Leader-Leader Exchange in Shared Leadership Teams: An Investigation of Collaborative Harmony Among Co-Leaders in Christian Ministry.

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty

of the College of Business and Leadership

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Leadership

Piedmont International University

February 24, 2017

This Dissertation was written by:

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Under the guidance of a Faculty Committee 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 PHILOSOPHY

February 24, 2017

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Abstract

Shared leadership is growing in popularity in many different fields but it remains understudied in Christian ministries. Thirteen leaders from some of the most respected ministries that employ this model were interviewed concerning the impact of team collaborative harmony on shared leadership in Christian ministry. Dr. Larry Osborne, a respected pastor and advocate of this model, helped design the interview questions that were used. Dr. Joseph Hellerman and Alexander Strauch, both renowned in the field of Christian shared leadership, shared insight on the findings.

This research demonstrated that experiencing the benefits of shared leadership while circumventing its dangers requires team collaborative harmony. Ten benefits have been associated with shared leadership in the academic literature. These include exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Many of these benefits were found in the ministries that were researched. This investigation also uncovered five potential risks. These included the difficulty of the model, a potential lack of follow-through, a possible lack of efficiency, a general lack of acceptance of the model, and the danger of immature or usurping team members.

Team collaborative harmony, along with the three domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, comprise the Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX) framework described in this paper. Aptitude in these domains was associated with healthy relationships and successful shared leadership in the ministries investigated. Effective shared leadership in the ministries researched here was positively related to the collaborative harmony on their teams.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Shared leadership is a style of organizational leadership that is growing in popularity across a large spectrum of organizations. The field of research on shared leadership is moving from infancy to adolescence and this relational approach to leadership, which is distinct from hierarchical leadership, has proven to be valuable (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016). Recent research on shared leadership has noted many benefits (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2014). This model is also biblically evident and practically relevant for churches and ministries (Hellerman, 2013). This project involved an investigation of various Christian churches and ministries that employ shared leadership models. This study focused on the collaborative harmony, evidenced by leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, that is present among leaders in these teams seeking to elucidate whether there is a relationship between the quality of interactions between leaders (Leader-Leader Exchange) and the effective exercise of shared leadership.

Background

Today's world is full of unprecedented opportunities and unique obstacles. Globalization has created numerous opportunities (Alexander & Warwick, 2007). Many factors have contributed to a flattened organizational landscape full of opportunity (Moran, Abramson, & Moran, 2014). These prospects are available for the visionary (Higham, 2016). In addition to globalization, the current rates of technological innovation are unparalleled in human history creating numerous opportunities for teams that are equipped to succeed in this environment (Karlgaard & Malone, 2015). Of course, these benefits are supplemented with prevalent transportation, communication, media, and other opportunities. All things considered, Christian ministers have a greater potential for influence than ever before and this underscores a need for effective leadership.

Unfortunately, ministers in the United States seem to be falling short of capitalizing on the potential previously noted. Recent polling has indicated some disheartening trends. A recent Pew Research poll found that during President Obama's eight years in office, the number of Americans claiming no religion at all rose from 16% to nearly 25% (Dimock, 2017). Generally, confidence in religion is at an all-time low (Grossman, 2015). Somewhat expectedly, this skepticism includes a lack of confidence in organized religion as well (White, 2012). Religious belief among incoming college freshmen is also at an all-time low (Eberhard, 2015). These current findings seem to validate a trend that has spanned the past decade. Twelve years ago, Hadaway and Marler (2005) found that less than a quarter of Americans attended church on any given weekend, a number that was far below the assumed attendance of that time. Most Americans do continue to believe in God but that number seems to be shrinking (Lipka, 2015). In fact, the number of Christians in this country has fallen 7% over the last eight years (Dimock, 2017). These polls highlight a decline in the health of the American church, a trend that stresses the need for effective Christian leadership.

Howard Hendricks articulately described the need for effectual leadership in this modern environment stating, "The greatest crisis in the world today is a crisis of leadership" (as cited in Malphurs, 2003, p. 18). Considering the current prevalence of opportunities and obstacles, innovative Christian leadership is needed. Shared leadership provides a possible solution to this growing leadership need.

Shared leadership is "a relatively novel yet increasingly popular approach to team leadership" (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013, p. 122). Shared leadership has been associated with many benefits. Shared leadership can produce exceptional outcomes like improved performance (Daspit, Ramachandran, & D'Souza, 2014) and team success (Shipper, Manz, Nobles, & Manz,

2014). It can also yield enhanced decision-making (Brodbeck, Kerschreiter, Mojisch, & Schulz-Hardt, 2007; Petrovia & Hristov, 2016; Supovitz & Tognatta, 2013). Similarly, it can help teams increase problem-solving capacity through information and knowledge sharing (Clarke, 2012; Wang, Waldman, & Zhen, 2014). Shared leadership leads to creativity and innovation (Hoch, 2013; Mohammed & Thomas, 2014; Pearce, 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003). It also improves team-member fit, by increasing team-member satisfaction (Hansen & Høst, 2012; Steinert, Goebel, & Rieger, 2006), involvement (Bamford-Wade & Moss, 2010), commitment (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2014; Lee-Davies, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse, 2007), and retention (Kleinman, 2004). Conversely, top-down leadership can prevent "team members from unfolding their true potential" (Hoegl & Muethel, 2016, p. 7).

Shared leadership also promotes team synergy (Somboonpakorn & Kantabutra, 2014). All of this leads to greater organizational vitality, enabling organizations to capitalize on latent talents (Lee-Davies et al., 2007; Miles & Watkins, 2007). Shared leadership can foster healthy organizational cultures capable of thriving in today's dynamic environment (Laloux, 2014; Robertson, 2015). It has also been associated with team member individual health (Wood & Fields, 2007). Finally, shared leadership has been correlated with sustained organizational growth (Pearce, Manz, & Akanno, 2013).

Shared leadership has been associated with exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Many of these benefits have been described across a large spectrum of organizations. Each of these benefits will be further described in the literature review.

Shared leadership is both effective (Pearce et al., 2013) and biblical (Getz, 2003; Grudem, 1994; Hellerman, 2013; Knight, 1999; MacArthur, 2004; Newton & Schmucker, 2014; Piper, 2000; Strauch, 2003; Viola & Barna, 2008; Wallace, 2004). Shared leadership structures are growing in popularity in the contemporary workplace, as the Zappos shoe company recently demonstrated (Denning, 2015), while traditional, hierarchical leadership structures, like those observed in many churches and ministries today, are being rejected (Pearce, 2007; Trevor & Kilduff, 2012). A few churches and ministries are using shared leadership models. Although less researched than it is in other types of organizations, shared leadership has been associated with positive outcomes in Christian churches and ministries as well (Brown, 2014; Veliquette, 2013; Wood & Fields, 2007).

Shared leadership is relational by nature (Wood & Dibben, 2015). Indeed, "Shared leadership is a relational phenomenon whereby leadership and influence are distributed and reciprocated" (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016, p. 341). The biblical shared leadership model is also "highly relational" (Hellerman, 2013, p. 18). Leader member exchange (LMX) theory has demonstrated that leadership effectiveness is dependent on the qualities of relationships between a leader and individual followers (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011; Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2013; Sparrowe, Soetjipto, & Kraimer, 2006). Team member exchange (TMX), involving the quality of relationships between team members, is also important (Willems, 2016). Both LMX and TMX are social exchange relationships that have value in the workplace (Chun, Cho, & Sosik, 2016). Leader-member exchange, team-member exchange, and social exchange relationships are important to effective leadership and shared leadership is intrinsically relational.

Because of this, this investigation focused on the Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX) relationships among leaders within shared leadership structures in various church and ministry

teams. Seers, Keller, and Wilkerson described the history of research on social exchange relationships in organizations and theorized that generalized exchange fosters group integration in a way that sets the foundation for effective shared leadership (as cited in Pearce & Conger, 2003). Leadership occurs "in and through relationships and networks of influence," and shared leadership considers these "social interactions as a group phenomenon" (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 23). Since social exchange relationships are fundamental to leadership in general and shared leadership in specific, leader-leader relationships on shared leadership teams in churches and ministries would seem to be important. With this in mind, it was hypothesized that effective shared leadership would likely be dependent on positive LLX attributes and strong relationships between leaders on shared leadership teams.

Problem Statement

There is minimal academic research concerning leader-leader interaction, what is referred to here as collaborative harmony, and its effects on shared leadership teams. Additionally, there are only a handful of academic investigations of shared leadership in Christian ministries. An investigation of LLX relationships on shared leadership teams in ministry will undoubtedly shed light in both of these two important areas. This research will be important to the field of shared leadership research, as it will elucidate the impact of collaborative harmony on shared leadership effectiveness. This will be described as Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX). Evaluating LLX quality and characteristics in church and ministry teams will provide insight into the relational dynamics of shared leadership teams and the phenomenon of shared leadership in Christian ministry.

Shared leadership has been shown to be effective in many different organizational contexts but there is minimal research on shared leadership in Christian churches and on the effectiveness of church leadership teams using shared leadership models (Veliquette, 2013).

Brown (2014) demonstrated the value of shared leadership in the church he surveyed. After surveying his church's leadership team using the Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS), he confirmed that the shared approach to leadership was "viable and measurable in both secular and church organizations" (Brown, 2014, p. 112). Similarly, Veliquette (2013) highlighted a gap in the literature on this topic and illustrated the value of shared leadership in protestant house churches (p. 243).

Research on LLX relationships in church and ministry teams has not been found. Investigating LLX features of Christian shared ministry teams will contribute new knowledge to the field of shared leadership as a whole and it will help fill the gap in the literature concerning the phenomenon in Christian churches and ministries. This research will benefit those investigating Christian leadership and it will prove valuable to anyone interested in shared leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate LLX attributes present in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries. Since this is a novel field of inquiry, a qualitative research method was utilized. Thirteen leaders in seven ministries and churches using shared leadership models were interviewed. The design facilitated an investigation of the attributes common in Christian ministry teams using shared leadership structures. This descriptive approach sought to ascertain which aspects of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features lend themselves to effective shared leadership. This research has been conducted with a focus on mainstream, evangelical, Christian churches and ministries in the United States. The leaders who were interviewed included prominent seminary professors, authors, and leaders who lead in well-known and respected churches along with less well-known leaders whose ministries

are members of mainstream denominations. Churches of varying sizes and denominational affiliations were considered. This qualitative approach has provided a baseline of information concerning LLX attributes in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries, paving the way for future investigation of the topic. The purpose of this study is thus to explore LLX features in shared leadership teams with a qualitative method that provides baseline information.

