentic leadership is viewed through the following lenses: intrapersonal perspective, interpersonal perspective, and developmental perspective.

From an intrapersonal perspective, scholars highlight a leader's self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept (Northouse, 2018). From this perspective, subjective details about the leader and her personal biography - along with the meaning she attaches to that information - influences behavior. Accordingly, this leader is able to present the truest form of herself to

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others. The interpersonal perspective is reliant upon the mutual participation of leader and follower (Eagly, 2005). Leadership is relational. As such, this approach recognizes the influence that leaders and followers have on each other.

Finally, the developmental perspective places emphasis on leadership as a skill that can be nurtured over a period of time (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). This perspective highlights four distinct, but interdependent components as essential to authentic leadership development: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

George (2003) says authentic leaders can be identified by five characteristics: (a) They have a clear understanding of their purpose; (b) they have a strong sense of values about the right thing to do; (c) they nurture trusting relationships with others; (d) they demonstrate self-discipline and act on their values; and (e) they are passionate about their mission. According to George, these five characteristics provided a very practical approach for everyone desiring to become more of an authentic leader.

Distributed Leadership

Whereas the definitions and descriptions provided thus far show leadership displayed by leaders as individuals in charge of others and having followers, Horner (1997) sees leadership as a participatory endeavor characterized by interdependency and changeable roles throughout the organization. According to this definition leadership is fluid and constantly evolving to take the form(s) needed for organizational goals. This is in contrast to the traditional leader-follower dyad relationship as hierarchical arrangements are minimal. Leithwood et al., (2004) refers to arrangements where decision making is enacted by influential characters at all levels of an

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organization as distributed leadership.

The concept of distributed leadership has been furthered by a multitude of scholars, although some have chosen alternative nomenclature: Pearce and Conger's (2002) shared leadership, Bass' (1990) and Somech's (2003) participative leadership, and Wallace's (1988) collaborative leadership. Scholars clarify that even the most ardent proponents of distributed leadership understand that hierarchical arrangements are needed for the vitality and viability of an organization. Leithwood et al., (2004) emphasizes that teams are incapable of spearheading successful organizations as leaders at the helm of a company have the onus of responsibility for the success or failure of an enterprise. A leader is ultimately responsible for casting the vision and ensuring the execution of company goals.

Spiritual Leadership

Inspired by an abundance of mentor-mentee relationships in the Bible, spiritual modeling is an inescapable duty of all those who would assume church leadership. Silberman (2003) says spiritual modeling is the very essence of the Abrahamic religions - Christianity, Judaism, and Islam - whereby those in positions of leadership have the responsibility to lead lives that reflect spiritual maturity and morality. Leaders are expected to live out their teaching and preaching - allowing their actions to speak louder than their words. Lim (2004) says leaders must have integrity and character. Fry (2003) offers the following three components as indispensable hallmarks of spiritual leadership: vision - related to the future state of an organization; altruistic love - a selfless and sacrificial concern for others; hope/faith - belief in self and others ability to achieve the vision of the organization with the aid of God.

According to Northouse (2018) spiritual leadership "focuses on leadership that utilizes values and sense of calling and membership to motivate followers" (p. 5). However, a leader's

values must be demonstrated in tangible forms to be effective. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011)

elucidates spiritual leadership by providing the following nine components which are discernable

by the actions of leaders. Spiritual leaders: (a) are called, (b) are trustworthy, (c) base their

leadership in Scripture, (d) have the gift of discernment, (e) believe in God's authority, (f) are

established by Jesus, (g) are obedient to God's purposes, (h) are Christ-centric, (i) move others

toward God's agenda. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) emphasize the practice of spiritual

disciplines (i.e. prayer, meditation, fasting) as essential to flourishing as a spiritual leader.

Servant Leadership

Robert K. Greenleaf's offers a perspective on leadership that places little emphasis on

position, hierarchy, or title of persons involved in the organization. He provides ten

characteristics of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1979) in the following table:

Table 1

Greenleaf's Ten Characteristics of Servant Leadership

Listening	Intentionally focusing on the thoughts hearts, joys, and pains of others.
Empathy	The most successful servant leader exercises empathy with others. Empathy can respond to positive and/or negative emotions.
Healing	One of the powerful forces for transformation and integration.
Awareness	Remaining highly alert and reasonable disturbed; not seeking solace; having inner serenity
Persuasion	Trusting persuasion over positional authority in organizational decision-making.
Conceptualization	The ability to create a future orientation providing vision and mission.
Foresight	Understanding past lessons, present realities, and the probable consequences future decisions.
Stewardship	Holding institutions in trust for society's greater good.
Commitment to Growth of Others	Believing others have intrinsic value beyond noticeable workplace contributions, and being deeply committed to everyone's growth.

(continued)

Building Community	Sensing the significance of loss in recent human history due to the shift from the local community to the larger institution as the primary sharper of lives leading to a desire to build organizational community.

Note: The data in this table are from "Creenleaf, R. (1979). Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness".

Servant leadership is predicated on a relational dynamic wherein the leaders are servants of the followers (Greenleaf, 1997). According to Greenleaf, the best test for a servant leader is to ask themselves: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p. 22).

The motivation of the servant leader is being in service to her followers and inspiring them to become servants themselves. According to Dierendonck (2011):

The Servant-Leader is servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead… The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed? (p. 1230)

The quintessential servant leader in the Bible is Jesus. Jesus had a clear sense of purpose and mission. According to Ford (1991), all that Jesus did during his focused three-year ministry was intended as a service to others, not himself. Barclay (1975) says, "The great characteristics of Jesus's life were humility, obedience, and self-renunciation" (p. 38). These character traits of Jesus are all consistent with the servant leadership model. It is not surprising that Greenleaf was greatly influenced by his Christian upbringing (Banks &

Ledbetter, 2004).

Jesus is quoted as saying "whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Jesus articulates a paradox that is at the crux of servant leadership; that leaders are servant of their followers (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010; Greenleaf, 1997; Herman & Marlowe, 2005). In traditional hierarchical arrangements the opposite - followers serving leaders - is the norm.

The words spoken by Jesus in the above passage, and other areas in New Testament scripture, are not merely philosophical or theoretical, but they were demonstrated in very practical ways. As a servant leader, Jesus was found serving his disciples in the following ways: He fed them (John 21:12-14); He washed their feet (John 13:3-4); He healed the sick (Matthew 8:1-3; Matthew 9: 20-22; Matthew 9:35; Mark 2:9-12; Luke 17:12-16; John 9:6-7. Jesus was not so great that he would not engage in what was considered the most menial of tasks. In preparing His disciples for the work of ministry, Jesus placed emphasis on the necessity of being in service to others. After washing the disciple's feet, an act that made one of the disciples - Peter - very uncomfortable, Jesus retorts "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15, New American Standard Version). Here Jesus is emphasizing the importance of leading with the spirit of a servant.

This mandate to be in service to others stood in contrast to the disciple's understanding of leadership. Lane (1974) says the disciples were persons of selfish ambition desirous of rank, status, and privilege. Jesus instructions "the one who is greatest among you must be servant of all" (Mark 10:43, New American Standard Version) was an

approach counterintuitive to the disciple's notion of leadership. Like many leaders today, the disciples desired to be in the position of honor, whereas Jesus demand humility. Disciples James and John provide an example of the self-serving and ambitious nature of the disciples when they asked that Jesus grant them to sit in positions of honor when Jesus comes into the Messianic kingdom (Mark 10:37). The disciples were two among twelve who were called-out to serve the masses of those who were lost. Yet, James and John - who were brothers - were only looking out for themselves.

Self-interest has no place in servant leadership. In fact, one must be capable of pursuing others interest before one's own. Jesus places even more emphasis on servant leadership when He commands "you should love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 28:20, New American Standard Version). Jesus helps his followers understand servant leadership by teaching what is known as the Golden Rule - do unto others as you would have others do unto you (Matthew 7:12). Manz (2011) says, "The Golden Rule challenges us to give others the same chance, the same respect that we wish to receive" (p. 66). Leaders are to treat their followers in accordance with how they would like to be treated. Because human beings usually pursue their own personal good, servant leaders must act in ways that pursue the good of their followers.

As a relatively new area of study in traditional research, servant leadership is still gaining empirical grounding. The construct of servant leadership has been established, however, its effectiveness is in the early stages of substantiation (Northouse, 2018; Yukl, 2013). The emergence of studies in the field of organizational leadership during the last three decades have sought to understand the applicability of servant leadership (Bryant, 2003; Contee-Borders, 2002; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Drury, 2004; Farling, Stone, &

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Winston, 1999; Irving, 2005; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Laub, 1999; Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004; Spears, 1996; Spears, 2000)

Behavioral Approach

Studies conducted by the Michigan and Ohio State University provide a useful framework to analyze the effectiveness of leaders. The University of Michigan researchers investigated leadership effectiveness by exploring the relationship between leader's behavior, group processes, and group effectiveness. Firstly, the researchers discovered that effective leaders engage in task-oriented behaviors that are in contrast to the tasks of their subordinates. In particular, leaders engage in the administrative tasks of planning, developing, and coordinating organizational imperatives. Task-oriented leadership behaviors have included initiating structure (Hemphill, 1950), defining group activities (Fleishman, 1952), concern with production (Blake & Mouton, 1964), autocratic (Reddin, 1977), achievement-oriented (Indvik, 1986), focus on production (Katz, Maccoby, & Morse, 1950), production emphasizing (Fleishman, 1957), goal-achieving (Cartwright & Zander, 1960), goal emphasizing (Bowers & Seashore, 1966), and management (Zaleznik, 1977). Task-oriented leaders direct subordinates and provide technical assistance in the implementation of tasks (Yukl, 2013).

According to the University of Michigan study leaders are also heavily involved in relation-oriented behaviors that include helping and supporting subordinate to navigate challenging tasks. This function requires regular communication and interaction with subordinates, presenting opportunities for suggestions and input. Research on relation-oriented leadership include the following leadership behaviors: consideration (Hemphill,

1950), building mutual trust (Misumi, 1985), participatory decision-making (Ouchi, 1981), interaction-oriented (Bass, 1967), supportive (Bowers & Seashore, 1966), democratic (Misumi,1985), concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964), people-centered (Anderson, 1973), emphasizing employee needs (Fleishman, 1957), and leadership (Zaleznik, 1977).

Ultimately, according to the Michigan State University researchers, effective leaders encourage a participative leadership approach and encourage participation in decision making when possible (Yukl, 2013). As earlier mentioned Leithwood et al., (2004) describes distributed leadership as arrangements where decision making is not monopolized by one, but is enacted by influential characters at all levels of an organization. This mirrors participatory leadership, which is a construct that other researchers have made contributions to, including: Woods (2004) delineation of democratic leadership and distributed leadership; Pearce and Conger (2002) shared leadership; Bass (1990) and Somech (2003) participative leadership; and Wallace (1988) collaborative leadership.

Whereas the Michigan State University researchers investigated leadership effectiveness by highlighting task-oriented behaviors, relations-oriented behaviors, and participatory leadership behaviors, the Ohio State University researchers considered behavioral dimensions of leadership effectiveness. From this perspective, leadership effectiveness is largely predicated on a leader's capacity for initiating structure and consideration (i.e. concerned for followers). Denison, Hooijberg, & Quinn (1995) have referred to initiating structure and consideration as classic dichotomous leadership constructs. The distinct categories provide a simplistic either/or approach to analyzing and evaluating leadership effectiveness (Halpin & Winer, 1957). Fleishman & Harris (1962) defined consideration and initiating structure as follows:

- **Consideration**: Includes behavior indicating mutual trust, respect, and a certain warmth and rapport between the supervisor and his group. This does not mean that this dimension reflects a superficial "pat-on-the-back," "first name calling" kind of human relations behavior. This dimension appears to emphasize a deeper concern for group members' needs and includes such behavior as allowing subordinates more participation in decision making and encouraging more two-way communication.

- **Initiating Structure**: Includes behavior in which the supervisor organizes and defines group activities and his relation to the group. Thus, he defines the role he expects each member to assume, assigns tasks, plans ahead, establishes ways of getting things done and pushes for production. This dimension seems to emphasize overt attempts to achieve organization goals.

As communicated by Yukl (2013) the domain of initiating structure relates to a leader's orientation towards accomplishing vital organizational tasks through doing such things as specifying procedures, driving performance standards, and enforcing deadlines. Leaders who are effective in this area place emphasis on ensuring subordinates have resources such as equipment and supplies needed for accomplishing the organization's goals.

The corresponding behavioral domain in the Ohio State University model is consideration, which refers to a leader's capacity for expressing appreciation and displaying genuine support to followers (Bass, 1990; Dale & Fox, 2008; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2013). The positive relationship between consideration and leadership effectiveness is consistent with the servant leadership construct. Leader

consideration results in increased levels of follower commitment.   Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert (1996) report that follower commitment to superiors is positively related to performance. Emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2017), which is a measure of a person's ability to be cognizant of and monitor the feelings and emotions of others, and to respond in a way that promotes the other's well-being (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2008), is indispensable to the behavior domain.

Practices of Successful Leaders

Vision

Those who enjoy the success in leadership have the ability to articulate a clear vision. Ken Blanchard (2010) says, "a compelling vision tells you who you are (your purpose), where you're going (your preferred picture of the future), and what will drive your journey (your values)" (p. 18). In the absence of a clear vision, followers are left guessing about the direction and goals of the organization. Feelings of uncertainty and insecurity are common emotions that followers experience. Quinn stressed the importance of a leader's ability to provide a picture of the future, guiding followers through uncharted and threatening environments (2010).

Followers are as important to the implementation of a vision as a leader. Kahan (2010) says that a vision needs to be shared in order to be effective. As such, leaders must understand their followers well enough to build a vision that aligns with the needs and interests of followers. If leaders are successful, they will craft a vision that followers are immensely connected to and passionate about. Kouzes and Posner (2010) stress that visions be "something they [the followers] care about as much as, or even more than, you do" (p. 67). Burns (1978) furthers this point by emphasizing that a vision must attend to the needs

of all parties involved. Visions are most successful when they gratify the motives, needs, and desires of leaders and followers. A successful vision serves as a mirror in which a follower clearly sees her desires, needs, and wants reflected (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

What follows are the characteristics that Kotter (1996) provides as qualities that should characterize a successful vision:

- Imaginable - conveys a picture of what the future will look like

- Desirable - appeals to the long-term interests of followers

- Feasible - comprises ambitious, but realistic and attainable goals

- Focused - must be clear enough to guide decision making

- Flexible - is general enough to allow creativity, initiative, and alternative responses in light of changing conditions

- Communicable - a vision is only as effective as a leader's ability to articulate it in a way that is clearly understood and replicable.

Communication

Beers (2012) drives home the importance of clearly communicating a vision by stressing that a vision should be succinctly defined, and leaders should eliminate the use of unnecessary words, expressions, or phrases that might obscure the vision's intended meaning. Unclear or poorly communicated visions leave open the door for followers to determine their own course of action and set goals they believe are important. A poorly communicated vision can lead to the demise of an organization. As such, leaders cannot take for granted that every employee or volunteer is clear about the organization's vision. Fiorina (2006) says it is incumbent upon every good leader to keep the vision before her followers. A leader should use "every forum, every speech, and every venue" as an

opportunity to communicate her vision (p. 203). Kotter (1996) stresses repetition as well.

According to Guiliano (2009), communication skills are so integral to leadership that it can make or break a leader. Followers are looking for sincerity and credibility from their leaders. People want leaders who can "communicate their ideas effectively, can motivate people emotionally and logically, meeting their eyes, voice, heart, or prose whether in person or electronically" (Guiliano, 2009, p. 131). Kotter (1996) says inauthentic and disingenuous communication is eventually exposed by hypocritical actions. Leaders must practice what they preach. Their actions must be in consonance with their words.

Modeling The Way

Bossidy & Charan (2011) share that a leader's behavior will ultimately become the behavior of followers. A leader who is persistently late for work or meetings can expect followers to eventually adopt similar behaviors. Mere lip-service is not sufficient to accomplish goals and objectives of an ambitious and aspiring organization. Exceptional leaders actually live out the vision with their actions. Leaders model the way by showing followers how things are supposed to be done. Leaders don't ask followers to do anything that they (the leaders) would not do. Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that followers must be respected as constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers.

Love

A leader cannot expect to accomplish a vision unless her heart and soul are committed to it (Bossidy & Charan, 2011). Executing a vision is an arduous task that requires substantial amounts of energy from leaders and followers. Progress towards a vision can only be sustained if the individuals enlisted love what they have undertaken. Bennis (2001) communicates that one cannot be a great leader without having passion and

love for the work they do. Moreover, Collins (2001) says that love has to be genuine and cannot be manufactured or contrived. It is essential that leaders are involved in the process of discovering what ignites their passion, and make sure their goals are in alignment with the work they do.

Love should be at the center of the work leaders do, and leaders should have a desire to contribute to the lives of the individuals with whom they live and work (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Leadership, according to Kouzes & Posner, is an "affair of the heart" (2010, p. 135). Leaders must be as passionate about people as they are about products, services, and leading itself. In an organizational context, love involves leaders developing relationships with followers and displaying care by attending events, having conversations, sharing success stories, and acknowledging constituents in formal and informal ways (Kouzes & Posner, 2010).

Self-Awareness

Goleman (2017) describes self-awareness as "having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives" (pp. 95-96). The emphasis is on leaders understanding who they are at the core as this will help them know how they are inclined to react to circumstances that might arise in various leadership roles. Petrie et al., (2000) say leaders can cultivate self-awareness by doing self-assessment and personality surveys. This introspective process can help leaders understand values that guide their actions and behaviors with others. Understanding oneself is a key aspect of self-awareness. Kouzes & Posner (2010) highlight the importance of a leader understanding who she is, where she comes from, and the values that guide her. In better understanding oneself leaders are able to maximize their strengths and neutralize weaknesses.

Mindfulness is another term used by Goleman (2017) to describe self-awareness. Self-aware leaders are cognizant of emotions as they are occurring. They are skilled at managing feelings and responses to certain emotions. Leaders with high emotional quotient choose not to dwell on negative emotions. This level of emotional sophistication helps them maintain the mental and emotional balance, focus, and energy required to meet the various demands of leadership.

Perpetual Learning

A distinguishing characteristic of successful leaders is their voracious appetite for learning. A person's success in leadership is in direct proportion to their love for learning (Collins, 2009). A leader who is no longer passionate about learning new information and expanding her knowledge base or skill set will soon witness the decline of her enterprise. Kouzes & Posner (2016) acknowledge at least four different ways that leaders can go about learning: (a) leaders learn from experience - by taking action, engaging in experimentation, leaders are able to learn by trial-and-error; (b) leaders learn by thinking - researching information and reading is a practical and effective way for leaders to learn; (c) Feeling - through introspective investigation and self-assessment, leaders can make new discoveries about themselves and address deep seated issues that might be affecting their performance; and finally (d) accessing others - leaders are encouraged to reach out to and learn from others.

Kouzes & Posner (2016) point out that learning inevitably precedes leading. It is, therefore, apparent that learning would be a reasonable expectation for continued growth and success as a leader. Kouzes & Posner encourage leaders to consider the myriad learning options available, and make learning a habit. Leaders who are habitual learners view every

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experience - even failures - as learning opportunities. Even when confronted with difficult

or painful circumstances, the leader is looking for the lesson(s) to be learned. For Kouzes &

Posner "the two very finest teachers of business are trial and error" (Kouzes & Posner,

2006, p. 64)

Leadership Practices of Women in the Bible

Deborah

Deborah (Judges 4:4-16) was a wife, Judge, and prophetess for the nation of Israel during

the nation's 40-year period extending from 1237 to 1198 BC. She was the only woman with the

title of Judge in scripture, which was the highest position of authority in her time (Keener,

1992). According to Bright, "Early Israel had none of the apparatus of state: neither central

government, nor capital city, nor administrative machinery, nor bureaucracy" (2000, p. 166). In

the absence of a central government, operating under a theocracy, a Judge was raised up by God

to counsel, adjudicate matters, and lead the nation of Israel. The Scriptures purport that

Deborah's ultimate task was to protect Israel from the evil kings and leaders of neighboring

nations. Henry (1845) says Deborah was successful in her endeavors because of her intimate

acquaintance with God. She was divinely inspired and commissioned by none other but God.

Prophetess Deborah was instrumental in leading the Israelites to victory over armies of

the invading Canaanites. In addition to being a great leader of a nation, she also provided moral

and spiritual support to a military leader by the name of Barak during a most critical time in the

nation's history. The biblical account details the counsel she provided, and the subsequent

confidence she engendered in Barak, before he advanced to the battlefield for a historic fight

against a formidable opponent. She explained to Barak that God would give him a convincing

victory over the armies of the Canaanites.

Deborah had faith in God and modeled courage and confidence before Barak and his followers, thereby earning their trust. Gaebelein (1991) explains the importance of Deborah modeling the way before Barak and his armies. She was not unwilling to demonstrate by her own actions what was required of Barak and the other soldiers. She delivered the word of the Lord and subsequently accompanied Barak on his military campaign (Judges 4:10). Hull (1987) describes Deborah as "a competent woman who was not only a spiritual and governmental leader, but she was the inspiration behind Barak's military expedition against Sisera. Deborah delivered the word of the Lord to Barak and then, at his express request, accompanied him on the campaign" (p. 110).

Deborah practiced what she preached. She was willing to put her life on the line for the purpose of honoring the Lord, empowering her people, and accomplishing the task of bringing victory to the nation of Israel. Lockyer (1988) describes Deborah as having "a fearless and unsolicited devotion to the emancipation of God's people" (p. 41). Her inspirational leadership sparked a determination, courage, and fearlessness that helped them overcome insurmountable odds. Armerding (1986) describes Deborah's leadership as having generational ramifications, as the Canaanite defeat ensured God's ultimate covenant with Israel would be fulfilled. She used practices that are common among leaders: providing a vision, modeling the way, and earning the trust of followers.

Esther

After the period of the Judges, the nation of Israel, as a united kingdom, were led by a succession of Kings: Saul, David, and Solomon. Eventually, the nation was divided and split into two countries with Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Each country had its share of challenges during this period - the greatest of which had to do with idolatrous practices and

worshipping of other gods which directly violated God's covenant with His people. The worshipping of other gods led to the hearts of God's people being steered in directions that resulted in disobedience and myriad sinful practices. The spiritual wandering of God's people had devastating consequences. Neither Israel or Judah enjoyed national prominence or military dominance of earlier generations. In fact, they would suffer defeat by other nations, were often stripped of their lands, and exiled to foreign countries (2 Kings 17:6-8).

Although some Jewish people would ultimately return to their home country after an exile, others would remain behind in the land of exile. The story of Esther is an account of those who were forced to remain in their land of exile during the reign of King Ahasuerus, ruler of the Persian empire from 485-465 BC. Bendor-Samuel (1986) refers to the story of Esther as "a record of deliverance from threatened extinction" (p. 508). Esther was the most unsuspecting leader. She was an outsider in the land of Persia and a foreigner. Through the providence of God, she becomes queen after the sitting queen was deposed. Shortly after assuming the position as queen, Esther learns that her appointment was for the purpose of serving as God's instrument of Israel's deliverance from a looming genocide attempt. According to Bromiley (1979), Esther and her cousin Mordecai were put into a position to rescue their fellow Jews.

While in the King's palace, enjoying the privileges and luxuries that came along with her new station in life, Esther does not forget her people who desperately needed an advocate, deliverer, and redeemer. Esther selflessly divested the privileges and comforts of a carefree royal existence and put her life in peril by pleading the cause of her people before King Ahasuerus. Although a queen, Esther took a grave risk by approaching the King during the time that she did. In the story, she explains to her cousin Mordecai - who tells her of the plot to exterminate the Jews - that she could be killed by going into the king's inner court without

being called (Esther 4:11). Mordecai encourages Esther with the following words: "who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14, New American Standard Bible).

Esther was convinced that she was called for a great purpose. She communicated grit and an indomitable spirit when she responded with the words "Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16, New American Standard Bible). However, before Esther took the risk of going uninvited before the king, she exhibits a leadership practice that should be a common practice of all in spiritual leadership - prayer. Bendor-Samuel (1986) says Esther's insistence on praying demonstrates that she put her life and the people's circumstance in the hand of the Lord. As a result of her courage, tenacity, dignity, and dependence upon the help of God, innumerable lives were spared, and Esther became a national heroine (Bendor-Samuel, 1986).

Huldah

Huldah was a priest (2 Kings 22:14-20) and a prophetess based in Jerusalem. She was the wife of Shallum, who was an official in the royal court. Huldah had a school for women in Jerusalem and was instrumental in teaching the word of God to Jewish women, mothers, and daughters. However, she was also instrumental in developing Josiah who was noted as one of the Judah's greatest kings. Huldah endeavored to rectify activities regarding misuse of funds by others for rebuilding the temple (2 Kings 22:14-20) and ushering in a spiritual revival that had diminished in Jerusalem. She spoke powerfully and authoritatively to the priests and kings of her time. Her story is chronicled in a few meager, but powerful verses in scripture. Her acclaim comes from the following prophesy from II Kings 22: 15-20 (New American Standard Version):

"Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Tell the man that sent you to me, thus says the

Lord: 'I will bring a calamity on this place, and upon its inhabitants—all the

words of the book which the king of Judah has read—because they have forsaken

Me and have worshipped other gods. Therefore My anger shall be kindled against

this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah who sent you to

inquire of the Lord, you shall say: Thus says the Lord God of Israel regarding the

word which you have heard: Because your heart was tender and you humbled

yourself before the Lord when you heard what I decree against this place and

against its inhabitants . . . and you rent your clothes and wept before Me—I heard

you. Therefore I will gather you unto your fathers, and you will go to your grave

in peace; your eyes shall not see all the misfortune which I will bring upon this

place"

The authority with which Huldah speaks, and the subsequent positive - and obedient -

response by the inhabitants of the southern kingdom of Judah, leaves little doubt as to her role

as a leader who was called by God.

Chapter Summary

The literature provides a comprehensive look at leadership and challenges of African

American clergywomen. The researcher begins the literature review with a historical

perspective that explores Black women in leadership roles in ancient Africa. Accounts were

provided of Black women leading in various societal spheres including economic

leadership, spiritual leadership, and political leadership. The literature review proceeds by

highlighting a shift from the egalitarian – sometimes matriarchal - gender arrangements in

African society to the patriarchal system that has characterized Black women's experiences

in the United States over the last several hundred years. The researcher identifies literature which explicates various social and cultural shifts, and theological presuppositions that contribute to challenges African American women experience in their quest for gender equality.

The role of the African American church and the prominence it has played in the life of African American women is extensively highlighted in the literature review. The relationship between the church and African American women is indispensable and mutually beneficial; however, the literature speaks abundantly of the African American church's role in challenging and limiting gender equality and the emergence of African American clergywomen. To this end, several accounts of African American women in clergy roles, along with their various trials and triumphs, are described in the literature review.

The literature review takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding challenges African American clergywomen face in their leadership roles and the practices employed to overcome challenges. Social science literature, leadership and management studies, Theological studies, and biblical accounts offer the principal researcher propositions, theories, philosophies, and frameworks that aid in providing perspective and understanding of the research topic.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify challenges African American women face in clergy leadership and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those challenges. Furthermore, this study highlighted how African American women in clergy leadership defined and measured success, and explored recommendations and advice they offer to others in similar leadership positions. This chapter details the procedures, processes, and protocol used to analyze the data obtained for a study involving identification of leadership strategies that 15 African American clergywomen employ to overcome common challenges faced in their leadership roles. The chapter reviews the nature of the study and the steps and methods involved in the data collection process. The research design is articulated, interview techniques and protocol are reported, and human subject protections are also specified in this chapter. Of utmost importance is the chapter's emphasis on protocols designed to protect participants from negative effects associated with the research of human subjects.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

This chapter describes the research methods that were applied to achieve the objectives of this study, which is to primarily answer these four research questions:

- RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?
- RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?
- RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?
- RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for

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emerging leaders in similar roles?

Nature of the Study

This qualitative research explored the experiences of African American women in clergy leadership positions. According to McIntyre (2011), "qualitative research reports generally devote more space to people's descriptive accounts of their own experiences than to numbers that quantify experiences" (p. 75). Giorgi (1997) outlines the following steps used in qualitative research: (a) data collection, (b) data interpretation, (c) data analysis, (d) data organization using a theoretical foundation, and (e) data synthesis for scholarly communication. Qualitative research brings a non-numerical approach and focuses on the interpretation of participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research comes in various forms and may include: case study, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative study, grounded theory, content analysis, dramaturgical interviewing, participant observation, and ethnography (Conklin, 2007; Creswell, 2013, 2017).

Creswell (2013) offers the following characteristics associated with qualitative design:

(a) Natural Setting: the research will be conducted in-person and in a face-to-face setting which will allow the researcher to observe body language, vocal inflections, and nuances;

(b) Researcher as a Key Instrument: open-ended interview questions will be the means of collecting data. The researcher will be the primary instrument for observing behavior;

(c) Multiple Methods: researchers are afforded multiple options for gathering data (i.e. interviews, documents, and observations). For the purposes of this study, information will be collected via recorded interviews;

(d) Complex Reasoning Through Inductive and Deductive Logic: the researcher is able to draw out salient points, and make discoveries through complex reasoning processes;

(e) Participants' Meanings: the researcher approaches the study as a learner, and

abandons preconceptions about the subject matter and the study participants, in order to

get meanings and understandings that represent the unique vantage point of those who

are being investigated;

(f) Emergent Design: the qualitative researcher approaches a study with the

understanding that the research process is emergent and could very likely evolve in

unexpected ways as the study ensues;

(g) Reflexivity: subjectivity of the researcher - including his/her biases, background, and

personal connection to the study - are divulged in qualitative research. The researcher

also explicates his/her reasons for conducting the study and how he/she might benefit or

gain from the research;

(h) Holistic Account: to the extent possible, the researcher aims to capture and report the

full essence of the participants lived experience in qualitative research. During the

analysis of data the researcher painstakingly searches out themes from the interviews that

help to provide perspective and provide depth and insight into the phenomena.

Understanding the participants' experiences is an important characteristic of qualitative

research (Creswell, 2013). This research methodology employs an unbiased, value-free

approach to studying phenomena wherein a researcher removes preconceptions and allows

oneself to be open to the data presented. As such, qualitative research is usually conducted in the

subject's natural setting (Andrade, 2009; Creswell, 2013, 2017). As the primary instrument of

the study, a qualitative researcher is able to have direct contact with the participants through

interviews or direct conversations or observations (Creswell, 2013). The ability to use multiple

data sources (i.e. interviewing, observing, and collection of documents) distinguishes qualitative

research (Butin, 2009; Creswell, 2013) from quantitative research. The varying methods of

inquiry that qualitative research offers, allows the researcher to explore the complexities and nuances of phenomena and provide unique vantage points (Creswell, 2013, 2017; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Strengths. A strength of qualitative research is that it allows researchers to examine groups that are similar or different to understand different perspectives. Open-ended interview questions are used to elicit information that permits the interviewer to comprehend actions, values, beliefs, and assumptions of participants (Choy, 2014). The qualitative research process of forming a relationship with participants builds trust between the researcher and participant (Griffin, 2004). Additionally, qualitative researchers benefit from the emergent nature of phenomena (Patton, 2002). The focus of this study, which explores best leadership practices and strategies of African American clergywomen, is best suited to qualitative research since this methodology allows the researcher to interview participants, ask questions pertaining to their experiences, and receive detailed responses rather than numerical and statistical answers.

Weaknesses. Qualitative research has its shortcomings as well. Critics highlight that qualitative research present challenges due to its emphasis on smaller sample sizes, which may not always be representative of the larger population (Hodges, 2011; Polit & Beck, 2010).

Methodology

Phenomenological studies describe experiences of an event (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenological study can help others to understand the experience of participants in ways that provides meaning and interpretation (Creswell, 2013). "The phenomenologist aspires to access the personal, the individual, the variations within themes... [Phenomenology] is, inherently, a means of creating knowledge that is particular — knowledge that offers a portal of insight into the individual and the idiosyncratic" (Conklin, 2007, p. 276). For this study, it is important to

understand the participants from their personal perspectives and involvement as clergy leaders. The phenomenological approach is categorized as qualitative because of the utilization of in-depth interviews of smaller sample sizes, which include participants who have first-hand experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Because the study focuses on experiences and viewpoints of participants (Lester, 1999), a phenomenological qualitative approach was appropriate.

Structured process of phenomenology. Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach is designed to elucidate the experiences of participants using epoché. Epoché, also known as bracketing, is an approach that allows the researcher to maintain objectivity and an open attitude of learning during the research process. The researcher is able to bracket - or put aside - judgments and previous knowledge related to the subject matter under investigation. With Greek origins, Epoché is transliterated as "meaning to stay away from or abstain" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Epoché enables researchers to set aside biases and personal feelings, and have an open-mind during the study. Epoché essentially serves as a safeguard that mitigates the tendency of a researcher to allow his/her biases or preconceptions to infiltrate or influence the data elicited from the study participants. Moustakas acknowledges the difficulty associated with objectivity, but stresses the necessity of epoché as it enables researchers to "see with new eyes in a naïve and completely open manner" and "suspend everything that interferes with fresh vision" (p. 86).

The researcher must ascertain the suitability of the transcendental phenomenological approach to a particular study. This is the initial step Moustakas (1994) highlights before epoche can be utilized. Subsequent to identifying transcendental phenomenology as the optimal methodological approach for a study, the researcher proceeds to bracket out their expectations

and experiences relative to the investigative process. This step is followed by open-ended interviews with questions focusing on the lived experiences of the subject. The fourth step involves the interpretation of the data to determine how the respondents viewed the phenomenon that is being studied. Finally, the interpretation and analysis are documented in narrative form. This last step refers to the writing of a textural description, which describes what the participants experienced, and a structural description, which describes how the participants experienced a phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) also recommends the researcher adding their own experiences in the final step.

Appropriateness of phenomenology methodology. This study aimed to identify leadership strategies of African American clergywomen to overcome challenges in their leadership roles. In addition, the study analyzed how African American clergywomen measure success in their roles, and the study further goes on to identify recommendations they have for emerging leaders or their peers in similar roles. This research endeavored to gain a deep, rich understanding of the lived experiences (Van Manen, 2014) of African American clergywomen. A transcendental phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) attempts to identify the perceptions, views, and lived experiences of study participants. The approach was selected because it "[focuses] less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of participants" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). The lived experiences of African American clergywomen in their leadership roles was the phenomenon under investigation for this study.

Strength of phenomenological methodology. According to Moustakas' framework for conducting phenomenological research, the investigator engages the study participants through dialogue and observation in order to ascertain the participant's experience(s) with a phenomena. Borrowing from Husserl's (1977) philosophical conceptualization of transcendental

phenomenology, the researcher investigated the noema - which refers to "that which is experienced, the what of the experience, and the object correlate"; and the researcher also focused on the noesis - which refers to "the way in which 'the what' is experienced, the act of experiencing, and the subject correlate" (p. 69). The deductive-inductive nature of transcendental phenomenology, which permits a researcher to draw out the 'why' and 'the how' of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Osborne, 1994) is a strength of phenomenology, and made the qualitative research design most appropriate and effective for the study.

Weaknesses of phenomenological methodology. Although the phenomenological approach was identified as the strongest methodology for the study, the researcher identified weaknesses of the approach for validity purposes. Because phenomenology has been questioned as a philosophical approach, Creswell (2013) recommends the researcher consider alternative philosophical assumptions for a study. Moreover, as phenomenology has a subjective orientation, Creswell (2013) advises the researcher to incorporate safeguards to mitigate assumptions and personal biases. While acknowledging the subjective nature of phenomenology, Bender (1998) asserts that subjectivity can be of positive use for the researcher as "one cannot be objective but, rather than float on a sea of relativity, one can position oneself so as to ask questions and propose interpretations that seem relevant to contemporary concerns" (p. 5)

Research Design

This phenomenological qualitative study endeavored to identify best leadership strategies employed by African American clergywomen to overcome challenges encountered in their leadership roles.

Unit of Analysis. The analysis unit for this study is African American clergywomen. The

following characteristics comprise the unit of analysis:

- Be an African American female between the ages of 30 and 70;

- Be currently serving in a clergy leadership position in the historical African American church or within one of the major African American denominations: National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Convention, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and Church of God in Christ (Brisbane, 1970; Brockway, 1947).

- Be serving in a clergy leadership position in the Greater Los Angeles area

- Has served in a clergy leadership position for at least 5 years

- Has completed at minimum a bachelor degree in a theological or ministry-related area of study

Sample size. Care was taken to select fifteen African American clergywomen who were representative of the unit of analysis criteria. The term sample is used as a term to distinguish this study as a phenomenological research which aims to gain a deep, rich understanding of the lived experiences of study participants (Van Manen, 2014). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) recommend a sample size from five to twenty-five. Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, fifteen participants were targeted as a reasonable number of participants.