Significance of Research

According to Park and Kwon (2013), "Shared leadership has gained considerable popularity over the past few years" (p. 28). The academic research on this phenomenon and its related benefits will be included in the literature. Unfortunately, there is less research concerning shared leadership in churches and ministries (Veliquette, 2013), and there is no research concerning LLX features in these settings. This investigation of different aspects of shared leadership that are common across churches and ministries has yielded information that is relevant concerning this topic. This will be considered in chapters four and five. This research will benefit churches, ministries, pastors, and Christian leaders by helping them successfully utilize shared leadership ministry structures. This could help them lead more effectively in the context of a changing and unpredictable world that is full of opportunities.

Assumptions

A few significant assumptions should be enumerated from the start. First, the utility of shared leadership approaches in Christian churches and ministries is accepted based on the wealth of academic research in this field and a few surveys of churches and ministries. Research by Veliquette (2013), Brown (2014), and Wood and Fields (2007) comprises the majority of academic research in this particular field. This project will add to their data. Second, several

surveys cited earlier indicated that the church is currently facing significant obstacles; it is assumed that churches and ministries could benefit from different leadership approaches, including shared leadership models. Third, it is assumed that churches and ministries will be open to considering the findings this investigation uncovers. Each of these assumptions will be considered but not specifically researched. Summarizing, it is assumed that this model of leadership will be practical for, valuable to, and welcomed by Christian ministries hoping to be more effective in today's dynamic environment.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative design that involved interviewing members and leaders of churches and ministries that operate with shared leadership structures has been utilized in this research. This qualitative approach investigated the LLX attributes present in shared leadership ministry teams, deriving relevant data and applicable information concerning shared leadership in churches and ministries in the United States.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the foundation for this study.

First, what do these ministries' shared leadership structures look like and are there common elements to those structures, which could be standardized and prescribed for other churches and ministries?

Second, concerning team-member maturity, which leadership approaches do leaders on Christian shared leadership ministry teams exhibit? Are transformational leadership, servant leadership, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership or other leadership approaches evident among team members?

Third, what team attributes are present on shared leadership teams? Are guiding documents, team size, shared history, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability present? Are there other attributes?

Fourth, how have relational features among leaders impacted shared leadership on these teams? Are team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution evident among team members? Are there other aspects?

Fifth, what outcomes have these ministries observed as a consequence of shared leadership? Are the ten benefits observed in the literature observed in Christian ministries using this model as well? Are there any negative consequences? What kinds of relational consequences are there?

Sixth, is effective shared leadership in these ministries related to collaborative harmony and its subdomains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features?

These six questions were designed to guide the investigation of shared leadership and related LLX attributes present in Christian churches and ministries. They have also served as the basis for the research and interviewing that was conducted with members of the shared leadership teams that were researched for this project

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Plural eldership, an obvious form of shared leadership, is an approach to leadership that is evident in the New Testament (Getz, 2003; Grudem, 1994; Hellerman, 2013; Knight, 1999; MacArthur, 2004; Newton & Schmucker, 2014; Piper, 2000; Strauch, 2003; Viola & Barna, 2008; Wallace, 2004). An evaluation of this model of leadership, along with a consideration of other approaches in Scripture, will be considered in the literature review. Unfortunately, “For a variety of reasons, historical and cultural, the model of one-man leadership in the local church is

now a given in the minds of most Christians" (Hellerman, 2013, p. 239). Additionally, "most Christian leaders," unaware of the biblical precedent for shared leadership, "continue to assume that one-man leadership is the biblical norm" (Hellerman, 2013, p. 240). This is precisely the style of leadership Jesus warned against, stating in Matthew 20:25-28 (New International Version):

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Unfortunately, authoritarian leadership has been common for millennia of human experience (O'Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, 2002) and continues to exist in Christ's church (Hellerman, 2013).

Shared leadership is radically different from this traditional form of leadership that is becoming outdated in today's leadership environment (Trevor & Kilduff, 2012). Hoch (2014) noted, "Today, organizations are faced with uncertainty and fast changing environments, and work tasks are becoming increasingly complex. Increasingly, organizations have adopted team-based work structures to respond to these challenges" (p. 541). A recent *Strategic Direction* article highlights this stating:

> The belief that organizations work best if "the boss" simply gives orders and the hired help blindly obeys has long been discredited as the best way to run a business - not that some bosses wouldn't love to have that sort of working arrangement today. Unfortunately for them, faced with fast-changing environments and increasingly complex tasks,

> businesses have discovered the value of adopting team based work structures in which the shared knowledge and abilities of individual team members have the opportunity to influence each other dynamically. ("Team tactics in shared leadership," 2014, p. 32)

The top-down, authoritarian, command and control approach of the past is becoming unviable in today's dynamic environment.

While shared leadership enables organizations to maximize the potential on their teams, traditional hierarchical approaches can stifle it. Hoegl and Muethel (2016) studied virtual teams and determined:

> Team leaders tend to underestimate the team members' capacity to lead themselves. As a consequence, these leaders monopolize decision-making authority and provide insufficient levels of autonomy for team members to tackle their tasks. Preventing the team members from unfolding their true potential, these leaders unconsciously jeopardize virtual team performance. Paradoxically, it is thus team leaders themselves hindering leadership effectiveness in virtual teams. (p. 7)

This is a striking example of how authoritarian, top-down leadership can hinder modern organizations. Sharing leadership can unleash the true potential of teams.

Shared leadership structures often evolve according to the unique strengths of the groups they comprise (DeRue, Nahrgang, & Ashford, 2015). Other benefits were previously noted and these include exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Each will be discussed in further detail in the literature review.

The literature review will include an evaluation of the New Testament support for shared leadership, demonstrating that shared leadership is both described and prescribed in the Bible. The literature review will also cite numerous studies that continue to highlight the value of shared leadership. A few studies that have corroborated this in Christian churches and ministries will also be cited. Based on this foundation, LLX features, which seem necessary for cultivating effective shared leadership teams, will be considered.

The conceptual framework of this study, which will guide the research, is grounded on the empirically demonstrated value of shared leadership and the New Testament precedent for this form of leadership. Additionally, this research will incorporate elements of social exchange, leader-member exchange, and team-member exchange theories, extrapolating a Leader-Leader Exchange concept relevant to shared leadership teams. This study will focus on the collaborative harmony between leaders on shared leadership ministry teams, hoping to elucidate which relational attributes most lend themselves to the effective cultivation and administration of shared leadership in churches and ministries.

Limitations and Scope of the Research

This research will include a few notable limitations. Obviously, since the shared leadership model is not widespread in Christian churches and ministries (Hellerman, 2013), the number of research subjects will be limited. Similarly, since minimal research has been done on shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries (Veliquette, 2013), the literature review will entail only minimal information specifically addressing this issue. Literature concerning shared leadership in other areas will have to provide the foundation for this research. The qualitative approach might also be a limitation, as it will rely on the subjective opinions of ministries and churches already committed to shared leadership; these ministries will have an

obvious bias, which may affect their views and interpretations. Finally, the Leader-Leader Exchange concept is a novel concept, which finds its intellectual roots in other social exchange theories. As with any new concept, its own infancy will be an initial limitation.

Definition of Terms

Shared Leadership has been defined in various ways. Ensley, Hmieleski, and Pearce (2006) define shared leadership as distributed leadership within a team (p. 217). Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, and Jung (2002), define it as the collective influence of team members on each other (p. 68). Haward, Amir, Borrill, Dawson, Scully, West, and Sainsbury (2003) define it as a plurality of leaders operating in a democratic way (p. 21). Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) define it as "a team property whereby leadership is distributed among team members rather than focused on a single designated leader" (p. 1217). Denis, Lamothe, and Langley (2001) define it as a collective of unique leadership abilities (p. 810). Pearce and Sims (2002) stated that it is distributed within a team and lateral among coworkers (pp. 172-176). Craig Pearce (2004) summarizes, defining it in the following way:

> Shared leadership occurs when all members of a team are fully engaged in the leadership of the team and are not hesitant to influence and guide their fellow team members in an effort to maximize the potential of the team as a whole. Simply put, shared leadership entails a simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process within a team that is characterized by "serial emergence" of official as well as unofficial leaders. In this sense, shared leadership can be considered a manifestation of fully developed empowerment in teams. (p. 48)

Each of these definitions clarifies what is meant by shared leadership. It should also be noted that shared leadership occurs in matters of degree (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2014). The term will be

used in a broad sense in this paper, referring to the general practice of sharing leadership rather than a precise definition of one type of organizational structure.

Organizational structure is defined as an organization's established task allocation, coordination, and supervision practices (Pugh, 2007, p. 1). The definition of organizational structure focuses "on three interrelated aspects: (1) the design of units, divisions, departments, teams, and networks that group individuals; (2) the reporting relationship among organizational entities; and (3) the coordination mechanisms that integrate units' activities and resources" (Lee, Kozlenkova, & Palmatier, 2015). Aligning an organization's structure and strategy is critical for success (Chandler, 1962; Lee et al., 2015).

Elders are defined as the spiritual leaders of the church. Alexander Strauch (2003) clarifies, "In biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church" (p. 16). The term pastor has been frequently used in modern church leadership. Biblically, pastors are identical to elders and the church leadership position of pastor is synonymous with that of elder" (Grudem, 1994; Wallace, 2004).

Biblical Eldership typically refers to a plurality of pastor leaders that govern the church. Joseph Hellerman (2013) described biblical leadership, what he calls "Jesus-like leadership," stating that it "begins with a plurality of pastor-elders who relate to one another first as family members in Christ, and who function only secondarily – and only within the primary relational context – as vision-casting, decision-making leaders for the broader church" (p. 292).

Summary

As stated previously, the purpose of this study is to examine LLX attributes on shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries. The church is faced with new challenges in a quickly changing world. Many organizations have begun noticing the value of shared

leadership and this is the type of leadership described and prescribed in the New Testament. Unfortunately, this type of leadership seems to be rare in the church today and there is very little research concerning shared leadership in contemporary evangelical, American, Christian churches and ministries.

The current research surveyed a broad cross section of churches and ministries with the hope of ascertaining the LLX features most conducive to effective shared leadership. This qualitative and descriptive investigation will clarify many aspects of shared leadership and the associated benefits some churches are recognizing today. This qualitative approach will rely on interviews with church and ministry leaders. The results will generate new information about shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries.