Purposive sampling. The sampling strategy used in selecting participants was purposive sampling. The antithesis to random selection processes (Trochim, 2006), purposive sampling is a widely used technique in qualitative research which targets participants based on characteristics that make them unique to the study (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, purposive sampling allows the principal researcher to identify and select participants who have the requisite expertise and

information needed for a study, and are likely to have the time and willingness to be involved

(Palinkas et al., 2015; Pan, 2016; Patton, 2002; Richards & Morse, 2012). Purposive sampling

allows the researcher to craft questions that are relevant to participants (Steen & Roberts, 2011).

Purposive sampling has great usefulness in phenomenology as it aids researchers in gaining an

understanding of phenomena and the lived experiences of a specific unit of analysis (Steen &

Roberts, 2011).

Participation selection: Sampling frame to create the master list. "From the

perspective of qualitative methodology, participants who meet or exceed a specific criterion or

criteria possess intimate (or, at the very least, greater) knowledge of the phenomenon of interest

by virtue of their experience, making them information-rich cases" (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 539).

The following sampling frame was created in order to effectively execute purposive sampling: 1)

the study defined the sampling frame to create a master list, 2) criteria of inclusion/exclusion was

established, 3) and establishing provision for maximum variation.

Sampling frame. LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com), a social networking service that

operates via websites and mobile applications, was the database used to develop the sampling

frame for this study. LinkedIn is primarily used as a professional networking database.

Members use the service to create professional profiles, post CVs, and network. Employers can

post positions and recruit prospective employees. LinkedIn allows users to research companies,

non-profit organizations, governments, and industries they may be interested in working for.

The site also allows users to research other professionals by name, industry, company, job title,

skills, and other characteristics. LinkedIn also allows users to filter a search by geographical

region.

As the study focused on strategies employed by African American clergywomen to

overcome challenges in their leadership roles, the initial search included the gender and ethnicity specification of the study, but this search proved unsuccessful. Subsequently, broader search categories and designations were used. The following terms were used to commence a search of individuals who met the study sampling criteria: pastors, pastoral, minister, clergy, elder, deacon, bishop, ordained, and theology. The results from these search entries were vast and resulted in a heterogeneous cross-section of individuals in professional and pseudo-professional clergy roles which comprised the master list for my study.

Criteria of inclusion. The aforementioned process yielded the master list which consisted of individuals who met the minimum inclusion criteria for the study. Subjects who were ultimately chosen for the study and asked to participate were also asked to verify inclusion criteria prior to participation. The criteria for inclusion for this study included:

- Be an African American female between the ages of 30 and 70;
- Be currently serving in a clergy leadership position in the historical African American church or of the major African American denominations: National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Convention, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and Church of God in Christ (Brisbane, 1970; Brockway, 1947).
- Be serving in a clergy leadership position in the Greater Los Angeles area
- Has served in a clergy leadership position for at least 5 years
- Has completed at minimum a bachelor degree in a theological or ministry-related area of study

Criteria for exclusion. The criteria for exclusion for this study included:

- Participant declines to sign or verbally acknowledge informed consent.

- Participant declines to verbally acknowledge that she meets all inclusion criteria.

  Purposive sampling maximum variation. The criteria for maximum variation for this study included:

- Length of service

- Individuals from neighboring counties in the Southern California region (Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Orange, San Diego) were invited to participate in the study.

- Preference for inclusion was given to individuals who were serving in senior leadership roles in their church.

Protection of Human Subjects

This phenomenological research used interviews for the purpose of collecting data. Because such a methodology involves human subjects, the researcher must take care to protect the rights, welfare, dignity, and well-being of the study participants. As such, strict adherence and compliance of the three basic tenets prescribed by the Belmont Report were observed. Those tenets are: 1) respect for the individual; 2) beneficence—making efforts to secure their well-being—acts that go beyond kindness or charity; 3) and justice (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006). Moreover, once the study was underway, the principal researcher governed himself in consonance with all IRB rules of Pepperdine University. University guidelines provided the framework and parameters whereby the study participants were protected and safeguarded against unethical behavior, negligence, or any misconduct that might have adversely affected participants or their church.

Moreover, the principal researcher governed himself and the research in accordance with U.S. Code of Federal Regulation sections, and Pepperdine University IRB which require the

following ("Pepperdine University," 2013):

1. Risks to research participants are minimal and reasonable in proportion to the anticipated benefits of the research. To achieve this the researcher employed a legitimate research design with components that did not unnecessarily put participants at risk. "Researchers should not expose research subjects to unnecessary physical or psychological harm" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 101).

2. Selection of participants was systematic, objective, and unprejudiced.

3. Informed consent was required, consistently documented, and secured.

4. The research design utilized a data monitoring mechanism to ensure the safety and well-being of study participants.

5. The research employed measures that rigorously safeguarded privacy and confidentiality of study participants.

6. Additional safeguards were included in the research design to mitigate duress or unwarranted pressure that a participant could have experienced.

The IRB application included the aforementioned information and guidelines and the principal researcher took all diligence to comply with standards to ensure participants' well-being, safety, and dignity.

Informed Consent

After permission to commence research was granted, each participant was contacted and invited to participate. Once agreement was established, a consent form articulated the nature and purpose of the study, an explanation of the risks, and the confidentiality guidelines. In addition, the form advised the participant of their right to withdraw from the research without prejudice at any time. The informed consent detailed, and the principal researcher discussed with

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participants, the potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in the study which included nothing more than is involved with an hour-long face-to-face conversation. Such risks include: (a) potential breach of confidentiality, (b) lack of interest or boredom, (c) and fatigue from sitting for a long period.

This study bridges the gap in the literature on the lived experiences of African American women in clergy leadership. As such, the following societal benefits may be derived from the study: (a) Study adds to a limited body of work available on the lived experiences of a group that has been traditionally excluded in church leadership studies, (b) Contributes to existing literature that highlights challenges associated with women breaking the glass ceiling and overcoming barriers to success in male-dominant, patriarchal institutions, (c) Informs and inspires emerging leaders from all backgrounds in both spiritual and secular industries, (d) Impacts the social, political, and spiritual direction of African American clergywomen in their immediate churches and surrounding communities. There are no potential benefit(s) to be gained by the subjects. The alternative for prospective participants is not to participate in the study. Additionally, the informed consent included the following:

- A general review and summary of the nature of the study.

- A detailed explanation of expectations of human subjects.

- A statement that explains the voluntary nature of the study which explains that participants may withdraw at any time without negative repercussion, revenge, slander, or public disclosure of association with the study or research, or withdrawal.

- A narrative of potential risks associated with subject's involvement in the study.

- An account of potential discomfort subjects may experience.

- A statement that ensures researcher confidentiality of subject's participation to the fullest

degree possible.

- The study author's name and full contact information.

- An offer to provide detailed information on the study upon completion.

- Spaces for subject signature and dating the letter (List based on insights provided by Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 102).

Confidentiality Procedures

To safeguard the confidentiality of research participants, Creswell (2017) asserts that participant' names not be included. It is for this reason that the principal researcher chose to use an alias in lieu of participant' names. The protocol used to construct the alias was composed of an alphabetic and four-digit numeric combination. The interviewee was assigned an alphabetic (A-Z) code along with a four-digit numeric code which represented the month and day of the interview. The letter "A" was assigned to the first interviewee, and "O" to the fifteenth interviewee. As an example, the first participant was assigned an alias that included the letter "A" and (insert date). The key with the sequence of alphabetic and numeric codes, along with other information that might identify the participant, was maintained and secured by the principal researcher to ensure confidentiality.

Moreover, all participant disclosures made in the study remained confidential and anonymous. The final report does not link participant responses to their respective organizations. Audio recording of interviews were deleted immediately upon completion of the study. Pepperdine University IRB mandates that confidential documents be destroyed no sooner than three years after the research project is completed.

Data Collection

Data was collected by direct interactions with the participants. The goal was to secure

data that were, "…rich, thick, and dense, offering enough detail to allow someone to comprehend the situation or understand the setting without asking additional questions" (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 122). An interview protocol (See Appendix E) was provided for the individual semi-structured interviews. The protocol included (a) an opening statement that explained the research and instructions for the participant, (b) interview questions, and (c) probes followed the questions. There was space on the protocol for the principal researcher to take notes of the respondents' answers and space for reflective notes. The interview questions included the participants' descriptions of their experience as African American clergywomen.

Purposive sampling was chosen for this study. Purposive sampling is a widely used technique in qualitative research which targets participants based on characteristics that make them unique to the study (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, purposive sampling allows the researcher to identify and select participants who have the requisite expertise and information needed for the study, and are likely to have the time and willingness to be involved (Palinkas et al., 2015; Pan, 2016; Patton, 2002; Richards & Morse, 2012). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to craft questions that were relevant to participants (Steen & Roberts, 2011). Purposive sampling has great usefulness in phenomenology as it aids researchers in gaining a better understanding of phenomena and the lived experiences of a specific unit of analysis (Steen & Roberts, 2011).

The principal researcher narrowed the study sample size to twenty-five with an anticipated response rate of fifteen. The researcher contacted each study participant via an introductory email from the primary researcher's Pepperdine University email account. The researcher's personal cell phone was also used to contact prospective study participants. Pepperdine University's IRB recruitment form was used as the primary means of study invitation. After participants expressed a strong level of interest to participate in the study, the

researcher subsequently emailed the IRB consent forms, prospective interview dates and times, and general interview questions. The researcher asked participants to review the information sent via email, complete and return the consent form along with preferred interview date(s) and time(s). After receiving the consent form, the researcher had the form digitally stored on password protected files and drives to protect participant's personal information.

Interview Techniques

One way of understanding participants' personal perspectives is through the use of personal interviews. Interviews are commonly used in phenomenology (Lester, 1999). Interviews allowed the principal researcher to learn in depth about the participants' experiences as African American clergywomen. According to Moustakas (1994), interviews allow a connection between the researcher and interviewee which creates an engaged conversation. Having an engaged conversation was integral to gaining a thorough understanding of the interviewees' experiences. To accomplish this objective, one-on-one semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect data. Galletta (2013) observed:

> Semi-structured interviews incorporate both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research… Each interview question should be clearly connected to the purpose of the research, and its placement within the protocol should reflect the researcher's deliberate progression toward a fully in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study (p. 45).

During the semi-structured open-ended interview, the principal researcher used an audio recorder. This was one of the features stipulated in the informed consent as to ensure

participants were aware of, and comfortable with, being recorded. In addition to audio

recording devices, the researcher also took notes. Breakwell et al. (2006) highlight the

significance of verbal and non-verbal components of face-to-face interview. This point

underscores the importance of note-taking which allowed the researcher to capture the non-

verbal aspects even in the absence of visual recording. Other non-verbal cues that should be

documented include perceived emotional and affective states according to Morris (2007)

and Osborne (1994). Field notes assist in this regard and enhance the credibility of

qualitative studies (Aten & Hernandez, 2005).

The research employed open-ended questions to guide the interviews. However, as

necessary, probing questions were used to gain a better understanding of the respondent's

meaning. According to Polkinghorne (1989), during semi-structured open-ended interviews, the

researcher is encouraged to ask clarifying questions to get to the meaning of the phenomena.

Probing questions invited participants to elucidate and expound on their thoughts and feelings

regarding their vocation which resulted in insights that otherwise would not have been

forthcoming. During the semi-structured open-ended interviews, a password protected audio

recorder was used. This feature was stipulated in the informed consent. In addition to audio

recording devices, the principal researcher took notes to capture the non-verbal cues. Interviews

were conducted at the preferred location of the participant, ideally their church office. The

interviews started with an ice-breaker question, followed by eight interview questions to satisfy

the purpose of the study and address the research questions.

Interview Protocol

The participants were invited to participate via emails and telephone calls. Although

informed consent was be sent prior to the interview, participants were issued another consent

form at the time of the interview. Consent procedures were reviewed again at the time of the interview, and the form was signed by both interviewer and interviewee. The interview process worked in consonance with a procedure which was consistent throughout the duration of the study. The time of interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher aimed to conduct all interviews at the church office, or preferred location, of the clergy leader.

During the semi-structured open-ended interviews, a password protected audio recorder was used. This feature was stipulated in the informed consent. In addition to the audio recording device, the principal researcher took notes to capture the non-verbal cues. Audio files from interviews were transferred from the recording device to a password protected computer. Similarly, interview transcriptions were stored on a password protected computer. The same password protected computer was used for note taking during the interviews, and for coding of interview transcripts. Upon completion of the research, all information collected and analyzed was transferred to a password protected USB before being deleted from the computer which it was originally stored on. The password protected USB drive was stored in a secure location at the residence of the principal researcher for three years, and then destroyed after the three years. Participants' names were not associated with the recording, transcription, notes, coding sheet, or final report. Participants in the study were de-identified; pseudonyms using alphabetic and numeric codes were applied in the file names to ensure participant confidentiality. Only the principal researcher had access to the key with the sequence of alphabetic and numeric codes, along with other information that may have identified the participant. All such identifying information was maintained and secured by the researcher in a secure location at the residence of the principal researcher.

Interview questions: After the interview protocol was reviewed, and before the

interview began, the principal researcher asked if he might be granted permission to pray over the session. If the clergy leader wished to offer prayer, the researcher deferred. The interview began with the following ice-breaker question: please tell me about your leadership approach. After this opening question, eight interview questions were posed to satisfy the purpose of the study and address the research questions. Through a peer review and expert review process, interview questions were narrowed down to eight. The validity and reliability processes are explained in the forthcoming sections. What follows are the original questions formed for the study. :

IQ1: What are some the major challenges faced in your leadership role?

IQ2: What connection, if any, does being an African American woman play in any of these challenges?

IQ3: In what ways have the challenges you've faced affected the way you lead?

IQ4: How would you describe your leadership approach?

IQ5: How does being an African American woman shape or influence your leadership style/approach?

IQ6: What strategies and practices help you overcome common challenges faced in your position?

IQ7: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples? And, do you believe the resistance or push-back is (or was) related to your being an African American woman?

IQ8: What experiences were most impactful in shaping your leadership approach?

IQ9: What does success look like to you?

IQ10: How do you measure and track your success?

IQ11: What would you like to have known before you started in your leadership role? How might this knowledge have affected who you are today?

IQ12: What advice do you commonly offer to emerging leaders who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with leaders in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Relationship between research and interview questions. RQ1 examined challenges and common pitfalls faced by African American clergywomen. RQ2 analyzed best leadership strategies and practices used to overcome challenges and common pitfalls. RQ3 explored ways African American clergywomen measure success. RQ4 focused on recommendations do African American clergywomen have for emerging leaders in similar roles? The relationship between research questions and interview questions was expressed as:

RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?

IQ1: What are some the major challenges faced in your leadership role?

IQ2: What connection, if any, does being an African American woman play in any of these challenges?

Q3: In what ways have the challenges you've faced affected the way you lead?

IQ7: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples? And, do you believe the resistance or push-back is (or was) related to your being an African American woman?

RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?

IQ4: How would you describe your leadership approach?

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IQ5: How does being and African American woman shape or influence your leadership style/approach?

IQ6: What strategies and practices help you overcome common challenges faced in your position?

IQ8: What experiences were most impactful in shaping your leadership approach?

RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?

IQ9: What does success look like to you?

IQ10: How do you measure and track your success?

RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for emerging leaders in similar roles?

IQ11: What would you like to have known before you started in your leadership role? How might this knowledge have affected who you are today?

IQ12: What advice do you commonly offer to emerging leaders who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with leaders in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Validity and reliability of the study.

The following three-step validation process was utilized to ensure that the interview questions adequately addressed the overarching research questions

Prima-facie & content validity (Table 2). Prima facie as an adjective means "sufficient to establish a fact or case unless disproved" (Academic, 2014, ¶2). In relation to the research and interview questions, prima facie refers to the first impression of the item being observed and served as a subjective assessment of a research instrument's suitability for further examination.

Table 2

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?	IQ1: What are the major challenges faced in your leadership role? IQ2: What connection, if any, does being an African American woman play in any of these challenges? Q3: In what ways have the challenges you've faced affected the way you lead?
RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?	IQ4: How would you describe your leadership approach? IQ5: How does being and African American woman shape or influence your leadership style/approach? IQ6: What strategies and practices help you overcome common challenges faced in your position? IQ7: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples? And, do you believe the resistance or push-back is (or was) related to your being an African American woman? IQ8: What experiences were most impactful in shaping your leadership approach?
RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?	IQ9: What does success look like to you? IQ10: How do you measure and track your success?
RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for emerging leaders in similar roles?	IQ11: What would you like to have known before you started in your leadership role? How might this knowledge have affected who you are today as a leader? IQ12: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with leaders in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Note. The table identifies four research questions and corresponding interview questions. Interview questions were reviewed by a panel of two peer-reviewers and expert reviewers.

Peer-review validity (See Appendix D). Peer review serves as an objective validation of the research process by an external reviewer (Creswell, 2013). Peer-review was accomplished with the support of four fellow Pepperdine University EDOL cohort members from Pepperdine University, and from a colleague who recently completed her doctoral coursework at another reputable higher education institution in Southern California. The five peer reviewers were invited to review the research questions along with the corresponding interview questions and asked to indicate if the questions should be (a) kept as stated (b) deleted, or (c) modified as suggested. If cohort members checked "c," they were asked to provide alternative wording for the interview question. The following are the research questions with peer review validated corresponding interview questions.

Table 3

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions (Revised)

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?	IQ1: What are the major challenges faced in your leadership role? IQ2: What connection, if any, does being an African American woman play in any of these challenges? Q3: In what ways have the challenges you've faced affected the way you lead?
RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?	IQ4: How would you describe your leadership approach? IQ5: How does being and African American woman shape or influence your leadership style/approach? IQ6: What strategies and practices help you overcome common challenges faced in your position?

(continued)

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?	IQ7: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples? And, do you believe the resistance or push-back is (or was) related to your being an African American woman? IQ8: What experiences were most impactful in shaping your leadership approach?
RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?	IQ9: What does success look like to you? IQ10: How do you measure and track your success?
RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for emerging leaders in similar roles?	IQ11: What would you like to have known before you started in your leadership role? How might this knowledge have affected who you are today as a leader? IQ12: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with leaders in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Expert review validity.   The researcher's dissertation committee conducted the expert validity review of research questions and corresponding interview questions. The committee considered the prima facie and peer review process, and subsequently offered their expert recommendations before the process was finalized.

Table 4

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions (Final)

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
Icebreaker Question:	Can you please tell me about your leadership approach?

(continued)

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
Icebreaker Question:	Can you please tell me about your leadership approach?
RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?	IQ 1: What are some the major challenges faced in your leadership role? Follow up: What connection, if any, does being an African American play in any of these challenges? Follow up: What connection, if any, does being a woman play in any of these challenges? IQ 2: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples? IQ3: Do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American woman
RQ 2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?	IQ 4: What strategies and practices help you overcome challenges faced in your position?
RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?.	IQ 5: What does success look like in your leadership role? IQ 6: How do you track and measure success?
RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for emerging leaders in similar roles?	IQ 7: If you were starting over (as a clergy leader/person), is there anything that you would do differently? IQ 8: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American clergywomen in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Statement of Personal Bias

It is incumbent upon the qualitative researcher to acknowledge the presence of biases that he may have in a study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The researcher approaches the study with inordinate biases due to his life-long association with the historic African American church. He has first-hand knowledge of challenges African American clergywomen have in a male-dominated profession. The researcher acknowledges his background may have influenced his ability to objectively decipher and interpret data.

Bracketing and Epoche. To mitigate inherent biases during the study the researcher engaged in the process of phenomenological reduction referred to as epoché. Epoché, also known as bracketing, is an approach that allowed the researcher to maintain objectivity and an open attitude of learning during the research process. Using epoché the researcher is able to bracket - or put aside - judgments and previous knowledge related to the subject matter under investigation. With Greek origins, Epoché is transliterated as "meaning to stay away from or abstain" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Epoché enables researchers to set aside biases and personal feelings, and have an open-mind during the study. Epoché essentially serves as a safeguard that mitigates against the tendency of a researcher to allow his/her biases or preconceptions to infiltrate or influence the data elicited from the study participants. When implemented successfully, epoché allows for a keen focus on the data and openness to unfiltered reception; allowing the researcher to capture phenomena from a "fresh perspective towards the phenomenon in examination" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). Therefore, the following steps were taken during the bracketing process in this study: 1) Biases, presuppositions, and previous experience and knowledge about African American in clergy leadership were noted in a journal; 2) Journal entries were also done during the actual study, and made available to readers after the fact, so as

to maintain transparency about biases that emerged during the course of the study (Creswell, 2013).

Data Analysis

Creswell's (2013) recommends the following steps in phenomenological analysis:

1. Data organization: Files are created by the researcher for the purpose of organizing data. The researcher converted audio to text through transcription for this study.

2. Reading and annotating: This step involves reading through the text, and annotating to formulate initial codes. The researcher found it conducive during the transcription process to take notes in the margin of field notes.

3. Describing the data in codes, themes, and descriptions: The coding process entails organizing data in categories of information.

4. Classifying data into themes: This process consists of grouping the categories of information into broader themes.

5. Interpreting the data: The researcher develops: textural description (which describes what happened), structural description (which talks about how it happened), and the essence of the experience.

6. Representing and visualizing the data: The data is extrapolated and depicted in tables, figures, or discussion.

Inter-rater reliability and validity. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) defined inter-rater reliability as, "The extent to which two or more individuals evaluating the same product or performance give identical judgments" (p. 93). To increase the validity of the research findings, the following three-step process was used during the coding process:

    1. The principal researcher independently coded data from three interview

transcripts. The principal researcher identified themes and categories from the three interviews. "Themes in qualitative research (also called categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell, 2013, p. 186).

2. The principal researcher proceeded to identify two co-raters who were fellow doctoral cohort members. These co-raters were familiar with the nature of qualitative research and were experienced with coding and identifying themes. Interview transcripts and themes from step 1 were shared with two cohort members. Both co-raters reviewed the material independently before convening with the principal researcher to discuss their findings, and report whether they agreed with the themes of the principal researcher or if consensus had been established on the coding results. In the event that consensus was not obtained, the principal researcher would have sought expert review from the dissertation committee.

3. Based on the feedback and guidance from steps 1 and 2 the principal researcher proceeded with analyzing and coding the remainder of the interviews. Upon completion of the interviews, the results were shared with the co-raters. The principal researcher and peer reviewers deliberated on themes with the hope of arriving at consensus on coding results.

4. If consensus could not be established, the principal researcher would have sought the expert review of the dissertation committee.

Chapter Summary

This study utilized a phenomenological qualitative research design to investigate the

leadership practices and strategies employed by African American clergywomen to overcome

challenges in their leadership roles. A suitability and appropriateness of a phenomenological

qualitative approach was articulated in the chapter. Fifteen African American clergywomen from

the seven historic African American denominations were purposively targeted, identified, and

selected. The interview approach was face-to-face, semi-structured, with open-ended questions.

The key research questions and corresponding interview questions were formulated after an

exhaustive review of literature. The responses to those semi-structured interviews served as the

source of data for the study. The principal researcher maintained strict adherence and

compliance with IRB protocol throughout the study. Care was taken to secure and store all

documentation and personal identifying information of study participants. All interviews were

transcribed by the author of the study. Interview transcriptions and notes were uploaded to

Microsoft Excel for data organization. The principal researcher enlisted the support of competent

co-raters who participated in analyzing data, coding of themes, and engaging in the inter-rater

reliability process. Chapter four details the findings of the research.

Chapter 4: Results

This study proposes that African American women face significant challenges in clergy leadership, and assumes there is much to be discovered and learned about leadership strategies and practices employed by those women to overcome the challenges they face. As such, the purpose of this study is to examine challenges African American women face in their clergy leadership roles and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those challenges. Furthermore, this study highlights how African American women in clergy leadership measure their success; and the recommendations and lessons African American clergywomen can offer to others in similar leadership positions. The following four research questions were identified to address this purpose:

RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?

RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?

RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?

RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for emerging leader in similar roles?

Eight semi-structured interview questions, and two follow-up questions, were posed to examine the stated research questions. To ensure validity of the interview questions, a three step validity review process was employed that included prima-facie validity, peer review validity, and expert review. The finalized interview questions used for the study were as follows, in relation to the research questions:

Interview questions related to Research Question 1:

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1. What are some of the major challenges faced in your leadership role?

   Follow-up questions were as follows:

   - What connection, if any, does being an African American play in any of these
     challenges

   - What connection, if any, does being a woman play in any of these challenges?

2. Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give
   examples?

3. Do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American
   woman?

Interview questions related to Research Question 2:

4. What strategies and practices help you overcome challenges faced in your leadership
   role?

Interview questions related to Research Question 3:

5. What does success look like in your leadership role?

6. How do you track and measure success?

Interview questions related to Research Question 4.

7. If you were starting over (as a clergy leader), is there anything that you would do
   differently?

8. What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day
   be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American
   clergywomen in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

   Ultimately, the study participants gave responses to the interview questions during a
semi-structured interview which utilized open-ended questions. The responses to those semi-

structured interviews served as the source of data for the study which was analyzed and will be addressed in this chapter to offer an understanding of strategies and practices African American clergywomen use to overcome challenges in their leadership roles.

Participants

Study participants were identified using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allowed the principal researcher to identify and select participants who had the requisite expertise and information needed for the study, and were likely to have the time and willingness to be involved (Palinkas et al., 2015; Pan, 2016; Patton, 2002; Richards & Morse, 2012). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to craft questions that are relevant to participants (Steen & Roberts, 2011). Purposive sampling was employed as it has great usefulness in phenomenology and aids researchers in gaining an understanding of phenomena and the lived experiences of a specific unit of analysis (Steen & Roberts, 2011).

The researcher ultimately interviewed 14 participants who met the criteria for the study. The goal was not necessarily to identify a specific number of participants for the study, but to reach saturation. The participants met the following criteria:

- African American female between the ages of 30 and 70;
- Serving in a clergy leadership position in the historical African American church or within one of the major African American denominations: National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Convention, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and Church of God in Christ (Brisbane, 1970; Brockway, 1947).
- Serving in a clergy leadership position in the Greater Los Angeles area

- Served in a clergy leadership position for at least 5 years

- Completed at minimum a Bachelor of Arts degree in a theological or ministry-

  related area of study or equivalent field.

Table 5

Participant Interview Dates, Interview Method, Length of Recorded Interview

Participant	Interview Date	Length of Interview
P1	February 27, 2018	53:56
P2	February 27, 2018	1:13:30
P3	March 5, 2018	1:03:39
P4	March 5, 2018	1:44:04
P5	March 12, 2018	1:29:09
P6	March 16, 2018	1:43:16
P7	March 19, 2018	2:04:57
P8	March 20, 2018	1:04:13
P9	March 20, 2018	54:39
P10	March 21, 2018	29:22
P11	March 21, 2018	56:59
P12	March 21, 2018	50:10
P13	March 28, 2018	1:26:42
P14	March 29, 2018	1:05:55

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews by direct interactions with the participants. The goal was to secure data that were, "…rich, thick, and dense, offering enough detail to allow someone to comprehend the situation or understand the setting without asking additional questions" (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 122). An interview protocol (See Appendix E) was provided for the individual semi-structured interviews. The protocol included (a) an opening statement that explained the research and instructions for the participant, (b) interview questions, and (c) probes which followed the questions. There was space included on the protocol for the principal researcher to take notes of the respondents' answers and space for reflective notes. The interview questions included the participants' descriptions of their experience as African American clergywomen.

The data collection process also commenced with the researcher utilizing LinkedIn to access clergy leaders who met the study criteria. LinkedIn is a social networking service that operates via websites and mobile applications and is primarily used as a professional networking database. Members use the service to create professional profiles, post CVs, and network. Employers can post positions and recruit prospective employees. LinkedIn allows users to research companies, non-profit organizations, governments, and industries they may be interested in working for. The site also allows users to research other professionals by name, industry, company, job title, skills, and other characteristics. LinkedIn also allows users to filter a search by geographical region.

The LinkedIn social networking database allowed the researcher to search for clergy members using such tags as pastors, pastoral, minister, clergy, elder, deacon, bishop, ordained, and theology. By filtering the search to a particular geographical region, the researcher was able to identify eligible participants for the study which comprised the master list for the study.

Forty-five eligible participants were identified via LinkedIn and were sent emails inviting them to participate in the study. Ultimately, a total of 14 participants were interviewed for this study. As previously mentioned, the goal of the study was not necessarily to identify a specific number of participants, but to reach data saturation.

Data Analysis

This qualitative phenomenological research explored the experiences of African American women in clergy leadership positions. Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach is designed to elucidate the experiences of participants using epoché. Epoché, also known as bracketing, is an approach that allows the researcher to maintain objectivity and an open attitude of learning during the research process. Upon completion of the interviews, and prior to commencing data analysis, the researcher reviewed biases about the research topic, and - as Epoché requires - bracketed or put aside judgments and previous knowledge related to the subject matter under investigation.

All interviews were recorded using a password protected audio-recording device and transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. The interview transcripts were reviewed for key words and phrases. Codes and themes related to each interview question emerged throughout the compilation of data.

Inter-rater review. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) defined inter-rater reliability as, "the extent to which two or more individuals evaluating the same product or performance give identical judgments" (p. 93). The principal researcher identified two co-raters who were doctoral students at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. These co-raters were familiar with the nature of qualitative research and were experienced with coding and identifying themes. Transcripts and themes from three interviews were shared with two

cohort members. Both co-raters reviewed the material independently before convening with the

principal researcher to discuss their findings. At which time the co-raters reported whether they

agreed with the themes of the principal researcher or if consensus had been established on the

coding results. In the course of this process, it was determined that consensus had been reached

on the coding protocol which included themes from three interviews. Subsequently, the

researcher proceeded to code the remaining interviews. After all 14 interviews had been coded,

the researcher once again shared the results with the peer reviewers for validation.

Data Display

The data collected from 14 interviews were organized by research question and

corresponding interview question. During analysis of data, key words and phrases were

identified and eventually became themes for the particular interview question. This process was

undertaken for each research participant. Charts are used to summarize and visualize the themes

both quantitatively and qualitatively to provide a full and rich description of data. Direct quotes

from the research participants are also included to better highlight the saliency of the themes and

to fully explicate the thoughts of the research participants. In chapter three the principle

researcher indicated that an alias, composed of an alphabetic and four-digit numeric

combination, would be used to identify each participant in the study. The purpose of this method

is to safeguard the confidentiality of research participants, as Creswell (2017) asserts that

participant' names not be included in the final report. As a slight modification, for the purpose

of the following data display in chapter four, participants are identified by using "P" and the

number to indicate the order in which each was interviewed. In other words, the first participant

interviewed will be referred to as "P1", the second "P2", and so on. In compliance with the U.S.

Code of Federal Regulations and Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board, this method

is an established means of ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of research participants. Furthermore, in consonance with confidentiality procedures outlined in chapter three, the final report does not link participant responses to their respective organizations and audio recording of interviews were deleted immediately upon completion of the study.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership? To answer RQ1, the following three interview questions were posed to all 14 participants:

IQ1: What are some of the major challenges faced in your leadership role?

Follow-up questions were as follows:

- What connection, if any, does being an African American play in any of these challenges?

- What connection, if any, does being a woman play in any of these challenges?

IQ2: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples?

IQ3: Do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American woman?

Responses from all interview participants to this interview question were analyzed for common themes to address the corresponding research question.

Interview question 1. What are some of the major challenges faced in your leadership role? Participant responses to this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following themes: a) patriarchy; b) gender stereotypes and discrimination; c) insubordination; d) voice is silenced.   A summary of these finding is illustrated in Figure 1.
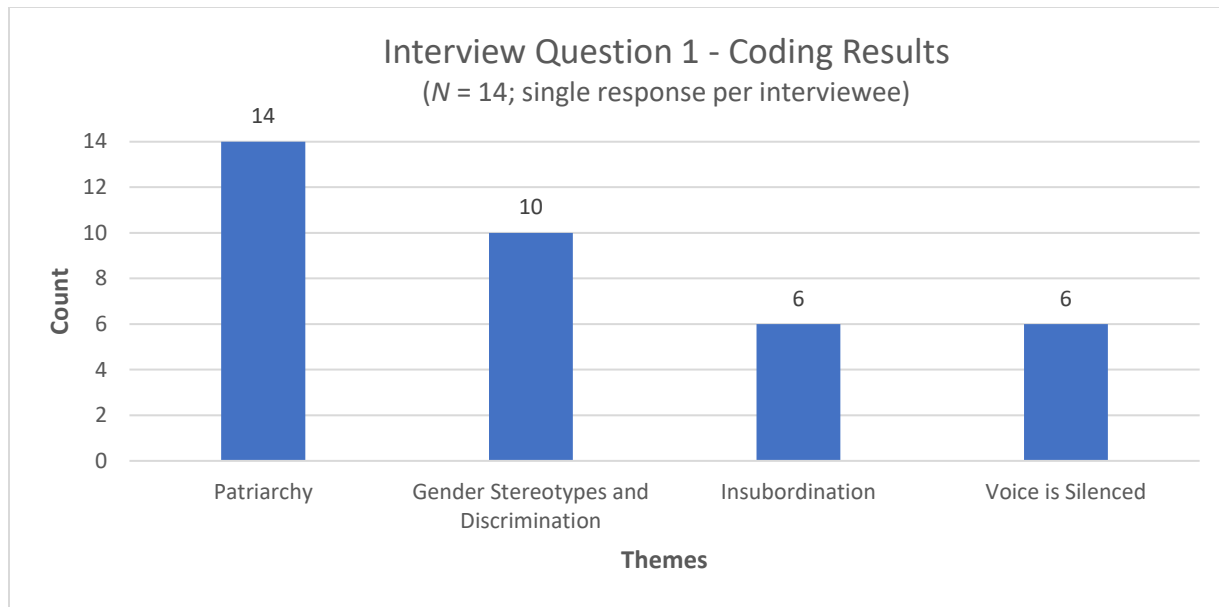
Figure 1. Challenges faced in leadership role. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ) 1: What are some of the challenges faced in your leadership role?

Patriarchy. This theme was most commonly cited as a challenge by African American clergywomen, mentioned by 14 (100%) of the participants. Patriarchy describes a system of ideals and practices that support male dominance and the subjugation of women. All study participants reported being mindful of the male dominant nature of the community they were working in. P1 cites "The biggest challenge is being a woman in this position and getting followership from men and women who don't think you should be their leader". P7 says her presence is a culture shock to men in her denomination. Many were not aware that a woman could have a senior level position. She is quoted as saying "I don't exist … I'm not in the paradigm … and so I'm ignored or overlooked".

Gender Stereotypes and Discrimination. There were 10 participants (71%) who reported experiencing various forms of ill-treatment in their positions because of they are women. P14 states "I did not receive a warm reception" when describing the first day of work at a new church that she had been appointed to lead. "It was a very hostile congregation" she

explains.

Insubordination. Participants speak of the resistance that they receive from parishioners in the form of insubordination, a theme mentioned by 42% (6 of 14) of the participants. Some church members refuse to take instruction or direction from clergywomen. According to P9 "most men don't want to submit to a woman". P3 speaks of "not being respected" and P2 reports that "men try to take over".