The next chapter will be a review of relevant academic literature concerning shared leadership. This will provide a starting point for the investigation as it will describe shared leadership in many different types of organizations. It will also connect social exchange theories with shared leadership, setting the foundation for the consideration of LLX features on shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries. The literature review will guide the investigation concerning these variables in Christian organizations. The third chapter will turn to the research itself and will describe the actual methodology and research plan. The fourth chapter will evaluate the data collected through the interviews of leaders and members of Christian organizations that use shared leadership structures. The concluding chapter will summarize the research, discussing the findings and their implications, the relevance and significance of the study, and areas of potential future research.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

As stated previously, the purpose of this study is to investigate collaborative harmony (or LLX features) in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries. A qualitative method, which used a semi-structured interview approach, was used to investigate shared leadership in various evangelical, Christian churches and ministries in the United States. These churches and ministries were selected in a way that was representative of varying church sizes and denominations. Some of these churches have been researched in other studies. Two of them are among the largest utilizing this model of leadership. The smallest church had an attendance of two hundred. Some of these churches and ministries included denominational affiliations with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Evangelical Free Church of America, and the Southern Baptist Convention while others were non-denominational.

This literature review will begin with a review of relevant biblical passages concerning shared leadership. That will include the conclusions of respected New Testament scholars. The biblical data will then be supplemented with an investigation of shared leadership in the academic literature. This dual approach will provide a starting point for the actual investigation of shared leadership in churches and ministries. The review of the academic literature will elaborate on the phenomenon of shared leadership, including its current status across numerous fields. Various social exchange and team-member exchange aspects related to effective leadership will be considered in this paper. The literature review will conclude with a review of the investigation's relationship to the current project, collaborative harmony and LLX features in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries.

The survey of the academic literature has been conducted using several online databases including EBSCOhost, American Doctoral Dissertations, the ATLA Religion Database, Business Source Premier, Education Source, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and DeepDyve. Keywords and phrases searched have included shared leadership, team leadership, distributed leadership, decentralized leadership, collaborative leadership, shared planning, team planning, distributed planning, decentralized planning, collaborative planning, shared decision-making, team decision-making, distributed decision-making, decentralized decision-making, collaborative decision-making, holacracy, heterarchy, hierarchy, organizational information flow, organizational structure, and others.

Shared leadership is a worthwhile approach to leadership in today's complex work environment (Grille, Schulte, & Kauffeld, 2015; Wang et al., 2014). Shared leadership is a leadership model that is appropriate for the information age (Trevor & Kilduff, 2012). Ulhøi and Müller (2014) noted:

> It can be concluded that the total volume, breadth and scope of publications on shared leadership have increased significantly, especially over the last ten to fifteen years, which suggests that shared leadership is a dynamic and expanding field. Similarly, the growing number of articles on collective and shared leadership in the more prestigious, older and more broadly focused management journals suggests that researchers have not only achieved a high scientific standard, but also that it is a healthy and mature subfield that is becoming widely acknowledged in the broader community of management scholars. (p. 66)

Although there is a wealth of research on shared leadership in many types of organizations, only minimal research has considered shared leadership in the context of Christian churches and

ministries (Veliquette, 2013). Additionally, although there is some reference to relationships among leaders on shared leadership teams, the effectiveness of collaborative harmony on successful shared leadership is a novel concept. Both of these issues will be considered in this paper, while the concept will be referred to broadly as Leader-Leader Exchange.

The literature being reviewed here will include an analysis of studies dealing with both fields of inquiry. A definite overlap exists between the two and there is a definite need for further research concerning shared leadership in the context of Christian churches and ministries. This will entail an analysis of the New Testament basis for shared leadership and a review of shared leadership and the fields it has focused on in modern research. The review will conclude connecting that research with the current study, paving the way for the rest of the research concerning LLX features of effective shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries.

As with any theory, one can find both support and disdain for shared leadership. Corrigan (2013) noted, "Proponents cheer it, and peer reviewed empirical studies talk about its appeal and correlate it with the presence of highly desirable characteristics," yet lamented, "Skeptics reject distributed leadership as leadership's 'flavour of the month'" (p. 66). There is adequate journal support for the benefits of this approach. From a Christian standpoint, that is secondary to the biblical basis for the model. For that reason, the scriptural foundation for shared leadership will be considered first. That will be followed by some of the academic support for the model.

The Biblical Basis for Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is an approach to leadership that is evident in the New Testament. Co-laboring in ministry, plurality in leadership, and shared leadership are biblical concepts (Eguizabal & Lawson, 2009). However, some theologians have contested the biblical support for

shared leadership and some controversy exists concerning the types of leadership structures prescribed in Scripture. Others consider the topic irrelevant.

George Eldon Ladd notes, “It appears likely that there was no normative pattern of church government in the apostolic age, and that the organizational structure of the church is no essential element in the theology of the church” (as cited in Duesing, White, & Yarnell, 2014, p. 154). Of course, many would disagree with this view. Recognizing the authority of Scripture and the importance of leadership, Christian students of leadership are wise to investigate the biblical data concerning the phenomenon of leadership.

There is debate among Christians concerning church governance. Episcopalianism embraces a hierarchy of individuals who maintain authority over churches and regions (Cowan, Gundry, Toon, Taylor, Patterson, & Waldron, 2004). Presbyterianism is a model of governance by which churches and regions are governed by representatives selected by the churches they oversee (Cowan et al., 2004). Congregationalism is similar except that each church is autonomous and governed by the elder or elders the church selects (Cowan et al., 2004). Plural elder congregationalism is a type of congregational church government, which insists “each local church should be led, under normal circumstances, by a plurality of elders” (Cowan et al., 2004, p. 188). This is different from the single-pastor view embraced by more traditional Congregationalist churches.

The case for single-eldership relies on various lines of evidence. Since early churches met in homes, single-elder proponents assume a single elder was more likely than a plurality of elders (Goncharenko, 2014). Another line of evidence assumes that there is a biblical precedent of a plurality of leaders led by one primary leader; the example of Moses is often given (Goncharenko, 2014). Gilbert (2011) references Joshua, the judges, the kings, and the high

priests of Israel in addition to Moses in support of this position (p. 31). Finally, some scholars believe that the angels of the churches in Revelation referred to individual pastors in those churches (Goncharenko, 2014). Gilbert (2011) acknowledges the weakness of this argument. It should be noted that each of these lines of evidence is anecdotal and oversimplifies the New Testament passages on biblical eldership. The house-church argument is based solely on assumption, the example of Moses ignores the New Testament model, and the argument concerning the angels of the churches in Asia assumes a fringe interpretation of those passages.

Gilbert offers two additional arguments. He contends that Paul wrote to Timothy individually not all the elders in Ephesus (Gilbert, 2011). He also insists that the New Testament church paid some of the elders while not paying others (Gilbert, 2011). Additionally, he offers practical reasons to consider a senior pastor model. Still, he cautions:

> All in all, I don't think there's a slam-dunk argument to be made here. I don't think the Bible *requires* churches to have a senior pastor, and I don't think it *forbids* them from doing so, either. There's enough warrant in the Bible to make it a biblically acceptable practice. (Gilbert, 2011, p. 34)

He emphasizes the conclusion many have arrived at: the single-elder model is biblically allowable but the biblical evidence for a dogmatic single-elder approach is lacking.

Still, the single-elder position warrants further consideration. Malcolm Yarnell summarizes the single-elder position writing:

> Typically, Southern Baptists employ one pastor in the local church, but in recent years there has been a trend toward multiple elders. The biblical and contextual arguments in favor of single eldership include the existence of multiple house churches in a city, the transitional state of the early church, single presidency in the period's synagogue, the

> assignment of one "angel" to each of the seven Asian churches (Rev. 1-3), and the common biblical paradigm of multiple leaders overseen by a single leader. (as cited in Blount, Wooddell, & Hawkins, 2007, p. 62-63)

Again, these arguments for single-eldership fail to convince.

Patterson, a proponent of single-elder congregationalism, makes a case based on three lines of evidence: the nature of salvation, the language of the New Testament, and leadership examples in the New Testament (Cowan et al., 2004). Concerning the nature of salvation, Patterson emphasizes the priesthood of all believers and the importance of prayerful unity and "spiritual consensus" in church government (Cowan et al., 2004, p. 142). He offers no argument for single-eldership here. Concerning the language of the New Testament, he correctly argues for only two offices of leadership in the church, elders (pastors) and deacons, and then contends that a congregation should be led by "Spirit-filled pastors and deacons" (Cowan et al., 2004, p. 144). Notice his plural reference to leadership in a single congregation. Finally, concerning Patterson's last line of evidence for single-elder congregationalism, the leadership examples in the New Testament, he offers no argument for single-eldership, only for congregational government (Cowan et al., 2004). Patterson does a thorough job of defending congregationalism but offers little support for single-eldership. He does not argue for a single-elder only approach but rather for the possibility of single-eldership if needed and for a time.

Patterson admits that the New Testament data are not contradictory to a plurality of elders, insisting that each New Testament church needed at least one pastor-elder and that this was "augmented as growth dictated" (Cowan et al., 2004, p. 134). He admits that it is not "unscriptural to have multiple elders in a local church" and that "such practice has clear precedent and mandate in the Scriptures" (Cowan et al., 2004, p. 134). He argues for the viability

of a single-elder led church but refrains from prescribing that or even asserting its value over plural-eldership models. He is clear, "there is nothing in the Bible to inhibit a congregation from appointing as many elders as needed. Furthermore, a case for a single elder or a case for mandatory multiple elders, in my estimation, cannot be established on the basis of Scripture" (Cowan et al., 2004, p. 150).

Another single-elder proponent, Daniel Akin agreed that his task of defending "a single elder (pastor) leading a local congregation probably did not have as much scriptural warrant as is popularly assumed" (Brand, Norman, Akin, Garrett, Reymond, White, & Zahl, 2004, p. 64). He continued, "The argument for a plurality of elders, pastors, overseers, leaders is easier to make based on the biblical evidence. For example, every time the word elder (presbuteros) appears in the context of church leaders, it is always in the plural" (Brand et al., 2004, p. 64). He only contends that there is theological flexibility for the possibility of a single elder, he is not committed to a single-eldership model (Brand et al., 2004).

Yarnell offers an important argument for single eldership that goes beyond those previously cited. His distinction between the corporate plural and the distributive plural must be considered. He argues:

> The biblical argument in favor of multiple elders relies upon the plural form of reference to elders in various cities in the New Testament. However, this argument assumes the corporate plural without due consideration for the distributive plural. Those advocating multiple elders often recall seventeenth-century reformed theology as mimicked by some nineteenth-century Southern Baptists. Although latitude with regard to the number of elders may be exercised, the division of "teaching elders" from "ruling elders" or the co-

> option of congregational government by a board of elders is without biblical support. (as cited in Blount et al., 2007, p. 62-63)

He continues:

> The corporate plural assumes multiple elders in one congregation in each city, while the distributive plural allows for the development of single elders in multiple congregations in each city. Expositional neglect of the distributive plural would have the absurd result of exhorting all the deacons in the church to marry the same woman" (as cited in Blount et al., 2007, p. 69).

His contention demands further consideration.

First of all, Yarnell's differentiation between the corporate plural and distributive plural seems to lack biblical precedent. Titus 1:5 does describe the importance of a plurality of elders in every town. This would accommodate Yarnell's corporate distributive view. However, Acts 14:23 describes a plurality of elders in every church, something that seems to invalidate Yarnell's position. Additionally, the elder qualifications demanded marital fidelity of each elder and other biblical scholars are wary of extrapolating these passages the way Yarnell does. 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 describe the marital standard for "an elder," they surely do not insist that every elder of the church be married to the same woman. Yarnell's arguments do not seem to offer clear evidence of single elder rule in each individual church.

Gerald Cowen takes the corporate plural argument further noting, "Regardless of the number of elders there were in each city or local church, one man of God always seems to have been the pastor" (Cowen, 2003, p. 16). He offers the example of James and his role in the Jerusalem church (Cowen, 2003). This is an important line of evidence to consider and may

prove to be the strongest argument in favor of single-eldership. This will be revisited shortly when Alexander Strauch's first among equals argument is considered.

Patterson, Akin, and Gilbert are wise in their restraint. They agree that the evidence for a single-elder only approach is weak and they hint at the biblical support for a plurality of eldership. Arguments for the latter position will now be considered.

Many would agree with Patterson, Akin, and Gilbert concerning the absence of evidence for a dogmatic single-eldership view. Numerous scholars proffer biblical evidence for a plurality of elders. The New Testament data support the plural eldership model, a model that was clearly utilized in the early church (Grudem, 1994). Grudem (1994) clarifies:

> Two significant conclusions may be drawn from this survey of the New Testament evidence. First, no passage suggests that any church, no matter how small, had only one elder. The consistent New Testament pattern is a plurality of elders "in every church" (Acts 14:23) and "in every town" (Titus 1:5). Second, we do not see a diversity of forms of government in the New Testament church, but a unified and consistent pattern in which every church had elders governing it and keeping watch over it (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3). (p. 913)

Plural eldership and shared leadership comprise the dominant leadership model in Scripture. Newton and Schmucker (2014) conclude, "the historical record clearly demonstrates the normative practices of the New Testament church – and plural eldership was at the heart of these practices" (p. 47). In spite of the controversy, plural eldership, an obvious form of shared leadership, is the prevailing view of biblical church polity.

George W. Knight (1999) affirms this stating, "Every church to which leadership is referred to in Asia Minor either under Paul and his associates or under Peter's ministry has a

plurality of leadership" (p. 177). Hellerman (2013) agrees, "None of Paul's congregations had a solitary (or 'senior') pastor figure. All were led by a plurality of overseers. And Paul modeled team leadership in his own life and ministry, as well… " (p. 193). Concerning the elders who shared the leadership of the local church, Viola and Barna (2008) noted, "These men all had equal standing. There was no hierarchy among them" (p. 110). Not until Ignatius was any elder elevated hierarchically above the others; this aberration was then propagated by Cyprian, the Roman Empire, and the Catholic Church (Viola & Barna, 2008).

This is not to say that there was no place for elevated honor or respect in the early church. The Apostle Paul wrote, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching" (New International Version of the Bible, 1Tim. 5:17). He also admonished Andronicus and Junia, saying that they were outstanding among their peers, the other apostles (Romans 16:7). This heightened respect for those leaders who had demonstrated exceptional service and who were recognized by their co-leaders as particularly influential is evidenced by the orders of their names in the New Testament.

Strauch (2003) refers to this as a "first among equals" view of leadership in the early church (p. 46). Peter was the "natural leader" among the apostles and his ambitious leadership motivated the rest of the group while the other apostles helped safeguard Peter from his own weaknesses (Strauch, 2003, p. 46). Here Cowen's argument concerning James must be revisited.

Previously, Cowen (2003) offered the example of James as evidence for a single elder with dominion over a plurality of elders. The same argument could be made for Peter; again, Strauch (2003) defines him as the "natural leader" among the apostles. The dual claim hints at a

plurality rather than a hierarchy. Strauch (2003) goes further though, demonstrating how these passages fail to substantiate a hierarchical view.

He elaborates, "Peter possessed no legal or official rank or title above the other eleven. They were not his subordinates. They were not his staff or team of assistants. He wasn't the apostles' 'senior pastor'" (Strauch, 2003, p. 47). Excellent leadership in the early church was respected and honored and outstanding leaders were given freedom to lead in the areas of their strengths. This is not, however, evidence of hierarchy in their ranks.

This absence of hierarchical or positional power is further evidenced by the collective way that leaders in the early church made decisions. These men were undoubtedly familiar with the biblical wisdom of having many advisors (Pr. 11:14, 24:6) and they implemented this in their collective decision-making. A group of apostles and elders shared the responsibility for decision-making (Acts 15:22, 16:4). Some examples of this include the appointment of Matthias (Acts 1:12-26), the choosing of Stephen (Acts 6:3-5), the reception of Paul (Acts 9:26-28), the sending of Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22), the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35), decisions concerning Gentile believers (Acts 21:25), the essence of the Gospel (Gal. 2:6), and the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas (Gal. 2:9). No individual held veto power over the rest and even the most respected among them, Peter, was open to rebuke and correction (Gal. 2:11-14). Collaborative decision-making was clearly practiced by the plurality of apostles and elders in the New Testament church.

Strauch (2003) summarized, "the New Testament provides conclusive evidence that the pastoral oversight of the apostolic churches was a team effort – not the sole responsibility of one person" (p. 35). Hellerman (2013) agrees; describing the churches Paul started, he wrote, "We find no evidence of one-person rule anywhere in the churches Paul established. A plurality of

elders provided oversight to each local congregation" (pp. 197-198). Plural eldership, a form of shared leadership, was the model that was both described and prescribed in the New Testament.

Famed pastor and teacher John MacArthur (2004) stated, "Every ministry described in the New Testament was a team effort" (p. 167). He then clarified, "…ministry as depicted in the New Testament was never a one man show" (MacArthur, 2004, p. 168). Concerning biblical plural eldership and shared leadership, he also wrote:

> The clear New Testament pattern for church government is a plurality of God-ordained men who lead the people of God together. From the beginning, oversight was shared by twelve apostles, and we see here that when they appointed subordinate leaders, those men also functioned as a team. (MacArthur, 2004, p. 167)

MacArthur agrees with the other scholars previously cited, affirming the biblical precedent for plural eldership.

Noted New Testament scholar Daniel Wallace (2004) insists that the New Testament evidence for shared leadership is so overwhelming that most scholars assume it. He elaborates:

> The case of multiple elders in the local church is solidly based on biblical, historical, and pragmatic reasons. By having several leaders, the church is more able to take on the personality of Christ rather than the idiosyncrasies of any one man. (Wallace, 2004)

Shared leadership is the leadership model that is both prescribed and described in the New Testament. That does not minimize the importance of leadership in the church nor does it imply the need for complete decentralization.

Scripture is very clear about selecting only mature leaders for church leadership and holding those leaders to specific criteria of leadership. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (New International Version) summarizes many of these qualifications, stating:

> Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Other New Testament passages reiterate these criteria. It is clear that leadership, in a New Testament sense, is to be shared among qualified group members but not distributed ad hoc across the organization (Hellerman, 2013).

At this point one might question the biblical support for the pastor's role. The office of pastor is only mentioned once in Scripture, in Ephesians 4:11 (Piper, 2000; Viola & Barna, 2008). This office is undoubtedly synonymous with that of the elder (Grudem, 1994; Piper, 2000; Viola & Barna, 2008). Thus, "what we usually call 'the pastor' of the church is properly one of several elders. Together they are charged with the teaching and oversight of the church" (Piper, 2000). In other words, the church should be led by a plurality of pastor/elders.

A survey of the elder passages in the New Testament will demonstrate this point. Acts 11:30 references plural elders in Judea. Acts 14:23 describes a plurality of elders in the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Acts, along with Acts 21:18, refer multiple times to a plurality of elders in Jerusalem. Acts 20:17 states that the same was true of the church in Ephesus. 1 Timothy 4:14 explains that Timothy was ordained by

a plurality of elders, while the fifth chapter of that same book refers again to a plurality of elders. In Titus 1:5, Paul commanded Titus to appoint a plurality of elders in every town in Crete. James 5:14 assumes a plurality of elders in the local church setting. Finally, 1 Peter 5:1 and 5, written to believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, assume a plurality of elders in the local churches. In addition to these passages, the only other New Testament references to "elders" describe elders of the Jews, who were political authorities in the Gospels in the beginning of Acts, and the elders surrounding God's throne in heaven, in Revelation. Of course, these passages do not reference elders in the local church. Each reference to elders in the local church assumes a plurality of elders in each church and in each town.

In its singular form, elder is found only five times in the New Testament. 1 Timothy 5:19 commands believers not to entertain unfounded accusations against an elder. Titus 1:6 describes the qualifications for an elder. In 1 Peter 5:1 (New International Version), the Apostle Peter referred to himself as a "fellow elder." The final two references involving a singular version of "elder" occur in 2 John 1:1 and 3 John 1:1, where the Apostle John refers to himself simply as "the elder." None of these references even hints at individual eldership or one-man leadership in the church.

This brief survey of the New Testament data corroborates the biblical plural eldership view. Each of the references concerning eldership in the church refers to a plurality of elders. None describes anything different. Not only is plural eldership described in the New Testament, it is also prescribed. One clear example of this is Titus 1:5 (New International Version), where the Apostle Paul commanded Titus to "appoint elders in every town." The New Testament evidence for plural eldership seems incontrovertible.