Voice is silenced. Throughout American History, voice - which is the power to engage in discussion, communicate dissent, and support thoughts - has been instrumental to ameliorating oppressive practices and institutions (Myrsiades, 1998). Inseld & Fernald (2004) believe voice is essential to women gaining status and social positioning, and leveraging power, to change their marginalized status. Consistent with the literature which speaks of the vital place of voice in the experiences of women in male-dominated communities, six (42%) of the clergywomen in the study spoke of their voices being silenced. Here are some of their responses:

- "when I first came they just ignored me" quoted by P1
- "we are often excluded from decision-making" quoted by P5
- "they will try to sit you down and shut you up" quoted by P2

Interview question 2. The question address challenges and common pitfalls that African American clergywomen face in their leadership roles. Interview question #2 asks: "Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples?" Participant answers to this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following themes: a) leadership style; b) gender perceptions; c) philosophical differences. A summary of these finding is illustrated in Figure 2.
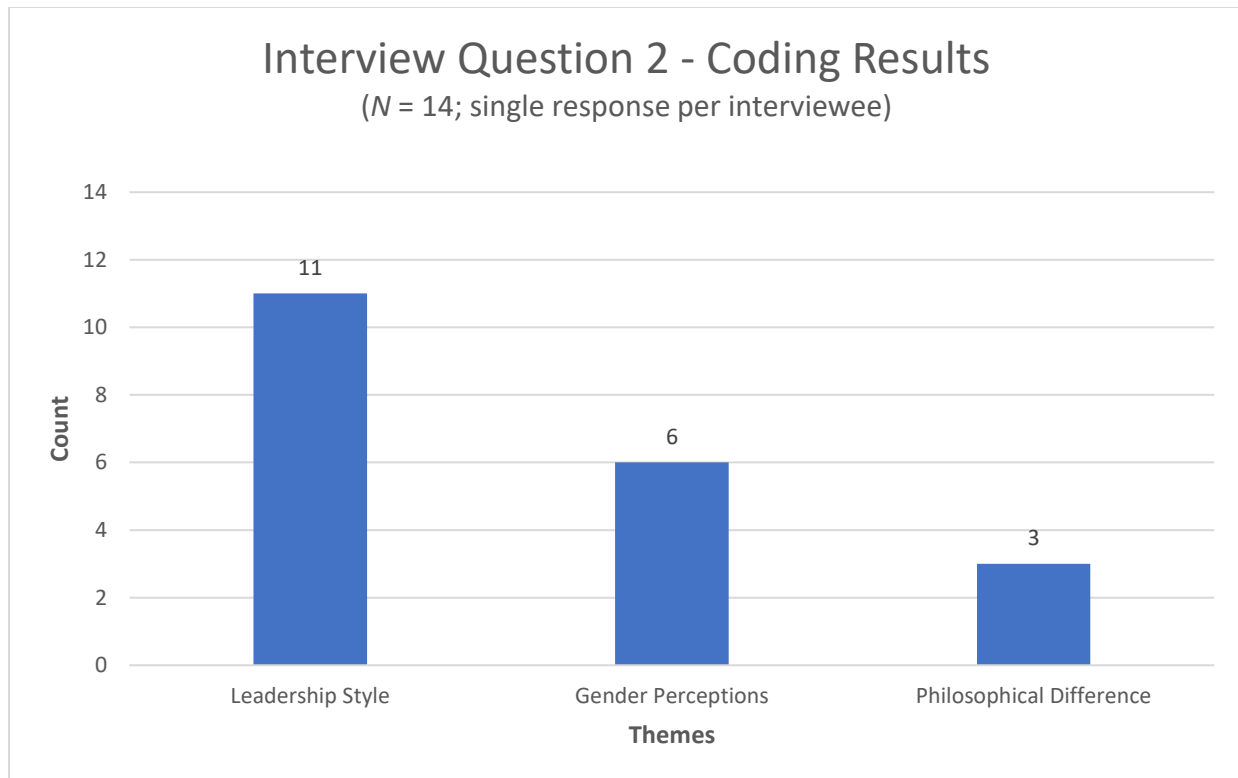
Figure 2. Push-back or resistance to leadership. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ) 2: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples?

Leadership Style. Challenges also come in the form of push-back or resistance that African American clergywomen experience as it relates to their leadership style, ideas, or philosophies. Eleven (78%) of the participants reported experiencing push-back or resistance resulting from their leadership style:

- "I challenge them, and some people don't like that" quoted by P5
- "When I get "pushy" there's definitely resistance" quoted by P1
- "I stand firm on my convictions and can be uncompromising" quoted by P4

Gender Perceptions. African American clergywomen speak of misperceptions related to how they are to conduct themselves as women. This phenomena is highlighted by role congruity theory which suggests that challenges women face in terms of advancing in male-

dominant professions can be related to the perceived lack of symmetry between gender roles and the leadership demands (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Gervais & Hillard, 2011). Among the fourteen participants in the study, six (42%) site pushback or resistance related to gender perceptions.

- "I'm perceived as a "woman" not as "Pastor"" - quoted by P9
- "I'm very relational, which can be misinterpreted, or it can rub some the wrong way" P9

Philosophical Differences. Many leadership challenges that participants had were related to diverging philosophies or views on important church matters. Sometimes the issue is related to the church's position on outreach, community engagement, or evangelistic efforts. This kind of push back was mentioned by three (21%) of the participants:

- "I believe in social justice … that's a strong value that I have" quoted by P5

Interview question 3. The question addresses challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership. Interview question #3 asks: do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American woman? It is important that a question is posed that clearly addresses the clergy leader's status as a woman to ensure that the research instrument effectively addresses the research questions. Feedback from participants for this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following theme: gender discrimination. A summary of this finding is illustrated in Figure 3 and is followed by a description of the some of the participants experiences dealing with gender discrimination in their clergy vocation.
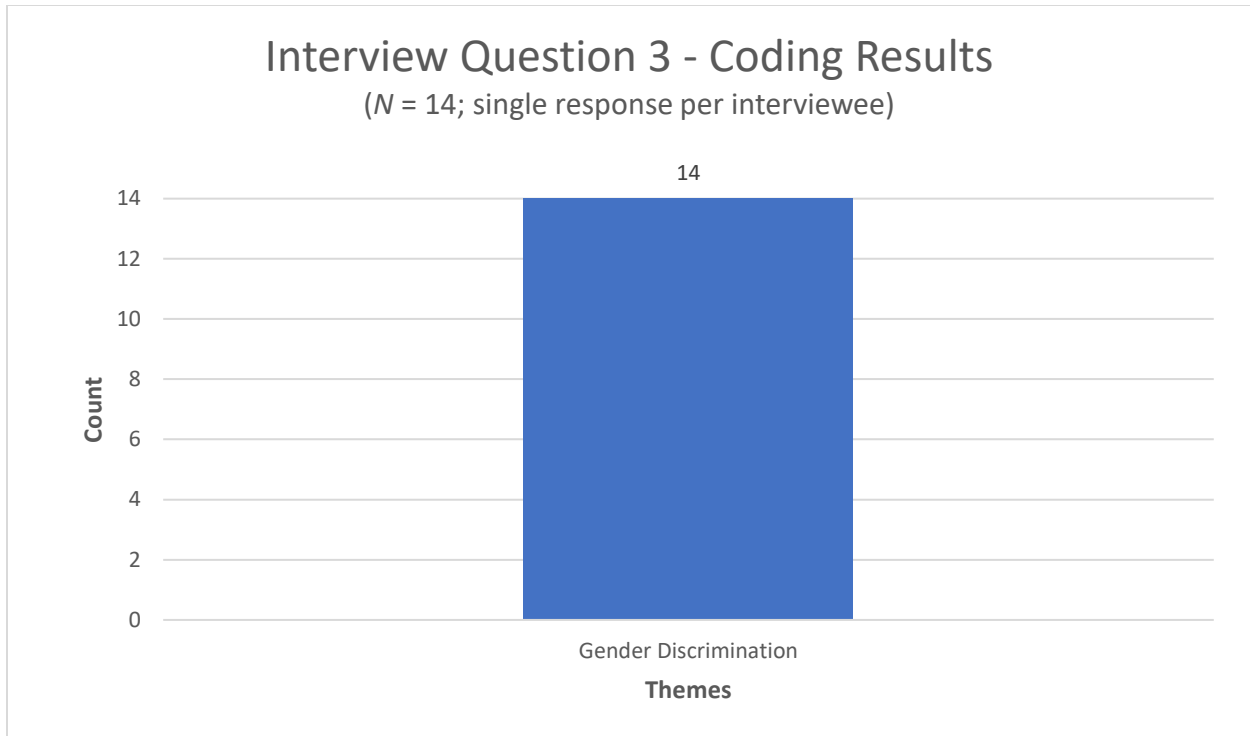
Figure 3. Push-back or resistance to leadership. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ) 3: Do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American woman?

Gender Discrimination. Literature on the experiences of women in religious leadership is replete with findings that gender discrimination is prevalent and pervasive as an acceptable norm. As the principle researcher it was important that I not presuppose this to be the experience of research participants in this study. Consequently, when asked whether participants believed resistance and push-back was related to being an African American women, by consensus, all fourteen (100%) participants connected the challenges experienced in ministry leadership to their status as a woman. "There is resistance from men and women and it's because I am a woman in this position" quoted by P5; "The push-back and insubordination is due to the fact that I am a woman" quoted by P9; "He refused to sit in the pulpit because I was there … he left the pulpit (during the funeral service) and sat down with the family" quoted by P9.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African

American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls? To answer

RQ2, interview question #4 was posed to all 14 participants.

Interview question 4. What strategies and practices help you overcome challenges faced

in your leadership role? Participant responses to this question yielded responses that were

grouped into the following seven themes: a) emotional intelligence; b) spiritual disciplines; c)

attitude; d) staying focused; e) support systems; f) communication and listening; g) education

and training. A summary of these finding is illustrated in Figure 4.
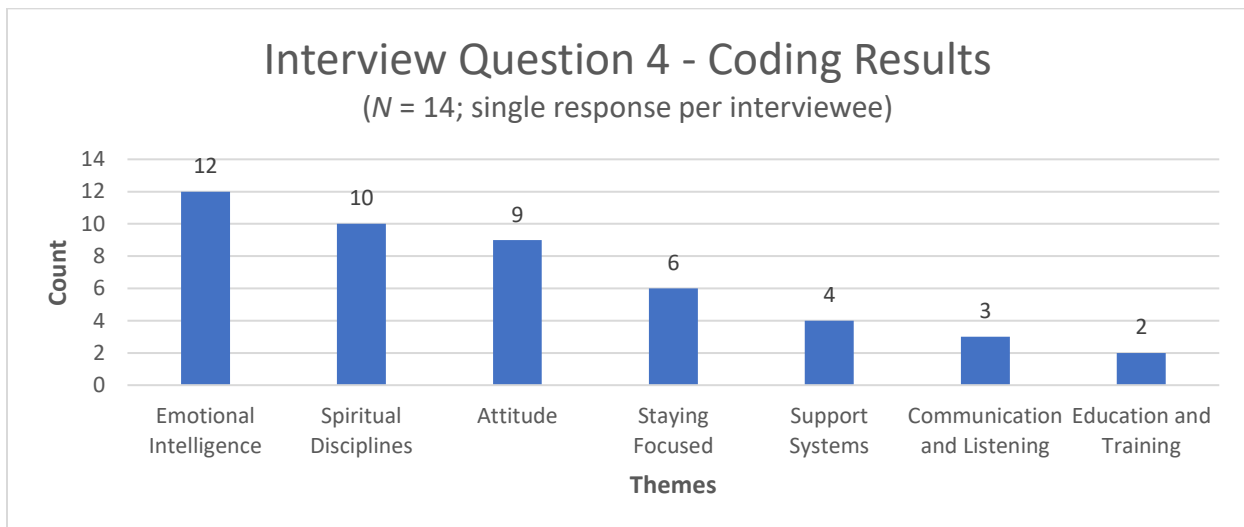
Figure 4. Strategies and Practices. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question
(IQ) 4: What strategies and practices help you overcome challenges faced in your leadership
role?

Emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2017), which is a measure of a person's ability to be

cognizant of and monitor the feelings and emotions of others, and to respond in a way that

promotes the other's well-being (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2008), is an indispensable and oft-

mentioned practice that African American women clergywomen employed in dealing with the

challenges faced in ministry. 86% (12 of 14) of the participants in the study mentioned

emotional intelligence as essential.

- "you have to understand the male ego … what make them tick and how to deal
  with them in such a way that they can receive your instruction and direction"
  quoted by P9

- "I am becoming more discerning, sensitive, and intuitive and this helps me greatly
  in dealing with the challenges. I've learned not to speak as quickly, as often, and
  as long as I used to, and still have an impact" – P5

- "You have to know how to deal with men and understand the difference between
  leading and emasculation" – P1

- "You have to leave a man [emotionally] intact" – P8

Spiritual Disciplines. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) emphasize the practice of spiritual

disciplines (i.e. prayer, meditation, fasting) as essential to flourishing as a spiritual leader. Of the

fourteen clergywomen participants in the study, 10 of the participants (71%) identify the

practices of spiritual disciplines as vital to their success. Spiritual disciplines are tools that help

manage the difficult vocation of clergy leader. Here are some of the comments appertaining to

spiritual disciplines: fasting (P1, P2, P3, P8); connection to God through worship (P1); praying

and asking God for help (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P10, P13); venting up and not out (P6); giving it to

God (P4); practicing spiritual disciplines (P12).

Attitude. Researchers have for many years explored the relationship between attitude

and behavior (Brannon, 1976; Liska,1975; D. J. Schneider, 1976; Schuman & Johnson, 1976).

The African American clergywomen in the study are mindful of the importance of their thoughts

and feelings related to the opposition they encounter in ministry. Responses from nine (64%) of

the fourteen participants are categorized under the attitude theme. Listed here are some of the responses: "It took much longer to accomplish the task, eventually we got there" (P1); "I try to be consistent and dependable" (P5); "You have to humble yourself and let your ego go" (P8); "Don't imitate; be authentic" (P13); "A gentle answer turns away wrath … I'm learning the whole (you know) 'you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar' approach, and it's working" (P3); "I'm very thoughtful and thorough, but when I make a decision – that's it. I'm decisive. And I haven't had to regret a decision that I've made up to this point. Thank God" (P7);

Staying focused. In his works on spiritual leadership, Fry (2003) place strong emphasis on vision as one of the three hallmarks of spiritual leadership. To manage and overcome challenges in clergy leadership six (42%) of the study participants stressed the importance of staying focused on the purpose, goal, or mission of the work to which they were called: P3 mentions "staying focused is so important"; P5 says "I deal with the challenges by staying focused on the work … I know who called me"; P8 is quoted as saying "you have to remember the bigger picture … remember what your goal is". Adding to the list of strategies and best practices is P4 who emphasized the following: "you just have to be mission-centered … understand the end-goal like Jesus did and don't let anyone take you off track"; similarly P14 says you have to "understand 'the why' .. have clarity of purpose … I know who I am and whose I am … I understand I was called to this work … I was called by God".

Support Systems. While leading in a predominantly male community is challenging for African American clergywomen, and many feel isolated, there are myriad support groups that clergywomen can connect with or join to mitigate the feeling of marginality and alienation experienced in their local congregation and denominational groups. Four (28%) of the fourteen

participants (P2, P6, P8, P13) use support systems to help them overcome challenges. P8 speaks of "building secondary connections". P6 discussed the importance of "having mentors" and speaking to them on a regular basis. Similarly, P13 says "talking to, and sharing stories with, other women in ministry" helps her deal with challenges.

Communication and Listening. Colarelli (2007) indicates that pastoral leadership requires one to be loving, empathetic, and a good listener. Consistent with the University of Michigan (Yukl, 2013) study on leaders, regular communication and interaction with subordinates is critical for success in leadership. The relations-oriented practices of communication and leadership are mentioned by clergy leadership as strategies for successfully navigating and overcoming difficulties of the profession by P1, P8, and P9 (21% of the participants).

- "But, I talked to them about it and included them in the process, and they felt part of the blessings" – quoted by P1
- "Communication is very important. I try to listen" quoted by P9

Education and Training. A distinguishing characteristic of successful leaders is their voracious appetite for learning. A person's success in leadership is in direct proportion to their love for learning (Collins, 2009). Kouzes & Posner (2016) point out that learning inevitably precedes leading. It is, therefore, apparent that leaders would be perpetual learner as this is tantamount to their continued growth and success as a leader. Kouzes & Posner encourage leaders to consider the myriad learning options available, and to make learning a habit. Leaders who are habitual learners view every experience - even failures - as learning opportunities. Study participants P8 and P12 (14% of the participants) stress the value of education, training, personal/professional development in leadership. The more knowledge these leaders acquire the

better equipped they feel to address challenges in their vocation. Education and training

emboldens these leaders in various emotional and psychological ways. It is clear that knowledge

empowers these clergy leaders.

Research Question 3

RQ 3 asked: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure

success? To answer this question, the following interview questions were posed to all 14

participants:

- IQ5: What does success look like in your leadership role?

- IQ6: How do you track and measure success?

Interview question 5. What does success look like in your leadership role? Participant

responses to this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following themes: a)

growth/change in others; b) ministry capacity; c) fiscal health. A summary of these finding is
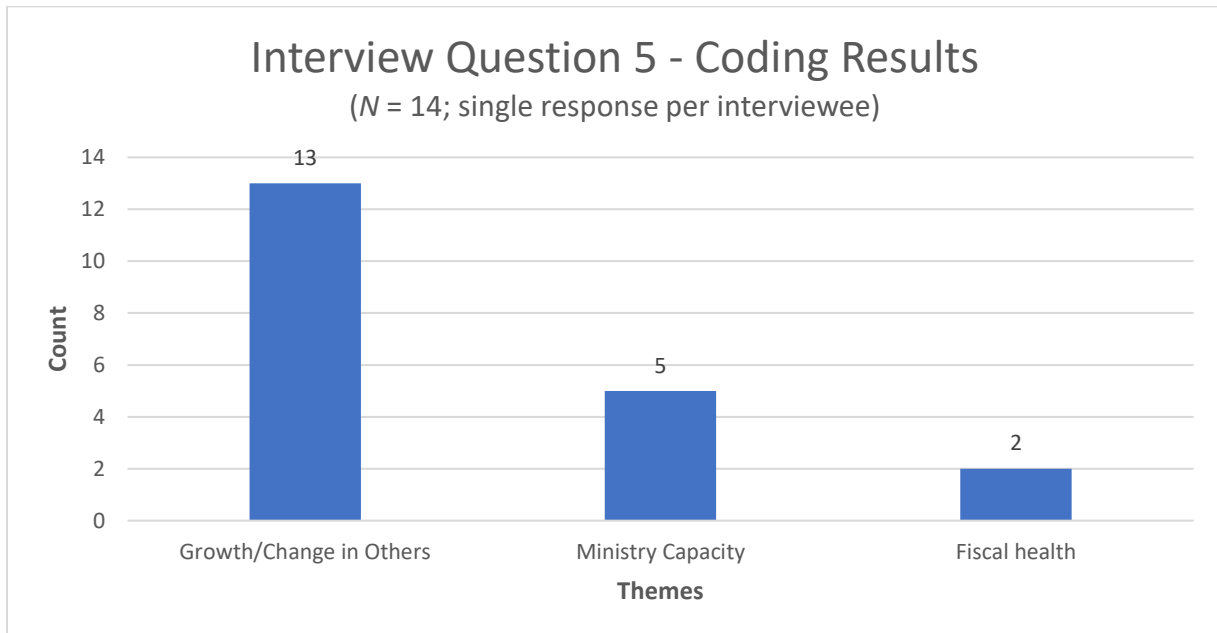
illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Measuring Success. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ)
5: What does success look like in your leadership role?

Growth/Change in other. When considering the ways that African American clergywomen view success, 93% (13 of 14) of the participants focus on indicators that are more qualitative as represented in perceptible changes they observe in those whom they lead. P1 says "when I see more initiative in people … when I see my leaders stepping up … that's success"; P5 makes a similar statement when she says "witnessing a change in behavior and patterns over time … I notice these things"; in the eyes of P8 success looks like "whole people". Further highlighting what success looks in their leadership role, P2 describes her experiences as such: "seeing growth. Building disciples. Watching the student become the teacher". P4 adds "success for me looks like … saved souls and changed lives".