The shared leadership perspective is evident throughout Scripture. Scripture states that God's desire was always to lead His Body directly, not through a "king" (1 Sam. 8). Paul's epistles insisted that Christ is and desires to function as the head of His Body, the church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). Jesus directly opposed hierarchy and authoritarianism, advocating and modeling servant leadership (Matt. 20:25-28). Jesus even commanded believers not to call each other master (Matt. 23:10).

In addition to the New Testament references to plural eldership, it is also evident that there was a plurality of apostles (Matt. 10:2; Acts 2:42) and deacons (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8). The New Testament church emphasized the role of every believer in the ministry of the church and believers were expected to minister according to their strengths, gifts, and talents (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12). That included the area of leadership (Rom. 12:8).

As previously noted and as described by Getz (2003), Grudem (1994), Hellerman (2013), Knight (1999), MacArthur (2004), Newton and Schmucker, 2014, Piper (2000), Strauch (2003), Viola and Barna (2008), and Wallace (2004), plural eldership, a type of shared leadership, is the prevailing New Testament leadership model. Examples of this can be found in Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18, Philippians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, 1 Timothy 5:7, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 13:7, 17, James 5:14, and 1 Peter 5:1-2. In addition to these references to plural eldership, another famous example of shared leadership and collaborative decision-making is the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-35). Last but not least, this is also the leadership approach attributed to God in Scripture. The Bible teaches that God exists as a Triune God (Matt. 28:19), a doctrine that would imply that shared leadership is part of God's very nature. Unfortunately, there is a "disconnect between this biblical ideal and contemporary practice" (Hellerman, 2013, p. 259).

The modern concept of pastor as CEO is absent in Scripture. Shared leadership is the model that was demonstrated in the early church (Getz, 2003; Grudem, 1994; Hellerman, 2013; Knight, 1999; MacArthur, 2004; Newton & Schmucker, 2014; Piper, 2000; Strauch, 2003; Viola & Barna, 2008; Wallace, 2004). The contemporary norm of a single pastor in charge of the congregation is more of a corporate business model than a biblical one (Hellerman, 2013). He elaborates:

> Several aspects of the corporate model of ministry tend to work in conjunction with one another potentially to compromise the kind of leadership modeled by Jesus in Philippians 2:6-11. Perhaps most problematic is the widespread conviction that the church should be led by a single pastor-leader. (Hellerman, 2013, p. 235)

Ken Blanchard, both a Christian and a world-renowned leadership expert, argued this same point at a leadership conference; he eviscerated the CEO, business model view stating, "the popular model of pastor as CEO is brain dead … This philosophy will only hurt the church in the long run" (as cited in Webber, 2002, p. 149). Although he was not arguing for shared leadership, he was emphasizing the problems that often accompany its alternative.

Shared leadership is the model that has been advocated throughout Scripture and it seems to be the model that best enables the church to follow Christ's headship rather than an individual's. Shared leadership is a model that shifts the glory from human leaders to God Himself. Eguizabal & Lawson (2009) correctly stated that the:

> Scriptures clearly depict teamwork through the practice of loving each other and living in the unity of the Spirit to the building up of the body of Christ. Therefore, a ministry team approach structured upon biblical and theological foundations should help the church to

> work together harmoniously and corporately as intended by Jesus Christ, the founder and head of the Christian church. (p. 250)

There is ample biblical precedent for embracing plural eldership and shared leadership. Academic research also demonstrates the value of this approach.

The Current State of Shared Leadership

There has recently been a "paradigm shift from vertical, hierarchical leadership towards more horizontal, collective processes" (Friedrich, Griffith, & Mumford, 2016, p. 312). "Leadership research, traditionally focused on the behavior of an appointed/elected leader, is rapidly shifting towards a distributed, group process form of leadership known as 'shared leadership'" (Serban & Roberts, 2016, p. 181). Friedrich, Griffith, and Mumford (2016) noted, "The focus on non-hierarchical, collectivistic leadership has been steadily increasing" (p. 312). Studies on shared leadership have surveyed the phenomenon across a large spectrum of organizations. These varied contexts span "from the not-for-profit world to high growth entrepreneurial firms to well established global organizations" (Pearce et al., 2014, p. xxi). Kocolowski (2010) noted that the majority of shared leadership research has been focused in the areas of healthcare and education, while some studies have studied it in new ventures, road maintenance teams, equipment and engine manufacturing, technology, local government, consulting teams, sales teams, police departments, and banks (p. 23). It has been considered in non-profit organizations (Desruisseaux, 1987), in organizations relying on volunteers (Lockett & Boyd, 2012), in cross-cultural leadership teams (Rodríguez, 2005), and even in chaotic, battlefield situations (Ramthun & Matkin, 2014).

The shared leadership concept is not purely theoretical as this type of organizational structure is being adopted by organizations around the globe. A few of these include AES, an

energy company with more than 40,000 employees around the world, BSO/Origin, an IT consulting company with more than 10,000 employees in twenty countries, Buurtzorg, a home-visitation healthcare provider with more than 7,000 nurses in the Netherlands, FAVI, a metal manufacturing company with more than 500 employees in France, Morning Star, one of the largest tomato processing companies in the world based in the United States, Patagonia, a clothing company based in the United States, RHD, a human resources company with more than 4,000 employees in the United States, and others (Laloux, 2014). Zappos is an online shoe sales company that recently, with a tremendous amount of media attention, shifted to a shared leadership "holacracy" model (Denning, 2015). Although hundreds of companies are already using the holacracy model (Robertson, 2015, p. 10), Zappos, a company of more than 1,000 employees based in Las Vegas, Nevada, is considered the pioneer of the new model (Useem, 2015).

Shared leadership is dominant in English primary schools (Parker, 2015) and it is becoming commonplace in Norwegian schools, where "consensus-oriented, distributed leadership**"** is becoming the predominant role for principals (Abrahamsen & Aas, 2016, p. 68). These are just a few of the many organizations using shared leadership structures. Many others are employing shared leadership principles within previously established organizational structures.

Shared leadership approaches to organizational governance are not new and they continue to show incredible promise. Although shared leadership evolves differently in different organizations, certain outcomes often result when leadership is shared. Some of these will be considered after a discussion of different ways that leadership can be shared.

Different Approaches to Shared Leadership

There are various approaches to shared leadership that should be clarified. Several will be considered here. As previously noted, Pearce et al. (2014), wrote, "all leadership is shared leadership, it is just a matter of degree" (p. xi). No individual leader can do all that an organization requires. For that reason, leadership must be shared. Some leaders are reluctant to do this and consolidate power within their own jurisdiction. This has been the self-serving norm of history. Other leaders realize the value of a team and thrive at sharing leadership in a way that enables the organization to accomplish far more than any individual ever could. There are many ways that an organization can achieve the benefits of strategically sharing leadership. Ultimately, how an organization shares leadership and structures its processes will depend a lot on the unique dynamics of the corporation.

The way decentralized leadership is structured is related to overall team performance (Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006). The different forms that shared leadership takes on seem to be directly related to the public discourse about shared leadership and "are in part shaped by particular contextual features within individual institutions" (Hall, 2013, p. 467). Some types of heterarchies, a class of shared leadership structures, have been shown to be effective (Frew, 2009). Holacracy, another shared leadership structure, is also growing in popularity (Robertson, 2015). One common feature of shared leadership structures is an emphasis on employee roles. In fact, a roles-based approach is critical to shared leadership (Youngs, 2014). This roles-based approach is a key feature of holacracy (Robertson, 2015). Teams where members with diverse abilities work in collaboration with each other while focusing on the roles they have been delegated are a feature of the information age workplace and vital to effective shared leadership

(Deng et al., 2015). Certain prerequisites lend themselves towards the emergence of such structures.

Shared leadership needs to be differentiated from complete decentralization. There are some leaderless organizations that are completely decentralized. Unsurprisingly, this can lead to "chaos" as this passive approach "can be just as dangerous as authoritarian leadership" (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 280). Pearce & Conger (2003) argued that the real "alternative to the false alternatives of mindless obedience versus leaderless chaos is empowerment within a context" (p. 280). By empowerment within a context they are referring to intentionally structured shared leadership models.

There are different ways of structuring shared leadership. Pearce et al. (2014) and Laloux (2014) have highlighted some of these structures and given numerous examples of them. Some of these structures will be summarized here.

Pearce et al. (2014) described four fundamental shared leadership models (p. xvi). They defined these structures as rotated shared leadership, integrated shared leadership, distributed shared leadership, and comprehensive shared leadership (Pearce et al., 2014). Each will be considered in more depth below.

Rotated shared leadership is a model whereby leadership is rotated according to a schedule or plan. Pearce et al. (2014) elaborated, "Rotated shared leadership, as the term suggests, involves conscious strategies to have different people clearly assuming the role of leader at different points in time" (p. xvi). This can involve rotating leadership positions according to a predetermined schedule (ex. annually) or plan (ex. as certain issues or needs become apparent). "Shared leadership can be considered rotated when influence passes from one person to another (one at a time) in a planned purposeful way over time" (Pearce et al., 2014, p.

1). Alcoholics Anonymous is an example of an organization that utilizes a rotated shared leadership model (Pearce et al., 2014).

Integrated shared leadership involves sharing leadership according to leader availability and skill. Pearce et al. (2014) wrote, "Integrated shared leadership is a bit more dynamic than rotated shared leadership, where leadership roles shift and transition more fluidly and rapidly between the individuals involved" (p. xvii). "Shared leadership can be considered integrated when influence is not just passed from one person to another in a linear way but often unfolds as a simultaneous and reciprocal process of mutual influence" (Pearce et al., 2014, p. 29). Southwest Airlines is an example of an organization that utilizes an integrated shared leadership model (Pearce et al., 2014).

Distributed shared leadership occurs when leadership is distributed across specific roles (ex. teaching pastors, worship pastors, etc.). Whereas rotated shared leadership rotates shared leadership according to a schedule or plan and integrated shared leadership allows shared leadership to unfold fluidly, "Distributed shared leadership…deals more with how to distribute leadership roles widely within an organization" (Pearce et al., 2014, p. xvii). Distributed shared leadership involves sharing power and influence across an entire organization; organizations that distribute leadership roles "more widely" have been found to be "more successful" (Pearce et al., 2014, p. 69). Some Christian mega-churches are examples of organizations that utilize distributed shared leadership models (Pearce et al., 2014).

Comprehensive shared leadership entails comprehensively infusing shared leadership practices across and throughout an entire organization (Pearce et al., 2014). "Comprehensive shared leadership goes beyond the categories in the other sections by combining all of the types in a highly advanced shared influence process" (Pearce et al., 2014, p. 107). The stellar success

of the Panda Restaurant Group and Panda Express chain can be attributed to the organization's commitment to comprehensive shared leadership (Pearce et al., 2014).

Laloux (2014) described an additional three structures that overlap with some of those previously highlighted. These include parallel teams, webs of individual contracting, and nested teams (Laloux, 2014, p. 325). In addition to these three types of structures, small organizations can utilize a simple self-managing approach (Laloux, 2014). Each of these three structures will now be addressed.

The parallel team structure involves the collaboration of autonomous teams comprised of individuals who work together with individual roles that are clearly defined by the team (Laloux, 2014). "This model is highly suitable when work can be broken down in ways that teams have a high degree of autonomy, without too much need for coordination across teams" (p. 320). Each team is responsible for its own planning, finances, and staffing needs (Laloux, 2014). Buurtzorg, a home-visitation healthcare provider with more than 7,000 nurses in the Netherlands, is an example of this type of structure (Laloux, 2014).

The webs of individual contracting are similar to the parallel team structures, involving autonomous teams (Laloux, 2014). A distinguishing factor is this model's approach to establishing roles. Rather than allowing the team to define roles, team members decide what needs to be done and how they would like to contribute. In other words, individual employees determine their own roles and are then held accountable by the team for the roles they choose (Laloux, 2014). Morning Star is the world's largest tomato processing company and they utilize a web of individual contracting approach (Laloux, 2014).

The nested team structure is similar to the parallel team structure at the team level but it organizes these teams into an interconnected mega-structure at the organizational level (Laloux,

2014). Holacracy, which was previously mentioned, is an example of the nested team structure (Laloux, 2014). The Zappos online shoe sales company, which has adopted a holacracy structure, is another example of this type of structure (Denning, 2015; Useem, 2015).

Plural eldership is both described and prescribed in Scripture (Getz, 2003; Grudem, 1994; Hellerman, 2013; Knight, 1999; MacArthur, 2004; Newton & Schmucker, 2014; Piper, 2000; Strauch, 2003; Viola & Barna, 2008; Wallace, 2004). How this biblical form of governance should be structured is less clear in Scripture. Elder led churches can cultivate specific structures that enable effective shared leadership in church settings. Within the plural eldership model, mature leaders who demonstrate character in life, competence in ministry, and commitment to biblical truth share leadership. These leaders are tasked with collaboratively sharing the oversight of the church.

Within this model, leadership sharing is comprehensive and can be rotated, integrated, and distributed as needed. In small churches, elder teams can be simple self-managing teams and in larger churches they can utilize other models. They might employ parallel team structures, allowing groups of elders to focus on specific areas of responsibility. They could use a web of individual contracting type of structure, allowing each elder to contribute in an area of personal strength, skill, ability, or calling. They could also utilize nested team structures whereby leadership teams collaborate for a larger scale vision. Additionally, ministries within the church can be overseen within this structure and can be facilitated by various church members; this is virtually identical to the biblical description of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31). In summary, the biblical plural eldership model includes various aspects of the structures described by Laloux (2014) and Pearce et al. (2014).

Christian para-church ministries are somewhat of an anomaly here. Although distinct from the local church, they are tasked with leading in a way that is consistent with biblical principles and the headship of Christ. Para-church ministries can adopt many of these shared leadership structures in order to best accomplish their unique ministry callings.

Sharing leadership is a practice. The examples cited here demonstrate some ways of structuring the sharing of leadership. Of course, as previously cited, these structures "are in part shaped by particular contextual features within individual institutions" (Hall, 2013, p. 467). In other words, each team is tasked with intentionally developing a structure that will allow it to thrive. Some of the outcomes of shared leadership approaches and the antecedents of those outcomes will now be considered in more depth.

Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX) in Shared Leadership Teams

Again, shared leadership is a relational approach to leadership (Wood & Dibben, 2015). Biblical plural eldership, a form of shared leadership, is also "highly relational" (Hellerman, 2013, p. 18). Collective, shared leadership is related to leader characteristics (Friedrich et al., 2016). Conversely, negative leadership styles can hurt shared leadership and team effectiveness (Boies, Lvina, & Martens, 2010). Immature and incompetent leaders can pose a real danger to shared leadership (Timperly, 2005). It seems evident that collaborative harmony on shared leadership teams would be dependent on team-member maturity and leadership approaches, team attributes, and relational features. Drescher and Garbers (2016) stated that, "research has extensively examined the relationship between shared leadership and performance outcomes," yet lament that, "little is known about the interaction with other team variables such as commonality and communication mode" (p. 200). The collaborative attributes, which precipitate effective shared leadership, must be considered.

Current research in this area is beginning to consider these "interpersonal variables" (Drescher & Garbers, 2016, p. 201). Unsurprisingly, team characteristics, like cohesion, role clarity, goal motivation, and openness to change, are correlated with team performance (Danish, Aslam, Shahid, Bashir, & Tariq, 2015). Similarly, diversity, when accompanied by team cohesion, leads to increased performance on top management teams (Bjornali, Knockaert, & Erikson, 2016). Not only do these relational characteristics affect overall team performance, they can also lead to greater team-member individual performance (Carboni & Ehrlich, 2013). Because of the impact of relational features on team and individual performance, these characteristics must be considered in relation to shared leadership teams. This highlights the value of a social exchange approach.

Social exchange theories, which incorporate various relational features, will be a theme of this research. Although a distinct approach to leadership, various other approaches and relational features will be considered as well. Leader-member exchange theory (LMX) and team-member exchange theory (TMX) are the conceptual foundation for the Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX) concept.

Leader member exchange (LMX) theory notes that the quality of leader-member relationships is critical to leadership effectiveness (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011; Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2013; Sparrowe, Soetjipto, & Kraimer, 2006). Team member exchange (TMX) asserts that the quality of team member-team member relationships is critical to team effectiveness as well (Willems, 2016). The significance of the quality of interactions between leaders on shared leadership teams seems intuitive. This new angle approaches traditional social exchange views of leadership from an LLX perspective.

Seers, Keller, and Wilkerson described self-directed, shared leadership workgroups, and stated, “dynamics of dyadic social exchanges may also be of great interest” (as cited in Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 84). Additionally, team-member exchange relationships cultivated “cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork” among team members (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 84). Team-member exchange, like leader-member exchange, is related to positive workplace outcomes (Banks, Batchelor, Seers, O’Boyle, Pollack, & Gower, 2013). Again, shared leadership considers these “social interactions as a group phenomenon” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 23). With this in mind, social exchange relationships in shared leadership teams will be considered from a Leader-Leader Exchange perspective in the ensuing research.

Social network analysis. The relational nature of shared leadership naturally leads to a social network consideration. Lee et al. (2015) noted, “As shared leadership is defined as a relational phenomenon involving mutual influence among team members, social network theory provides a natural theoretical and analytical approach to studying the relational influence structures of teams” (p. 48). Barnett and Weidenfeller (2016) agreed, writing, “Social network analysis is a method for measuring and understanding the dynamics of these interactions and relationships” (341).

Social network analysis highlights many important aspects of group structures and interactions. Three distinct domains can be envisioned considering social network approaches. These three domains include leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features.

Social network analysis recognizes the significance of leadership emergence within social structures. Within this perspective, certain leadership approaches seem particularly pertinent. These include transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, servant leadership, and authentic leadership.

Social network analysis has shown an association between transformational leadership and group climate strength (Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008). The same approach has also correlated transformational leadership with innovation and innovative climate (Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010). The value of transformational approaches within social network settings is not surprising.

The importance of emotional intelligence skills within social networks has also been corroborated (Freshman & Rubino, 2004). This has to do with the emotional aspects of social relationships. Emotional commitment can be inversely proportional to network density (closeness between team members), since it is difficult to develop close relationships with large numbers of people (Scott, 2013). This does not repudiate the value of emotional intelligence as emotional intelligence is vital to ensuring constructive relationships. Prell (2012) noted, "network structures in which the majority of individuals are linked together through strong ties are seen as benefiting individuals and groups through increased access to emotional and social support" (p. 152). Again, unsurprisingly, the value of emotional intelligence is substantiated from a social network perspective.

Servant leadership has been correlated with group inclusiveness (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). It is related to social capital, social interaction, and group work engagement (De Clercq, Bouckenooghe, Raja, Matsyborska, 2014). It is also critical to networking and collaboration in the modern workplace and will likely be important in the workplace of the future (Balda & Mora, 2011). Servant leadership is an important leadership approach in social network settings.

Finally, authentic leadership is also important. Authentic leadership is related to organizational inclusivity (Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2014). It is also related to organizational communication and employee-organization relationships (Men & Stacks, 2014). Inclusivity,

communication, and intrapersonal relationships are all important at the network level making authentic leadership an important consideration from a social network analysis perspective.

In addition to these important leadership approaches, social network considerations highlight the value of team attributes and relational features. Team attributes, including the ways that teams structure themselves, and relational features, including relationships among team members, must also be considered.

Social network analysis demonstrates the importance of team attributes and structure. Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson (2013) noted, "Network analysis is about structure and position" (p. 10). Group communication, information flow, idea generation, leadership emergence, team relationships, and other features are all impacted by social structures (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013; Prell, 2012; Scott, 2013). This shows the importance of considering team attributes when evaluating teams from a social network perspective.

Finally, social network analysis invites consideration of relational features on teams. Scott (2013) noted, "Social network analysis must be seen as a comprehensive and all encompassing approach to the relational features of social structures" (p. 9). The social structures (and team attributes) that evolve will inevitably be impacted by team relational features. Social network approaches are a valuable approach to understanding these relationships. Hawe & Ghali (2008) noted, "Social network analysis is a method for capturing the complexity of social relationships" (p. 62). Relational features are a critical aspect of social network approaches to investigating teams.

The importance of a team's social environment is underscored by the harm that status asymmetry can have on teamwork and the benefit that relational strength can bring to teams (Tzabbar & Vestal, 2015). Barnett and Weidenfeller (2016) stated, "Measuring and

understanding the relational dynamics and patterns in a team through the use of social network analysis can provide helpful insights about team functioning and performance" (p. 347). They cited the work of D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, and Kukenberger (2014) who demonstrated the value of a social network approach to investigations of shared leadership.

Qiong and Cormican (2016) noted the positive effect of team density on shared leadership (p. 2). Others have corroborated this finding (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016). The value of relationships is evident and evaluating teams from a social network perspective can provide a better understanding of team relational dynamics.