> "When I see people overcome challenges and strongholds in their lives. When I see marriages that were once rocky, but now they're working. When I see the power of God moving and having His way in and among His people .. that's success. It's all about the people" – quoted by P13

Ministry Capacity. The behavioral domain of leadership explicated by researchers at Michigan and Ohio State University place emphasis task-oriented behaviors leaders have which include initiating structure (Hemphill, 1950), defining group activities (Fleishman, 1952), concern with production (Blake & Mouton, 1964), autocratic (Reddin, 1977), achievement-oriented (Indvik, 1986), focus on production (Katz, Maccoby, & Morse, 1950), production emphasizing (Fleishman, 1957), goal-achieving (Cartwright & Zander, 1960), goal emphasizing (Bowers & Seashore, 1966), and management (Zaleznik, 1977). Task-oriented leaders direct subordinates and provide technical assistance in the implementation of tasks (Yukl, 2013). The data from this study reveal that 36% of the study participants (5 of 14) view success in terms of efforts that produce outcomes that improve ministry capacity and accomplish the stated goals

and objectives of the organization. Here are some responses to interview question #5: "numerical growth" (P1); "meeting goals" (P11); "when you can leave and things go on as planned" (P9); "training someone to take your position" (P9); "when you can work yourself out of job" (P9); "when I see myself and others doing things with excellence" (P7)

Fiscal Health. 14% (2 of 14) of the study participants highlight fiscal health as a success indicator. (P14) spoke at length about the challenges she faces in leading congregations with inordinate financial challenges. In the conversation with P14, she mentioned that she (as well as other clergywomen) are regularly assigned to churches in economically blighted and impoverished communities. While she rejoices in the opportunity to serve in a high need area, she admits there is frustration with the paltry amounts of support given by the denominational body to whom she reports. This phenomenon is consistent with the literature which reports that African American women not only struggle to gain entry in the ministry and advance beyond entry-level appointments, but, due to the dearth of opportunities, they are oftentimes forced to accept assignments with smaller congregations in marginal urban or rural areas. Men are usually sought out for churches with large congregations, which typically come along with greater compensation (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). This reality presents immense challenges for African American clergy leaders as they struggle to lead and attend to the "ministry needs of the church" (P7), and in terms of their personal well-being and subsistence – "being able to pay my bills" (P14).

Interview question 6. How do you track and measure success? Participant responses to this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following themes: a) observation; b) participation; c) growth. A summary of these finding is illustrated in Figure 6.
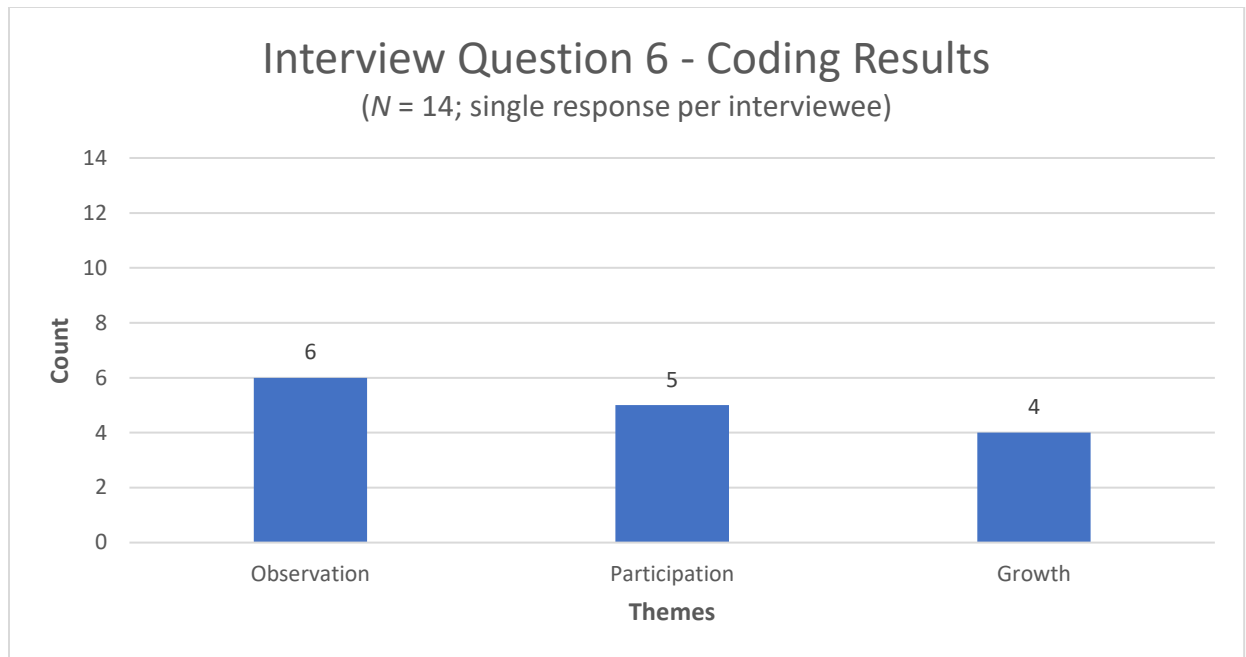
Figure 6. Tracking and Measuring Success. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ) 6: How do you track and measure success?

In tracking and measuring success, African American clergywomen in the study provided the following responses around the three themes:

Observation. 43% (6 of 14) of participants track and measure success in their leadership roles via observation. This activity implies being more than just a distant surveyor of the lives of parishioners, but leaders find it important to be in relationship with congregants and ministry leaders. This practice is consistent with servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1997), which is predicated on a relational dynamic. Being a faithful steward and leader of a local church, charged with the spiritual care of God's people, requires presence in the church and engagement with God's people. According to P13, tracking and measuring success through observation means "spending time with people". She furthers this point by saying "you look at the people … and spend more time with them. That's how you track success". P6 says "look at the start and finish". You "observe and take mental notes" (P3)

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Participation. Success in ministry can be defined and displayed in myriad ways. As indicated in participant responses from interview question five, 93% of participants look for spiritual maturity in others as evidenced by a discernible change in behavior. This can be tracked and measured by increased participation and involvement in the life of the church. When looking at responses from interview question #6, five of the fourteen (38%) of study participants place significant emphasis on the level of participation when tracking and measuring success. This point is highlighted by P5 when she says "I look for increased levels of participation and involvement over time". Similarly, P9 says "I can leave and nothing lacks - things go on as usual".

Growth. The Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry (CARM) suggests that successful clergy leadership within a local church be measured according to the following criteria: accurate preaching and teaching of the word of God; sanctification of God's people; and disciple-making (Slick, n.d.). This success framework is contrasted with models that focus on church membership, quality of programs and activities, and the entertainment value that a church may provide. When the clergywomen in the study speak of growth as a means of tracking and measuring success, the respondents are referencing the perceptible change in the life of believers that results from the faithful teaching and preaching of the word of God, which, if appropriated by followers, leads to transformed lives and behavior. Four of the fourteen (29%) clergywomen in the study presented growth as a way of tracking and measuring success. Participant #8 refers to "looking at their progress over time … seeing a change in people". According to P4: "Sometimes we can see the growth in people … sometimes God allows you to see it sometimes we don't".

Research Question 4

RQ 4 asked: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership roles have for emerging leaders in similar roles? To answer this question, the following interview questions was posed to all 14 participants:

- IQ7: If you were starting over (as a clergy leader), is there anything that you would do differently?

- IQ8: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American clergywomen in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Interview question 7. If you were starting over (as a clergy leader), is there anything that you would do differently? Participant responses to this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following themes: a) personal growth and development; b) relationship with God; c) wouldn't change anything. A summary of these finding is illustrated in Figure 7.
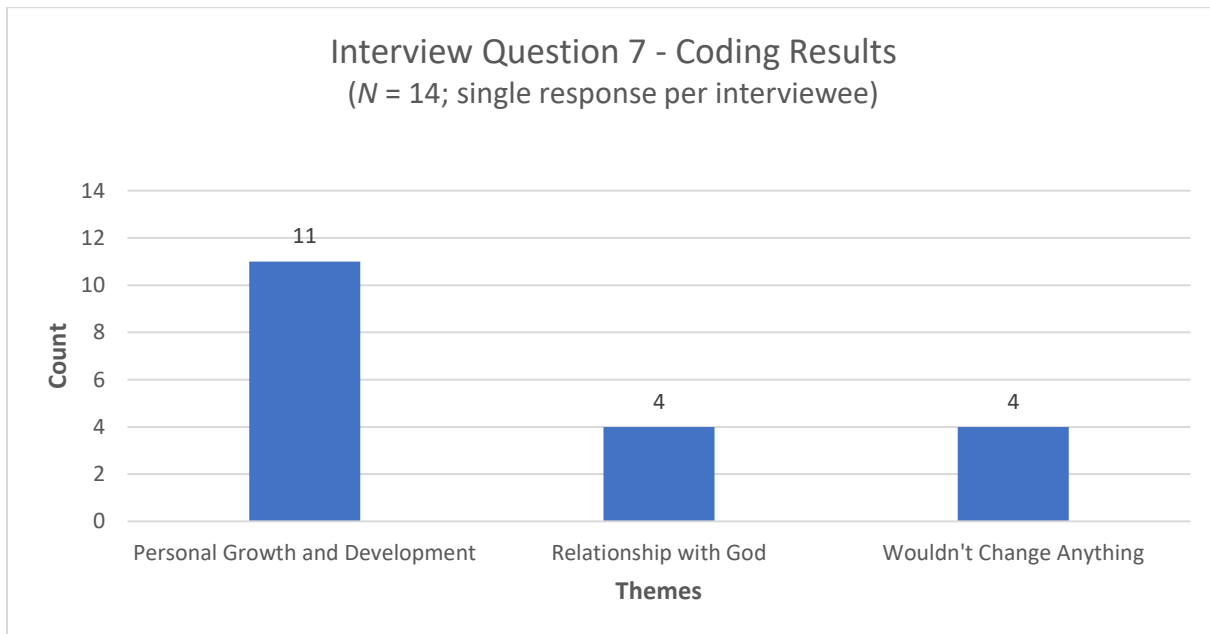

Figure 7. Recommendation for clergy leaders. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ) 7: If you were starting over (as a clergy leader), is there anything that you would do differently?

Personal Growth and Development. This theme is very much connected to a best practice and strategy used to overcome challenges addressed in interview question #4. 79% (11 of 14) African American clergywomen in the study point to personal growth and development as something that they would give greater attention to if given the opportunity to start over. The following are responses from five participants: "You can't strengthen others if you are weak" (P1); "I would have gotten my education sooner" (P9); "I would have delved into the education for ministry sooner" (P8); "I would have done a better job of developing mind, body, and spirit" (P8); "I would definitely get an advanced degree" (P14).

Relationship with God. Four of the 14 (28%) clergywomen express that they would develop a stronger relationship with God if given the opportunity to start over. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) elucidates spiritual leadership by providing the following nine components which are discernable by the actions of leaders. Spiritual leaders: (a) are called, (b) are trustworthy, (c) base their leadership in Scripture, (d) have the gift of discernment, (e) believe in God's authority, (f) are established by Jesus, (g) are obedient to God's purposes, (h) are Christ-centric, (i) move others toward God's agenda.

- "I would have understood my relationship with God better" (P1)

- "I would have developed my prayer life" (P1)

- "I wish I knew who I was in Christ and the vastness of who God is" (P4)

- "I would be more confident in who God called me to be" (P6)

Wouldn't change anything. From the responses it is clear that the African American clergywomen in the study believed there to have been a purpose in even the most difficult of times experienced in ministry. As the other themes that emerged from this question suggests, there are certainly ways that the participants believe they could have better prepared themselves

for ministry. Perhaps there were practices that, if applied and incorporated at an earlier stage in their ministerial vocation, would have prevented hardships and difficulties down the road. These facts notwithstanding, of the fourteen clergywomen in the study, four (29%) indicate that they would not change anything if given the opportunity to start over. "I really don't think I would do anything different .. I think everything is as it should be" (P5); "I wouldn't change anything … I have no regrets" (P1); "Nothing. I wouldn't change a thing" (P11).

Interview question 8. What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American clergywomen in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)? Participant responses to this question yielded responses that were grouped into the following themes: a) resilience; b) self-care; c) purpose and focus; d) mentors; e) building community/support systems; f) leadership preparation. A summary of these finding is illustrated in Figure 8.

Interview Question 8 - Coding Results
(*N* = 14; single response per interviewee)

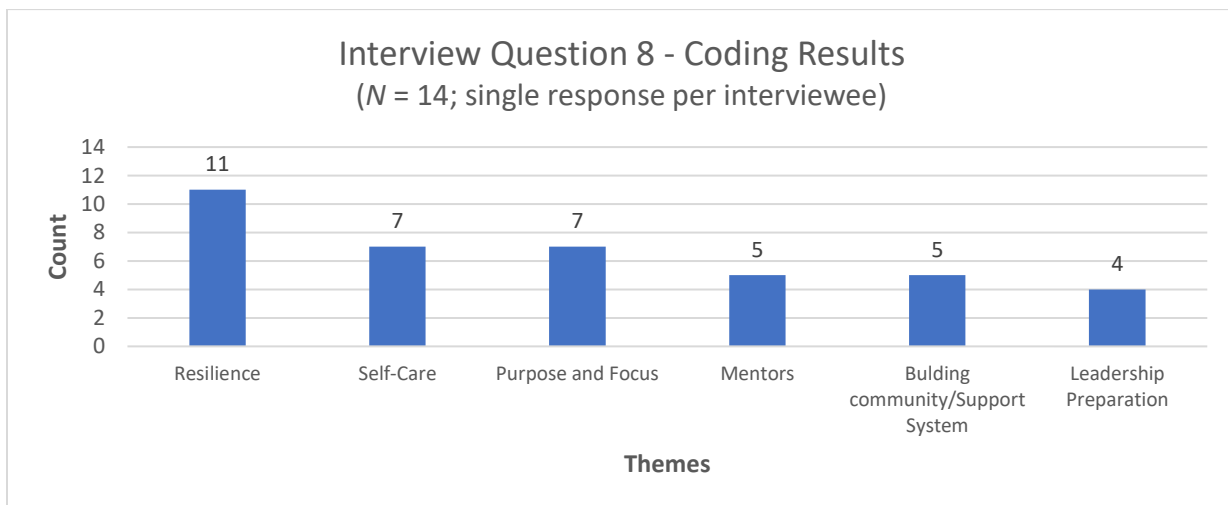*Figure 8.* Recommendation for clergy leaders. Themes that emerged from responses to Interview Question (IQ) 8: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American clergywomen in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

Resilience. The personal characteristic of resilience is vital to leadership formation and

development (Luthans, 2002). Of the 14 participants in the study 11 (79%) recommend

resilience to other African American women who aspire, or are already active in clergy. The

participants stress the importance of having a fitness to deal with and overcome adverse events

and hardships. Struggles in ministry can often be interpreted as failure or inadequacy. Having the

capacity to recover and continue the work of ministry is essential. Early African American

clergywomen had this personality trait. Richardson (2002) refers to resilience as more than

merely having the ability to "bounce back", but it's also the ability to grow through one's

hardships and challenges. The following are responses from participants: "There's a great price

to be paid" (P5); "Endure hardship" (P8); "Don't take it personal" (P4); "Surrender your mind,

your will, your emotion to God" (P4); "Be steadfast … be strong. Ever-forward, never

backward" (P2).

Self-care. 50% (7 of 14) of the participants note the importance of maintaining spiritual,

mental, and physical well-being. Clergy leadership is a very demanding vocation that can take a

tremendous toll on one's health. Couple the inevitable challenges of the job with the myriad

challenges that the study participants share, makes self-care that much more importance for

clergywomen. Self-care is defined as a practices employed to decrease stress, fatigue, and mental

exhaustion to improve psychological and emotional well-being in individuals (Lee & Miller,

2013). The African American clergy leaders interviewed in the study recommend the following

to promote self-care: "Make sure you take care of yourself" (P1); "Know that you are worthy of

being included" (P5); "Make sure you laugh … pamper yourself" (P8); "Learn to be content …

stay active … take care of yourself" (P13)

Purpose and focus. Ken Blanchard (2010) says, "a compelling vision tells you who you

are (your purpose), where you're going (your preferred picture of the future), and what will drive

your journey (your values)" (p. 18). Purpose and focus are offered as a recommendation by 50% (7 of 14) of the participants for aspiring or active clergy women. Listed here are some of the recommendations: "know who you are … be mindful that you are a child of God" (P9); "know that God has called you" (P5); "seek God first … have an ear to hear from God … be obedient to God … know who God is" (P4); "have an understanding of what you are called to … whether it's pastoral ministry, missions, teaching, evangelism" (P14).

Mentorship. The potential benefits of mentoring relationships has been extensively reported (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Roche, 1979). Of the fourteen participants in the study, five (36%) state having mentors as vital to successful clergy careers. Research has placed great significance on the role that mentoring has in promoting positive professional outcomes and advancing career satisfaction for protégés (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). This dynamic is displayed in an experienced or more advanced individual providing support to a less experienced person. 35% (5 of 14) of the African American clergywomen in the study support this notion with the following responses: "seek out mentors" (P1); "get a mentor" (P11). However, study participants also suggests clergy leaders engage in the practice of mentoring others: "mentor someone" (P6); "give back" (P7).

Building Community/Support Systems. This theme builds on the concept of mentoring, whereby protégés develop relationships with more advanced or experienced individuals for the purposes of personal and professional growth, and psychosocial well-being. Building community/support systems refers to developing caring communities whereby collective mentoring and support takes place (Tierney, 1996). 35% (5 of 14) of the study participants encourage others to stay in community with both men and women who provide affirmation and support. Clergy leadership is a particularly marginalizing and potentially

alienating profession for women. According the findings from this study, African American clergy think it critical to build a network and support systems to help them manage and cope with challenges. Here are some of the participant responses: "stay connected … fellowship with others" (P1); "have men on your teams" (P7); "talk to other women" (P13); "listen to sound advice" (P2); "find sisterhood … stay connected" (P14)

        Leadership Preparation. Respondents emphasize the importance of leadership preparation for those aspiring to enter the vocation. This theme resonates with the best practice of education/training from interview question #4. Success and endurance in ministry is in direct proportion to the quality of training and preparation that the clergy person commits to (Collins, 2009). Kouzes & Posner (2016) point out that learning inevitably precedes leading. It is, therefore, apparent that leaders would be perpetual learners as this is tantamount to their continued growth and success as a leader. Kouzes & Posner encourage leaders to consider the myriad learning options available, and make learning a habit. Notice that the preparation referenced under this theme may relate to spiritual, theological, interpersonal, or personal competencies. Here are some of response from the four (28%) participants who contributed to the theme of leadership preparation: "use wisdom, not emotions" (P9); "learn to practice forgiveness … lead with love" (P9); "self-knowledge … understand who you are" (P10); "get to the bible … read it through once a year" (P11).

Chapter Summary

        The purpose of this study was to identify challenges African American women face in clergy leadership and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those challenges. Furthermore, this study highlighted how African American women in clergy leadership defined and measured success, and explored recommendations and advice they offer

to others in similar leadership positions. The following research questions (RQs) were addressed in this study:

- **RQ1** - What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?

- **RQ2** - What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?

- **RQ3** - How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?

- **RQ4** - What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership roles have for emerging leaders in similar roles?

The participants' responses to the eight interview questions served as the source of data for this phenomenological research study. The researcher interviewed fourteen participants, then transcribed and coded the data. Prior to grouping the codes into themes, the researcher validated the interview codes through and interrater review process by enlisting the support of two Pepperdine University doctoral students. The codes for each research question were subsequently grouped into themes. The table below displays a summary of themes that arose from the data analysis. In the following chapter, the researcher presents a discussion of themes, implications, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

Table 6

Summary of Themes for Four Research Questions.

RQ1. Challenges	RQ2. Best Practices	RQ3. Measurements of Success	RQ4. Recommendations
Patriarchy	Emotional Intelligence	Growth/change in others	Personal growth and Development

RQ1. Challenges	RQ2. Best Practices	RQ3. Measurements of Success	RQ4. Recommendations
Gender stereotypes	Spiritual disciplines	Ministry capacity	Relationship with God
Discrimination	Attitude	Fiscal health	Wouldn't change Anything
Insubordination	Staying focused	Observation	
Voice is silenced	Support systems	Participation	Resilience
Leadership style	Communication and Listening	Growth	Self-Care
Gender perceptions			Purpose and focus
Philosophical Differences	Education and Training		Building community/Support Systems
Gender Discrimination			Leadership preparation

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

African American women have a history in clergy leadership that dates back to the18th

century. Pioneering clergywomen such as Jerena Lee, Mary Small, and Sojourner Truth,

Amanda Berry Smith, and Zilpha Elaw experienced monumental challenges as they pursued and

effectively carried out the call of God on their lives (Andrews, 1986; Collier-Thomas, 1998).

However, their lives in ministry came with a great price - they experienced isolation,

banishment, and persecution of various kinds. As findings from this study suggest, African

American women continue to endure tremendous hardships in ministry. The study aimed to

explore the hardships and challenges of this contemporary generation of African American

clergywomen and identify strategies and practices that might better inform and prepare emerging

clergywomen to be successful in their ministry roles.

Chapter 5 includes an overall summary and discussion of the data presented in chapter

four, and details the key finding from the study. Lastly, this chapter explores implications of the

study and gives recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

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clergy leadership and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those

challenges. Furthermore, this study highlighted how African American women in clergy

leadership defined and measured success, and explored recommendations and advice

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- *RQ3* - How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?

- *RQ4* - What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership roles have for emerging leaders in similar roles?

To examine the research questions, a qualitative methodology was employing using a phenomenological approach. This phenomenological study described the experiences of an event (Creswell, 2013) appertaining to African American clergywomen. A phenomenological study can help others to understand the experience of participants in a way that provides meaning and interpretation (Creswell, 2013). "The phenomenologist aspires to access the personal, the individual, the variations within themes... [Phenomenology] is, inherently, a means of creating knowledge that is particular — knowledge that offers a portal of insight into the individual and the idiosyncratic" (Conklin, 2007, p. 276).

For this study, it is important to understand the participants from their personal perspectives and involvement as clergy leaders. The phenomenological approach is categorized as qualitative because of the utilization of in-depth interviews of smaller sample sizes, which include participants who have first-hand experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Because my study focused on experiences and viewpoints of participants (Lester, 1999), a phenomenological qualitative approach was appropriate.

Data was collected by direct interactions with the participants. The goal was to secure data that were, "…rich, thick, and dense, offering enough detail to allow someone to comprehend the situation or understand the setting without asking additional questions" (Richards & Morse,

2012, p. 122). Purposive sampling was chosen for this study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to craft questions that were relevant to participants (Steen & Roberts, 2011). Purposive sampling has great usefulness in phenomenology as it aids researchers in gaining a better understanding of phenomena and the lived experiences of a specific unit of analysis (Steen & Roberts, 2011).

Discussion of Key Findings

The results of the study are to inform on best leadership practices and strategies of African American clergywomen to overcome challenges in their leadership roles. The following is a discussion of key findings and themes that emerged from the completed interviews. The results have been analyzed and displayed in the following table to show the extent to which themes from the research are supported in the extant literature on the topic. What follows is a discussion of the points the researcher believes to be of chief significance to the topic. A summary is indicated in the following table:

Table 7

Summary of Themes Supported in Literature and Unique to Study

RQ1. Challenges	RQ2. Best Practices	RQ3. Measurements of Success	RQ4. Recommendations
Themes Supported in Literature: -Patriarchy -Gender stereotypes -Discrimination -Leadership style	Themes Supported in Literature: -Emotional Intelligence -Spiritual disciplines -Communication and Listening	Themes Supported in Literature: -Growth/change in Others -Observation -Participation -Growth	Themes Supported in Literature: -Personal growth and Development -Relationship with God

(continued)

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RQ1. Challenges	RQ2. Best Practices	RQ3. Measurements of Success	RQ4. Recommendations
-Gender Discrimination -Voice is silenced Themes Unique to Study: -Insubordination -Gender perceptions -Philosophical Differences	-Education and Training -Staying focused Themes Unique to Study: -Attitude -Support systems	-Ministry capacity -Fiscal health Themes Unique to Study:	-Purpose and focus -Leadership preparation Themes Unique to Study: -Wouldn't change Anything - Resilience - Self-care - Mentors - Building community/ Support systems

RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership? African American women face numerous challenges, including patriarchy, gender stereotypes and discrimination, insubordination, the silencing of their voices, and patriarchy. Additional causes of challenges are related to push-back they receive due to their unique leadership styles, gender perceptions, philosophical differences. The issue that acts as the impetus and foundation of the challenges is gender discrimination as perceived by the research participants. Challenges that contemporary African American clergywomen are similar to those faced by the earliest African American clergywomen in the 18th century (Collier-Thomas, 1998; Andrews, 1986). Not much has change in terms of the nature and type of discrimination, oppression, and persecution that African American clergywomen experience. The resistance and opposition is expressed as following that have support in the literature:

Patriarchy: in many ways the historical African American church, and the institution of

religion at large, serves as a reflection of society. Patriarchy describes a system of ideals and practices that support male dominance and the subjugation of women. The fact that the historical Black church is situated in the United States of America, which is clearly patriarchal, inherently predispose the Black church to patriarchal influences, and the myriad problems this belief systems poses to African American clergywomen. As the literature for this study indicates, Black women in leadership roles was not uncommon in ancient Africa. African women were "priestesses, queens, herbalist, and tribal mothers" (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p. 276). Patriarchy was a relatively foreign concept to Africans prior to their arrival to America. On the continent of Africa, gender arrangements were more egalitarian (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009).

When study participants were queried about push-back and the connection to gender, all answered in the affirmative. Gender discrimination is a common practice in the occupational setting of the clergy. Bragg (2011) asserts that patriarchy, sexism, classism, and gender barriers all contribute to the difficulties faced by African American women pursuing senior pastoral leadership. Both clergy and laity – men and women - are often guilty of sexist attitudes and practices that manifest in very overt forms (Barnes, 2006; Cody, 2006). The phenomenon of Black female patriarchy, also highlighted in the literature for this study, is mentioned as a hindrance for African American clergywomen. Black female patriarchy glorifies the position of men in positions of leadership. Westfield (2006) states that Black female patriarchy emerges when Black women assume majority status in the participation ranks of the church and subsequently perpetuate the status quo of male domination and power and privilege of men.

Gender Stereotypes. Cultural norms and prescriptions related to gender are very influential in fueling the challenges African American clergywomen face. This theme is supported in the literature. Role congruity theory suggests that challenges women face in terms

of advancing in male-dominant professions can be related to the perceived lack of symmetry between gender roles and the leadership demands (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Gervais & Hillard, 2011). According to Boyce and Herd (2003), "Role congruity theory offers an explanation for the gender stereotyping of leadership positions by maintaining that perceived gender roles may conflict with expectations regarding leadership roles, especially when an occupation is held predominantly by one sex" (p. 367). African American clergywomen in this study highlight challenges specific to disparate views on gender and women's roles in the church.

Cody (2006) highlights that women are often at a disadvantage because of misunderstandings and lack of consensus about what constitutes matters as trivial as appropriate dress for clergywomen. Many women are criticized for either being too feminine or too masculine in their appearance. Kwilecki's study (1987) shows the challenges women have with regard to striking the proper balance between being passive (i.e. affiliative) and aggressive (i.e. authoritative). A prevailing stereotype exists in the church that suggests that women's interests and competencies are in contrast to the leadership roles required of clergy leaders (Gervais, Hillard, & Vescio, 2010). Women are thought to be fragile, emotional, and dependent, and these traits are less desirable than stereotypical male gendered traits such as logical, reasonable, and strength (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Bernard (1964) admits that both men and women experience role conflict in ministry and secular professions. However, the challenge appears far more acute for clergywomen with families as the work of ministry presents exclusive and extensive demands. As such, the competing demands of home and church life, coupled with expectations from parishioners and family members, can create overwhelming levels of stress for women. This role conflict can

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ultimately manifest in clergywomen feeling compelled to choose between career or family. Women who persist in clergy also feel pressure to change to an inauthentic leadership pattern that mirrors styles consistent with traditional male leadership. The compulsion for women to adapt or "fit in" is considered both a trap and recipe for failure (Kelan, 2008; Kulich, et al., 2011; Lantz, 2008). Role congruity theory explains the cognitive dissonance experienced by both men and women when facing the reality of female leadership in the Black church.

Gender Discrimination. It is important to note that the challenges and discrimination African American clergywomen experience is often the result of divergent interpretations of scripture on the place and role of women in the church. This issue has been a source of strife and contention for centuries. Halverstadt (1991) expresses concerns that these contentions have resulted in a norm of competition and conflict that is unhealthy for a spiritual community. He asserts that cooperation is at the core of any viable organization, but especially the church, which is supposed to model appropriate interpersonal relationships. Reconciling the hermeneutical issues are essential to resolving the conflict that exist in the in African American church and ameliorating the challenges of African American clergywomen. Moreover, as articulated in his book Managing Church Conflict, Halverstadt (1991) places strong emphasis on the necessity of church leader's recognition of the complementary and indispensable roles of both men and women to the success of the church.

Furthermore, and critical to reconciling the hermeneutical debates, is the importance of analyzing and drawing conclusions about the role of women in the church while grounding one's hermeneutic with an understanding of the cultural context in which the Bible was written. Sawyer (2002) finds it worth noting that the first-century women had her life predetermined before she was born. Culture mandated that women's roles involve the care and maintenance of

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the family and home. Without women working to transform raw materials from animals and the land into products for home use, in addition to rearing children, the family would not have survived. Education and theological training was a world in which most women were unfamiliar (Wyatt, 2002). As such, many women were neither equipped for, nor were they interested in, religious leadership. Society has evolved tremendously and in no way reflects the times of the biblical writer. Gender roles are more egalitarians, the marketplace and economy, and social institution is highly dependent on the contribution and active involvement of women. As the research suggest, the church has not evolved and advanced at the same rate as the rest of society.

Voice is silenced. This theme is also prominently represented in the literature on women in leadership. One of the ways that gender discrimination, patriarchy, and insubordination is demonstrated is in effort to silence the voice of African American clergywomen. It comes as no surprise that this silencing not only affects clergywomen, but all women in the congregations of African American churches. The silencing of the Black woman's voice shows the extent to which sexism and gender bias have been normalized in the Black Church. Baron (2004) laments that because women do not have sanctioned authority on a broad scale within the Black church, they are not able to use speech, language, and voice to articulate the range and depth of their concerns on matters related to their marginalized status.

Insubordination. This theme can be inferred in the literature, although it is not explicitly stated. African American clergywomen experience a copious amount of defiance from parishioners and staff under their leadership. Many feel justified in their mistreatment and disrespect of African American clergywomen, because they feel women cannot be called to the ministry and therefore should not be serving in such roles. This theme is connected to the push-back African American clergywomen experience due to their leadership style. They report push-

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back, often in the form of insubordination, associated with philosophical differences, gender perceptions, leadership style.

RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?

Practices and strategies that African American clergywomen use to overcome the challenges they face include: emotional intelligence, spiritual disciplines, having a positive and self-affirming attitude, staying focused, support systems, communication and listening, education/training.

Emotional Intelligence. Emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2017), which is a measure of a person's ability to be cognizant of and monitor the feelings and emotions of others, and to respond in a way that promotes the other's well-being (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2008), is an indispensable strategy employed by African American clergywomen to overcome challenges, and is prevalently discussed in leadership literature. Emotional intelligence comes across in a leader's capacity for expressing appreciation and displaying genuine support to followers (Bass, 1990; Dale & Fox, 2008; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2013). Leaders with high emotional quotients have an acute sensitivity, awareness, and consideration of the emotional needs of others. The positive relationship between leader's consideration of the emotional needs of followers is also consistent with the servant leadership construct (Greenleaf, 1997).

Spiritual Disciplines. Consistent with the literature, African American clergy place a high premium on the importance of spiritual disciplines. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) place spiritual disciplines under the umbrella of spiritual leadership. They elucidate spiritual leadership by providing the following nine components which are discernable by the actions of

leaders. Spiritual leaders: (a) are called, (b) are trustworthy, (c) base their leadership in scripture, (d) have the gift of discernment, (e) believe in God's authority, (f) are established by Jesus, (g) are obedient to God's purposes, (h) are Christ-centric, (i) move others toward God's agenda; and they practice of spiritual disciplines (i.e. prayer, meditation, fasting). Spiritual disciplines are essential to flourishing as a spiritual leader.

Attitude. Researchers have for many years explored the relationship between attitude and behavior (Brannon, 1976; Liska,1975; D. J. Schneider, 1976; Schuman & Johnson, 1976). The African American clergywomen in the study are mindful of the importance of their thought and feelings related to the opposition they encounter in ministry. This particular theme is not explicitly mentioned in the literature as a best practices or strategy for clergy leaders. This leadership trait, however, may easily be connected to other valuable and necessary practices for leadership development and formation.

Staying Focused: African American clergywomen highlight the importance of staying focused when dealing with leadership challenges in the male-dominated vocation. This theme connects to the literature that highlights vision as indispensable to successful leadership. Ken Blanchard (2010) says, "a compelling vision tells you who you are (your purpose), where you're going (your preferred picture of the future), and what will drive your journey (your values)" (p. 18). In the absence of a clear vision, followers are left guessing about the direction and goals of the organization. Feelings of uncertainty and insecurity are common emotions that followers experience. Quinn stressed the importance of a leader's ability to provide a picture of the future, guiding followers through uncharted and threatening environments (2010). The focus on purpose, mission, and vision keeps African American clergywomen grounded in one sense. But,

it also elevates them and allows them to "rise above" or transcend the problems and hardships of the profession.

Building a Support System. The clergy is a particularly marginalizing and potentially alienating profession for women. In the world outside of the clergy profession, Black women deal with what has been labeled the triple threat of racism, sexism (Talleyrand, 2006), and classism (Collins & Yeskel, 2000). The combination of these multiple marginalizing identities subject Black women to unique social challenges. According to findings from this study, African American clergywomen think it critical to build a network and support system to help them manage and cope with challenges of their minority status in the clergy vocation. This theme is unique to the study.

Communication and Listening. According to the University of Michigan study, effective leaders are heavily involved in relation-oriented behaviors that include helping and supporting subordinates navigate challenging tasks. A relation-oriented practice that African American clergywomen employ to overcome challenges include communication and listening. These practices demonstrate to the follower, even in a hostile and adversarial setting, that the leader is considerate and interested in the concerns, insecurities, and fears of followers. Fleishman & Harris (1962) says consideration builds mutual trust, respect, and a certain warmth and rapport between the supervisor and his group. This does not mean that this dimension reflects a superficial "pat-on-the-back," "first name calling" kind of human relations behavior. This dimension appears to emphasize a deeper concern for group members' needs and includes such behaviors as allowing subordinates more participation in decision making and encouraging more two-way communication.

Education/Training. A distinguishing characteristic of successful leaders is their voracious appetite for learning. African American clergy use learning opportunities to grow more competent in their vocation, but also as a tool to increase sophistication and erudition for combating challenges. The leadership literature connects a love of learning to leadership success (Collins, 2009). A leader who is no longer passionate about learning new information and expanding her knowledge base or skill set will soon witness the decline of her enterprise. Kouzes & Posner (2016) acknowledge at least four different ways that leaders can go about learning: 1) leaders learn from experience - by taking action, engaging in experimentation, leaders are able to learn by trial-and-error; 2) leaders learn by thinking - researching information and reading is a practical and effective way for leaders to learn; 3) feeling - through introspective investigation and self-assessment, leaders can make new discoveries about themselves and address deep seated issues that might be affecting their performance; and finally (4) accessing others - leaders are encouraged to reach out to and learn from others.

Kouzes & Posner (2016) point out that learning inevitably precedes leading. It is, therefore, apparent that learning would be a reasonable expectation for continued growth and success as a leader. Kouzes & Posner encourage leaders to consider the myriad learning options available, and make learning a habit. Leaders who are habitual learners view every experience - even failures, hardships, and challenges - as learning opportunities. Even when confronted with difficult or painful circumstances, the leader is looking for the lesson(s) to be learned. For Kouzes & Posner "the two very finest teachers of business are trial and error" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. 64).

RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?

Generally, African American clergywomen use qualitative markers to measure success in ministry. This include observing behavior of congregants and leaders and assessing growth, participation, and change. This is consistent with the literature that show the African American church as a primary socializing agent that has historically been attentive to the development of its members (Williams, 2003). The leaders in the study also measure success by assessing ministry capacity and evaluating fiscal health. These practices are consistent with management studies literature that emphasize task-oriented leadership competencies, which include: initiating structure (Hemphill, 1950), production (Blake & Mouton, 1964), production emphasizing (Fleishman, 1957), goal-achieving (Cartwright & Zander, 1960), and management (Zaleznik, 1977).