Evaluating shared leadership teams from a social network perspective has demonstrated the value of four key elements of shared leadership networks (Qiong & Cormican, 2016). These include network density, centralization, efficiency and strength (Qiong & Cormican, 2016). Network density "measures the compactness or closeness of team member interactions with each other" (Qiong & Cormican, 2016, p. 4). This has been correlated with positive shared leadership results (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016; Qiong & Cormican, 2016). Network centralization "measures the extent to which team members rely on a small concentrated number of people" (Qiong & Cormican, 2016, p. 4). Centralization negatively impacts shared leadership while decentralization positively impacts it (Qiong & Cormican, 2016). Network efficiency "measures the amount of contact among team members. This implies how much information flow is in a network" (Qiong & Cormican, 2016, p. 4). Network strength "measures the frequency of contact among team members. This can influence how often information is exchanged" (Qiong & Cormican, 2016, p. 4). Network efficiency and strength have also been associated with different aspects of shared leadership. Basically, shared leadership can benefit from close, frequent, and numerous interactions between co-leaders.

Social network analysis provides a valuable starting point for a deeper investigation of the collaborative dynamics among leaders on shared leadership teams. Social network approaches demonstrate the significance of mature leadership approaches (like transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, servant leadership, and authentic leadership), team attributes (like structure and organization), and relational features. These findings have laid the conceptual framework for further investigation of the three concepts of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features.

Considering these data, three LLX domains seem relevant. These three domains include leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features. Obviously, leadership approaches will impact team density, centralization, efficiency and strength. Domineering styles of leadership that lack relational competencies will inevitably stifle team density, decentralization, efficiency and strength whereas relational approaches will foster collaborative harmony. Team attributes and structure have the potential to either promote or hinder these key elements of shared leadership networks. Ultimately, since each of these fundamentals is inherently relational, team relational strength seems a relevant domain to investigate.

Because of this, the three LLX domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features will be considered. The investigation will probe how various aspects of each of these domains affect the successful sharing of leadership. Each of these will be evaluated in the ministry teams investigated for this research.

Leadership styles impact the teams leaders lead (Jo, Lee, Lee, & Hahn, 2015). This is intuitive but highlights the importance of considering leadership styles in the investigation of leadership teams. Team attributes, like team structure and organizational context, are also important to effective teamwork in self-managed contexts (Tata & Prasad, 2004). It seems that

both leadership style and team attributes are critical to leadership ability, especially in shared leadership teams. As important as leadership ability is to team functioning, interpersonal relationships among team members are also critical to team effectiveness (Kundu & Ganguly, 2014). Interpersonal relationships are the central concept in leader-member exchange theory and fundamental to other social exchange theories of leadership.

Considering how leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features are related to team functioning, each of these will be considered in relation to shared leadership. Because these features are related to effective team functioning, these domains will comprise the initial Leader-Leader Exchange conceptualization.

The first domain of leader maturity will explore various leadership approaches, including transformational leadership, servant leadership, emotional intelligence, and authentic leadership. Team-member maturity should be evidenced by competent leadership. There is a danger of a "distribution of incompetence" implicit in shared leadership (Timperly, 2005, p. 417). Mature team-member leadership is needed to offset this. Of course, research abounds concerning different approaches to leadership. This investigation will focus on these issues within the contexts of teams, extrapolating how that might relate to effectively sharing leadership within team contexts. This will prove important in the investigation of LLX attributes.

The second domain of team attributes will consider different structural elements, like guiding documents, team size, time and shared history, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability. The social structure elements within teams are important to team outcomes (Henttonen, Janhonen, & Johanson, 2013). Again, team attributes like structure and organizational context are important to effective teamwork (Tata & Prasad, 2004). Because

of this, various related attributes will also be considered in the present investigation of LLX in ministry teams.

The third domain of relational features will consider team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution. Again, interpersonal relationships are important in team contexts (Kundu & Ganguly, 2014). Because of this, different features of interpersonal relationships will be considered in the present investigation of LLX features in shared leadership ministry teams.

Academic research concerning the different aspects comprised in the three domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features will be considered in preparation for further investigation of these attributes. Since these are all important at the team level, they will all be considered in relation to LLX features in ministry teams. Since LLX is a novel concept, additional research on each of these topics must be further considered.

Leader maturity. Team-member maturity is obviously important and would likely be demonstrated by competent leadership. Different leaders approach leadership from different angles, making a survey of these different approaches relevant to this investigation. Different leadership approaches will inevitably impact how co-leaders relate to each other in shared leadership settings. Friedrich et al. (2016) noted:

> While there is significant research that has evaluated how the characteristics of individual followers as well as characteristics of teams relate to the use of collective behaviors, there is far less research on what individual differences within the leader may lead to them acting collectively or not, and in particular the different leader characteristics that may be tied to the different forms of collective leadership behaviors. (p. 315)

Traditional theories of leadership, including trait-based approaches, skill-based approaches, style-based approaches, situational approaches, and contingency approaches all seem relevant but somewhat more difficult to measure in shared leadership contexts. The styles leaders lead with will impact their teams (Jo et al., 2015). As previously noted by David Thompson (as cited in Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2009) and Marcus Buckingham (2005), complimentary pairings of leadership styles can be beneficial in shared leadership contexts.

Research has correlated shared leadership with team effectiveness and demonstrated the value of different leadership approaches in shared leadership settings (Wang et al., 2014). Wang et al. (2014) found that sharing "new-genre leadership" approaches (like transformational leadership) had a higher impact on team effectiveness than sharing traditional approaches to leadership (p. 181). Barnett and Weidenfeller (2016) agree, writing:

> Good vertical leadership of certain types (e.g., transformational, empowering leadership, and other "new genre" leadership styles) can accelerate the emergence of shared leadership in a team. Other types of leadership (e.g., aversive and directive leadership) may suppress it. Effective shared leadership can augment or supplement the impact of good vertical leadership. (p. 347)

Both servant leadership and transformational leadership have been correlated with effective team performance (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011). These approaches, and others like authentic leadership and emotional intelligence are acquirable and learnable competencies that have been correlated with effective leadership. Each will be reviewed here in relation to shared leadership and team effectiveness.

Transformational leadership is related to positive team performance (Vesa & Hasu, 2015; Zawawi, & Nasurdin, 2015). While transformational leadership is related to positive team

performance, transactional leadership hinders it (Rao & Kareem Abdul, 2015). Transformational leadership has been associated with "followers' performance, attitudes, and subjective well-being" at both the individual and group levels (Nielsen & Daniels, 2012, p. 383). Additionally, "group-focused transformational leadership was positively associated with team performance through team member exchange" (Chun et al., 2016, p. 374). Similarly, group level transformational leadership "is positively related to team innovation via team knowledge sharing" (Jiang, Gu, & Wang, 2015, p. 677). Other research has related transformational leadership to team risk-taking, learning, creativity, and "team creative efficacy" (Shin & Eom, 2014). In addition to increasing team creativity, transformational leadership also increases team motivation (Wang, Kim, & Lee, 2016). Transformational leadership is also associated with capitalizing on the benefits of team diversity (Reuveni & Vashdi, 2015). In addition to its positive effect on a team, transformational leadership has even been shown to positively impact the teams with which the transformationaly led team interacts (Cha, Kim, Lee, & Bachrach, 2015). Boies, Lvina, and Martens (2010) found that "Team potency and trust were positively related to shared transformational leadership" (p. 195). Transformational leadership is related to numerous positive group outcomes and would be an expected leadership approach on shared leadership teams.

Stupak & Stupak (2005) noted, "Servant leadership, within a team framework, is becoming the preferred way of galvanizing the workforce in the contemporary, service driven environment" (p. 483). Servant leadership is important in the practice of Christian team leadership (Eguizabal & Lawson, 2009). It is also related to team relationships, creativity, and innovation (Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, & Cooper, 2014). Servant leadership is associated with "shared leadership," "knowledge creation," and "caring relationships" (Rai & Prakash, 2012, p.

61). It has also been connected with team potency and performance (Hu & Liden, 2011). Again, servant leadership would be expected of leaders serving in shared contexts (especially in Christian ministry settings).

Emotional intelligence is related to team performance (Naseer, Chishti, Rahman, & Jumani, 2011). Emotional intelligence has also been proposed as the basis for leadership emergence in self-managing teams (Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002). Emotional intelligence fosters team trust, which, "in turn, fosters a collaborative culture which enhances the creativity of the team" (Barczak, Lassk, & Mulki, 2010, p. 332). Emotional intelligence has been correlated with team cohesiveness and performance (Rapisarda, 2002). Both leader emotional intelligence and team-member emotional intelligence contribute to positive team performance (Chang, Sy, & Choi, 2012). Leader emotional intelligence is associated with team "emotionally competent group norms," which are also related to overall team performance (Koman & Wolff, 2008). In summary, group emotional intelligence leads to greater team effectiveness (Ghuman, 2016). These findings support the importance of emotional intelligence in teams, team members, and team leaders. Emotional intelligence is something one would expect to find common in effective shared leadership teams.

Authentic leadership and team authenticity have been correlated with effective teamwork (Hannah, Walumbwa, & Fry, 2011). Authentic leadership can be "particularly beneficial when shared among team members," where it has been associated with successful new venture teams (Hmieleski, Cole, & Baron, 2012). Authentic leadership is also related to team virtuousness, commitment, and potency (Rego, Vitória, Magalhães, Ribeiro, & e Cunha, 2013). Interestingly, team climate is critical to the emergence of authentic leadership (Kinnunen, Feldt, & Mauno, 2016). This seems to fit nicely with a shared leadership model where relational maturity can

foster collaborative harmony and its related benefits. Again, this would be expected in shared leadership teams.

Authenticity is critical to Christian ministry as well. Scripture is clear about the character requirements for ministry leaders (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:1-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Since Christian leaders are required to demonstrate spiritual maturity, authentic leadership characteristics would be expected of leaders on Christian ministry teams.

Various leadership approaches are related to effective team leadership and some have been correlated with effective shared leadership. Without doubt, shared leadership must be distributed among competent leaders. Although the practice has real benefits, a "distribution of incompetence" is a danger implicit in shared leadership approaches (Timperly, 2005, p. 417). This is intuitively accurate. Leadership should never be distributed ad hoc across random groups of people. If leadership is to be effectively shared, it must be shared by competent leaders. Competent leaders will undoubtedly be strong in various leadership approaches, like those previously outlined. Co-leaders should demonstrate individual maturity through competent approaches to leadership. Together these leaders can build strong teams with strong relationships.