Growth/Change in Others. African American clergywomen in the study view themselves as help professionals. Some of the needs that the Black church provides include academic support and tutoring, job training and placement, health education, and housing assistance (Gilkes, 2001). Michael Eric Dyson, a noted religious scholar, activist, professor, and ordained Minister identifies the Black Church as one of the most valuable resources in the Black community and central to Black culture as a whole (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2009). The church has been vital to the socialization process for African Americans - teaching standards for appropriate conduct and codes for morality that are applicable for home life, the workplace, educational settings, civic and community life (Lincoln & Mimiya, 1990; Taylor, Lincoln, & Chatters, 2005). While the church, with its spiritual emphasis, focuses greatly on spiritual (intangible) growth. The manifestation of spiritual growth is materialized in tangible forms.

Ministry Capacity. Clergy persons are organizational leaders of non-profit enterprises that are accountable to the State. Therefore, success must also come in material and quantifiable forms. Some of the clergy leaders are also task-oriented leaders who specialize in directing subordinates and providing technical assistance in the implementation of tasks. Leaders in this study views success in terms of efforts that produce outcomes resulting in improved ministry capacity and ability to accomplish the stated goals and objectives of the organization. As the literature suggest, task-oriented behaviors are typical in secular organizations, but the literature does not provide much insight about this important function in religious leadership.

Fiscal Health. A vital part of ministry capacity is the financial health and stability of the church. Clergy leaders use this as a means to measure success. This phenomenon is consistent with the literature which reports that African American women not only struggle to gain entry in the ministry and advance beyond entry-level appointments, but, due to the dearth of opportunities, they are oftentimes forced to accept assignments with smaller congregations in marginal urban or rural areas. Men are usually sought out for churches with large congregations, which typically come along with greater compensation (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership have for emerging leaders in similar roles? In terms of recommendations that African American women have for clergywomen, themes that emerged included: personal growth and development; relationship with God; wouldn't change anything; resilience; self-care; purpose and focus; mentorship; building community/support systems; leadership preparation. Recommendations offered by clergy leaders is consistent with social cognitive literature that address the dynamic interplay between leader self-efficacy and leader effectiveness. Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is related to a person's beliefs about their capacity and ability to

achieve, persevere, and perform at a certain level required to meet their life's goals and aspirations. Self-efficacy posits that a person's thoughts and feelings about themselves manifest outwardly in the choices and decision they make. Unlike the themes that emerged in the other research questions, most of the themes from the fourth research question were unique to the study, and were not explicitly discussed in the literature. The recommendations offered by clergy leaders have profound implications that will be addressed in the following section of the study.

Implications of The Study

The purpose of this study was to examine challenges African American women face in clergy leadership and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those challenges. The study highlighted how African American women in clergy leadership defined and measured success and explored recommendations and advice they offer to others in similar leadership positions. The results of the study were examined to discover themes that reinforced existing literature, and to identify themes that were unique to the study.

Consistent with the literature, this study highlighted what has been known for centuries – African American women face inordinate challenges as it relates to entering clergy leadership and thriving in the profession. The challenging environment of clergy leadership situates African American women in male dominated settings that make them susceptible to the norms of patriarchy, gender discrimination, stereotypes, and myriad marginalizing and diminishing practices. The institution of religion is perhaps the most hostile environment for women in terms of breaking the glass ceiling and ascending the upper echelons of organizational and denominational ranks. Unlike its practice in other mainstream social institutions, the federal government does not monitor equal opportunity practices, nor does the federal government enforce anti-discrimination laws in the church.

Despite the tremendous challenges of pursuing a vocation in the clergy community, African American women have made incredible strides and have assumed high ranking position in both the local church and larger ecclesiastical bodies. Presumptively, there is much to be learned from African American clergywomen for leaders in both spiritual and secular industries about leadership. Lincoln & Mamiya have highlighted the glaring disparity in the rate of female-male perspectives in religious scholarship (1990). Most research centers on the experiences of men in leadership. The experiences and practices of African American clergywomen are worthy of greater exploration in academy.

African American clergywomen are the model population to explore for leadership scholars interested in developing a more holistic framework for leadership development and practice. Traditional leadership frameworks have focused more on the analytic (Mintzberg, 2004; Pitcher, 1997; Yukl, 2013) and conceptual (Locke, 2003; Bass, 1985) domains. However, scholars have become more cognizant of the need for the development of spiritual and emotional domains of leadership development (Quatro et al., 2007). Emotional domains of leadership has its roots in the works of such scholars as Goleman (2017) who introduced the concept of Emotional Intelligence to a wide audience; Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) have also explored the emotional domain of leadership in their works on transformational leadership. On the other hand, the spiritual domain of leadership has been explored by Greenleaf (1997) in Servant Leadership, Maslow (1965) in his theory of self-actualization, and House and Aditya (1997) values-based leadership.

As the study's findings clearly report, African American women are able to thrive in these very challenging communities through the utilization and application of a holistic approach which encompasses analytical and conceptual erudition, and emotional and spiritual

competencies. Analytical and conceptual strengths are crucial for the highly administrative

functions of clergy roles that involve task-oriented behaviors necessary for driving

organizational capacity, fiscal health, and numerical growth. While the emotional and spiritual

domains enables African American clergywomen to maintain a transcendental view of the

vocation and keep their sights set on the greater goal of carrying-out a divine work to which they

have been called. Emotional and spiritual intelligences are vital for African American

clergywomen. Moreover, these competencies are tantamount to their personal well-being from a

psychological, emotional, and physical point of view.

The recommendation that study participants offer to their counterparts and emerging

leaders to manage the leadership demands of clergy, and overcome challenges can be grouped

into two categories of social control that positively affect self-efficacy: self-regulation and group

mediation. Self-regulation was highlighted in the study by the following themes: personal

growth and development, relationship with God, wouldn't change a thing, self-care, purpose and

focus, leadership preparation, resilience, and building community/support systems. Group

mediation practices was highlighted by: self-care, mentorship, building community/support

systems. Combining a holistic leadership approach that encompasses self-regulatory and group

mediation practices are essential to success for African American clergywomen to overcome

challenges and have success in clergy. As efforts are undertaken to build and prepare the next

generation of women clergy leaders, curriculum and training must include these features.

In terms of the study's implications for impacting the social, political, and spiritual

direction of African American clergywomen in their immediate churches and surrounding

communities, it is worth noting the prominent role of the historical Black Church in the lives of

African Americans, which has been identified as one of the more prominent social institution in

the Black community along with the school and family (Billingsley, 1991). The Black Church is credited as being a place that offers "valuable community networks that foster mutual support, nurture individual gifts, and validate individual identities" (Frederick, 2003, p. 4). Lincoln (1990) identifies the Black Church as central to the totality of Black existence in America. Challenges that African American clergywomen experience in the church could potentially serve as an impediment to the church maximizing its full potential and acting as the necessary help and change agent needed in Black communities across the country. As one of the most marginalized groups of people in the United States, African Americans need every available resource at its disposal to promote the flourishing of life for members of its communities. In recent years black social activism has increased on a national level due to the strained relationships between black communities and law enforcement. Black Lives Matters activists emerged as a voice against systematic racism and injustices against Black people. While the conversation about macro-sociological factors contributing to the subjugation and oppression of African Americans must be had, it is also critical that micro-level, intra-group hostilities and tensions be accounted for and assuaged. What better place for this to begin than the historical African American church?

For Future Study

The challenges experienced by the African American clergywomen who participated in this study revolved around being a woman in a male-dominated profession. Many clergy and laity within the community of the historical African American church subscribe to the norm of patriarchy which often manifests itself in discriminatory treatment of clergywomen. Patriarchy was such a prominent theme and focal point of discussion that other challenges of the profession were not addressed. Because of the dearth of literature on the lived experiences of African American clergywomen, a future study might examine challenges (and corresponding strategies)

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that are unrelated to the gender status of African American clergywomen. Controlling for gender would allow the researcher to uncover potential parallels in the experiences of African American clergywomen and their male counterparts, whose stories are prominent in religious leadership studies.

Final Thoughts

As expected, I thoroughly enjoyed conducting this study. The conversations I had with the 14 clergywomen I interview was inspiring and exhilarating. I felt a sense of sadness as I reached data saturation and data collection was coming to an end. I eagerly anticipated each interview. That four-week period of meetings and interviews are times that I will forever cherish. I walk away from the study with a much greater appreciation and respect for the experiences and the work that African American women do in ministry. From my personal experiences and upbringing in the historical Black church, I was perceptive of challenges that clergywomen face. But, my understanding was shrouded by the privilege that I enjoy as a male. This study made me confront privilege that I have taken for granted for countless years in the Black church. I have served in ministry for over a decade as both a Deacon and Minister. In such a short period of time, I have enjoyed more access and opportunities than many clergywomen have experienced in their clerical lifetime, some of whom were far more experienced and qualified than I. This study has caused me to consider how I might use my privilege going forward to ameliorate inequities in my secular and spiritual vocations.

One surprising take-away from the study is the relative contentment, satisfaction, and overall positive outlook that African American clergywomen have in view of all the challenges they face in ministry. As raw as their expressions were in describing the difficulties of being a woman leading in a male-dominant community, none of the participants appeared to be

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disheartened, neither did any express bitterness or anger about their experiences. All of my

study participants appeared immensely emotionally and spiritually healthy, and emboldened to

continue the work that God has called them to. It is also worth noting that they all expressed

appreciation to me for taking an interest in their experiences and making African American

clergywomen the focus of my doctoral dissertation project. As one of my participants shared,

"Thank you for your research and for amplifying the voices of Black women in ministry". To

this, I responded: "thank you; it's was my esteemed privilege and honor".

Author's Notes

As I concluded the writing of this study, I was informed that some of its readers might

care to know the author's personal view on the role of women in the church. Apparently, I've

done a decent job of maintaining objectivity on the matter and allowing the data to speak for

itself. Therefore, for inquiring minds, and for those wrestling with the subject, I offer the

following from the Apostle Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the

power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek". –

Roman 1:16 (New American Standard Bible).

In dealing with such a divisive and polarizing issue as women in church leadership, I

consider the debate secondary to the all-important issue of salvation, and the means by which

men and women are saved – the proclamation of the gospel of Christ. Clearly, the "power of

God" [to save] is not diminished, nor is it rendered any less effective, because of the biological

or physiological ascription of the gospel bearer, nor the title or position that person may possess.

As such, I believe it incumbent upon all of us - man and woman - who have put a saving faith in

Christ, to carry out His mandate: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that

I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. - Matthew 28:19-20

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Notice

PEPPERDINE

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 12, 2018

Protocol Investigator Name: Michael Harris

Protocol #: 18-01-701

Project Title: Exploring best leadership practices and strategies employed by African American clergywomen to overcome challenges in their leadership roles.

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Michael Harris:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

Informed Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

> **INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

EXPLORING BEST LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN CLERGY LEADERSHIP

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Michael J. Harris and Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. at Pepperdine University, because you are African American woman in clergy leadership. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for you records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to identify challenges African American women face in their clergy leadership roles and clarify best leadership practices and strategies for overcoming those challenges. Furthermore, this study highlights how African American women in clergy leadership measure their success; and the recommendations and lessons African American clergywomen can offer to others in similar leadership positions.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Review the interview questions that are provided by the principal researcher.
2. Review Pepperdine University's informed consent form.
3. Verbally respond in a face-to-face interview to 8 qualitative interview questions.
4. Review and approve your responses to the interview questions after your responses have been transcribed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include nothing more that is involved with an hour-long face-to-face conversation. Such risks include:

1. Potential breach of confidentiality.
2. Lack of interest of boredom
3. Fatigue from sitting for a long period.

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) Informed Consent

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include:

One of the goals of this is to bridge the gap in the literature on the lived experiences of African American women in clergy leadership. Accordingly, the study will potentially benefit other researchers who are studying the lived experiences of African American women in clergy leadership. The following societal benefits may be derived from the study:
1. Study will add to a limited body of work available on the lived experiences of a group that has been traditionally excluded in church leadership studies.
2. Contribute to existing literature that highlights challenges associated with women breaking the glass ceiling and overcoming barriers to success in male-dominant, patriarchal institutions.
3. Inform and inspire emerging leaders from all backgrounds in both spiritual and secular industries.
4. Impact the social, political, and spiritual direction of African American clergywomen in their immediate churches and surrounding communities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records collected for this study will be confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be transcribed and coded by the principal investigator During the semi-structured open-ended interview, the researcher will use an audio recorder. This will be one of the features stipulated in the informed consent as to ensure participants are aware of, and comfortable with, being recorded. In addition to audio recording devices, the researcher will also take notes. It is for this reason that the researcher has chosen to use an alias in lieu of participant' names. The protocol used to construct the alias will be composed of an alphabetic and four-digit numeric combination. The interviewee will be assigned an alphabetic (A-Z) code along with a four-digit numeric code which will represent the month and day of the interview. The letter "A" will be assigned to the first interviewee, and "O" would be assigned to the fifteenth interviewee. As an example, the first participant would be assigned an alias that includes the "A" and (insert date). The key with the sequence of alphabetic and numeric codes, along with other information that might identify the participant, will be maintained and secured by the researcher to ensure confidentiality.

Moreover, all participant disclosures made in the study will remain confidential. The final report will not link participant responses to their respective organizations. Audio recording from interviews will be deleted immediately upon completion of the study. Pepperdine University IRB mandates that confidential documents be destroyed no sooner than three years after the research project is completed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items which you feel comfortable.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Michael J. Harris at ███████████████████████, Dr. Farzin Madjidi at ██████████████████████ if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045 ████████████ or ████████████████

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) Informed Consent

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

AUDIO/VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHS *(If this is not applicable to your study and/or if participants do not have a choice of being audio/video-recorded or photographed, delete this section.)*

> □ *I agree to be audio/video-recorded /photographed (remove the media not being used)*

> □ *I do not want to be audio/video-recorded /photographed (remove the media not being used)*

_____
Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of his/her questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

_____
Name of Person Obtaining Consent

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) Informed Consent

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Dear <Potential Participant Name>

My name is Michael Harris, and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining challenges and best leadership practices of African American clergywomen and you are invited to participate in the study. If you agree, you are invited to participate in a private face-to-face interview that will be conducted at a location of your preference during <specified dates>.

The interview is anticipated to take no more than one hour to complete. With your permission, I would also like to audio-record our conversation in order to review it as necessary to complete my research. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study. To protect confidentiality, I will not publish the interview schedule, and will use numbers instead of names on all securely stored notes and audio files associated with your interview.

Are you interested in participating in this study? If so, I will follow up immediately with an email to provide detailed information about the nature of the study and include a copy of interview questions. If at any time, you decide you do not wish to participate in the study, you only need to let me know. May I continue utilizing this email address or do you have another email address you are more comfortable with me sending this information to?

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael J. Harris

Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Status: Doctoral Student

APPENDIX D

Peer Reviewer Form

Dear reviewer:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The table below is designed to ensure that may research questions for the study are properly addressed with corresponding interview questions

In the table below, please review each research question and the corresponding interview questions. For each interview question, consider how well the interview question addresses the research question. If the interview question is directly relevant to the research question, please mark "Keep as stated." If the interview question is irrelevant to the research question, please mark "Delete it." Finally, if the interview question can be modified to best fit with the research question, please suggest your modifications in the space provided. You may also recommend additional interview questions you deem necessary.

Once you have completed your analysis, please return the completed form to me via email to Michael.harris@pepperdine.edu. Thank you again for your participation.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1: What are the challenges and common pitfalls for African American women in clergy leadership?	IQ1: What are some of the major challenges faced in your leadership role? a. The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated** b. The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it** c. The question should be **modified as suggested**: _____ _____ I recommend adding the following interview questions: _____ _____ _____ IQ2: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give examples?

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>a.   The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
b.   The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
c.   The question should be **modified as suggested**:
_____
_____

I recommend adding the following interview questions:
_____
_____
_____

IQ3: Do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American woman?

a.   The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
b.   The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
c.   The question should be **modified as suggested**:
_____
_____

I recommend adding the following interview questions:
_____
_____
_____</td></tr>
<tr><td>RQ2: What are the best leadership strategies and practices used by African American women in clergy leadership to overcome challenges and common pitfalls?</td><td>IQ4: What strategies and practices help you overcome challenges faced in your leadership role?

a.   The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
b.   The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
c.   The question should be **modified as suggested**:</td></tr>
</table>

	_____ _____ I recommend adding the following interview questions: _____ _____ _____

RQ3: How do African American women in clergy leadership roles measure success?	IQ5: What does success look like in your leadership role?
	
	    a. The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
	    b. The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
	    c. The question should be **modified as suggested**:
	
	_____
	_____
	
	I recommend adding the following interview questions:
	
	_____
	_____
	_____
	
	IQ6: How do you track and measure success?
	
	    a. The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
	    b. The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
	    c. The question should be **modified as suggested**:
	
	_____
	_____
	
	I recommend adding the following interview questions:
	
	_____
	_____
	_____

| RQ4: What recommendations do African American women in clergy leadership roles? | IQ7: If you were starting over (as a clergy leader), is there anything that you would do differently?

     a.   The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
     b.   The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
     c.   The question should be **modified as suggested**:
 _____
 _____

 I recommend adding the following interview questions:
 _____
 _____
 _____

 IQ8: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American clergywomen in your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?

     a.   The question is directly relevant to Research question **- Keep as stated**
     b.   The question is irrelevant to research question – **Delete it**
     c.   The question should be **modified as suggested**:
 _____
 _____

 I recommend adding the following interview questions:
 _____
 _____ |

APPENDIX E

Interview questions

IQ1: What are some of the major challenges faced in your leadership role?

    Follow-up:

- What connection, if any, does being an African American play in any of these

  challenges

- What connection, if any, does being an woman play in any of these challenges?

IQ2: Do you experience push-back or resistance to your leadership style? If yes, can you give

examples?

IQ3: Do you believe that resistance or push-back is related to your being an African American

woman?

IQ4: What strategies and practices help you overcome challenges faced in your leadership role?

IQ5: What does success look like in your leadership role?

IQ6: How do you track and measure success?

IQ7: If you were starting over (as a clergy leader), is there anything that you would do

differently?

IQ8: What advice do you commonly offer to African American women who aspire to one day be

in your role? And what advice do you commonly share with African American clergywomen in

your peer group (with positions similar to yours)?