Team attributes. In addition to these leadership approaches, team attributes and relational features must be considered. The team attributes that will be considered here will include guiding documents, team size, time and shared history, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability.

Guiding documents are important as they can help team-members relate to each other and other teams with clarity. The now famous collectivistic approach to leadership called

"holacracy," is founded on a team constitution (Robertson, 2015). Faiks (1993) affirms the value of a constitution writing:

> Teams are often assembled without much thought being given to their ultimate effectiveness. Yet time and energy can be saved if, at the outset, team members take the time to write a constitution establishing the basic principles and rules that will determine the power, duties and rights of both the team and its members. (p. 11)

He continues:

> Every team constitution will be unique to that project's own set of circumstances. But it is the concept of a constitution that is important; i.e., a document hammered out by the people involved, who are not afraid to address the difficult issues that can prevent or hamper a team from fulfilling its mission. (Faiks, 1993, p. 11)

Additionally, a constitution can help a team better define and understand its relationship to the rest of the organization (Dorando & Grun, 1996).

Team size is also an important feature (Cha et al., 2015). There are various team sizes that are often correlated with effective teams (Karlgaard & Malone, 2015). Smaller team sizes allow for more effective communication, something that is critical to shared leadership (Friedrich et al., 2016). Communication will be further evaluated in the coming pages. At this point, its relationship to team size is all that is being considered. Evaluating the sizes of shared leadership teams will further the understanding of the relational attributes present among team members.

Time is also critical to shared leadership. Barnett and Weidenfeller (2016) explain, "Shared leadership takes time to develop" (p. 347). Time is needed for the development of successful teams (Mathieu et al., 2015). Yang (2014) stated, "Most newly formed teams manage

to function in spite of the fact that their members do not know each other," but then he clarified, "Over time, teams progress into successful units" (p. 858). Building and maintaining successful teams requires "time, commitment and continuity" and "a deliberate approach to build individual capacity and team unity" (Abbott & Bush, 2013, p. 586). Time is needed for group integration and collaboration (Price, Harrison, Gavin & Florey, 2002). Building a strong, high-performing team takes significant time. Previous research has noted that shared leadership increases over time (Engel & Rentsch, 2010).

Diversity of skills, experiences, and approaches is the source of many of the benefits of shared leadership. Shared leadership has been "strongly associated with team performance in more diverse teams" (Hoch, 2014, p. 541). Hoch (2014) elaborates, stating that shared leadership can:

> enhance the benefits inherent to diversity, such as the sharing of non-redundant and non-overlapping information. Specifically, higher levels of shared leadership may help team members draw upon their information and knowledge related to their diverse experience backgrounds, which will enhance team performance. (p. 545)

Deep-level diversity is also a critical component of successful teams and time is needed in order to achieve the benefits of deep-level diversity (Price, K., H., Harrison, Gavin, & Florey, 2002). Deep-level diversity comprises psychological diversity, something quite different than surface level diversity (Price et al., 2002).

Diverse teams, comprised of different ages, backgrounds, and past experiences, can yield very positive effects and shared leadership is associated with these positive outcomes ("Team tactics in shared leadership," 2014). Deep-level, psychological diversity involves different ways of approaching and thinking about problems, something that is different than surface level

diversity that refers to shallower differences. Deep-level diversity contributes to team synergy and performance (Rink & Ellemers, 2010).

Diversity can be beneficial but it can also harm teams (Nederveen, Van Knippenberg & Van Dierendonck, 2013). Teams that lack diversity typically achieve "average effectiveness" while diverse teams can be either "highly effective" or "highly ineffective" (Alder & Gunderson, 2008, p. 140). Diversity can lead to "ambient disharmony" (Chua, 2013, p. 1545). Some of these negative features of diversity can inhibit the emergence of shared leadership but shared leadership enables the effective utilization of the benefits of diversity when these obstacles are overcome (Hoch, 2014). Successful teams must learn to mitigate the conflict their differences can lead to while capitalizing on the strengths their differences can provide. Diversity does lead to increased performance on top management teams, but it does so within the context of team cohesion (Bjornali et al., 2016). Building highly functional diverse teams necessitates growing trust among team-members.

Role differentiation is another element common in shared leadership teams. "Personality, functional expertise, competencies, goal orientations, teamwork orientations" and other features "motivate and enable individuals to occupy different team roles" (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Kukenberger, Donsbach, & Alliger, 2015). Role differentiation is vital to the development of effective teams (Ancona & Caldwell, 1988). Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Kukenberger, Donsbach, and Alliger (2015) noted:

> Research and practice have suggested that the best teams are well designed up-front. Teams that have an optimal mix of members' knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) are better positioned to work well together and to perform effectively than are teams composed of a less-optimal combination of members. (p. 7)

They conclude, “team composition serves as the foundation upon which other team factors are built, and represents a key enabling feature of teams” (Mathieu et al., 2015, p. 7).

Belbin (1993) proposed eight team roles. These include implementers, who implement team plans, completers, who ensure standards are met, shapers, who think out of the box, coordinators, who manage the activities of the team, team workers, who foster a team spirit, resource investigators, who look for new opportunities to exploit, monitor evaluators, who analyze the ideas proposed by the group, and plants, who come up with new strategies based on group objectives (Batenburg, Walbeek, & Maur, 2013). Belbin’s particular roles are not necessarily correlated with team performance (Batenburg et al., 2013). Mathieu et al. (2015) argue that “optimal team compositions are not likely to be adequately captured by a simple average or variety (i.e., variance) index” (p. 25). Although diverse roles are critical to effective teams, these roles are “emergent phenomena” that might arise from “situational demands, members’ work histories, or the extent to which teams have rigid or loosely defined positions (if positions at all)” (Mathieu et al., 2015, p. 25).

Role differentiation is intrinsic to many of today’s shared leadership approaches. It is fundamental to holacracy (Robertson, 2015). It is also a standard attribute of many collectively led “teal” organizations (Laloux, 2014). Although standard lists of roles do not necessarily predict team success, allowing team members to thrive in their natural strengths and abilities can help a team maximize its potential. Leadership teams that master this approach may excel in areas that others fail.

A decision-making protocol can help shared leadership teams effectively make decisions. As previously noted, distributed decision-making is beneficial (Petrovia & Hristov, 2016) but the benefits of this collaborative approach require a formal group decision-making process

(Bourgault et al., 2008). Some of the important elements of a group decision-making process should include information sharing, considering all the information provided, evaluating the potential possibilities related to the information, and processing all of the information in a systematic way (McLeod, 2013).

Accountability is a critical component of effective teams. While the lack of accountability can contribute to organizational failure, the presence of accountability has been associated with exceptional leadership, organizational success, and employee motivation (Froschheiser, 2009). A lack of accountability can be detrimental to a team (Lencioni, 2005). Fandt (1991) found that "high-accountability teams relied on more interdependent behaviors, experienced greater satisfaction with their team, and expressed higher success than low-accountability teams" (p. 300). The value of accountability in teamwork makes this a feature that would be expected in shared leadership teams.

Relational features. Since both leadership and shared leadership are relational endeavors, considering these relational features will provide a better understanding of LLX in shared leadership ministry teams. Of course, the previous domains of leader maturity and team attributes also affect the relational nature of the team. The relational features that will be considered here will include team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution.

Team relational strength is obviously an important relational feature. Again, shared leadership "is a relational phenomenon whereby leadership and influence are distributed and reciprocated" (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016, p. 341). Shared leadership is intrinsically relational (Wood & Dibben, 2015). The biblical plural eldership approach to ministry leadership is also

"highly relational" (Hellerman, 2013, p. 18). Team relationships are critical to effective shared leadership.

Relational strength can benefit teams whereas status asymmetry can hurt them (Tzabbar & Vestal, 2015). Barnett and Weidenfeller (2016) found that team density, defined as the quantity of relationships in a group in relation to the number of possible relationships in the group, was related to the strength of shared leadership in that group (p. 341). Because of this, they affirmed, "Shared leadership is a relational phenomenon whereby leadership and influence are distributed and reciprocated" (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016, p. 341).

Some researchers go so far as to claim that "the network of relationships can be viewed as collective leadership itself" (Friedrich et al., 2016, p. 315). Indeed, team interconnectedness, trust, and cohesion lend themselves to effective collective leadership (Friedrich et al., 2016). Unsurprisingly, shared leadership is related to team collectivism (Engel & Rentsch, 2010). Team cohesion is also related to team performance (Bjornali et al., 2016; Danish et al., 2015) and team relational features can even improve the performance of individual team members (Carboni & Ehrlich, 2013). The relational nature of leadership generally and shared leadership specifically highlights the importance of relationships on teams.

Prayerful unity is critical to Christian leadership. It is not something that comes up very often in the academic research. Unity is critical in Christian leadership where biblical "concepts such as co-laborer, plurality of leadership, shared leadership, and servant leadership" involve "two or more people working together for a common purpose" (Eguizabal & Lawson, 2009, p. 258). Prayerful unity has been described as an essential element of Christian shared leadership (Hellerman, 2013). Although not commonplace in academic research, prayerful unity will be investigated in regards to the ministry teams interviewed for this project.

Shared leadership is related to trust (Engel & Rentsch, 2010). Trust among team members is both a prerequisite for the emergence of shared leadership and a requirement for the group's future performance as a team (Drescher, Welpe, Korsgaard, Picot, & Wigand, 2014). Of course, building trust requires time, a feature that was previously discussed. Trust often begins with the team's view of the team leader, whose personal credibility and behavior lay the foundation for shared leadership emergence (Grille et al., 2015). Sometimes the emergence of shared leadership is related to larger structural reforms (Hall, 2013). Team trust paves the way for collaboration and other productive practices. Again, trust, team potency, and shared transformational leadership are all related (Boies et al., 2010). When team trust and leader example allow, shared leadership structures and their many benefits can flourish.

Communication has been called the "life blood of collective leadership" (Friedrich et al., 2016). Drescher and Garbers (2016) also noted that communication significantly contributes "to effective teamwork and shared leadership" (p. 201). Communication is critical to ensuring that members of an organization embrace a shared vision (Farmer, Slater, & Wright, 1998). Communication is vital to successful teamwork (Stupans, 2013) and it "is essential to collective leadership" (Friedrich et al., 2016, p. 314).

Productive conflict can help teams maximize their creative and innovative potential. Schulz-Hardt, Jochims, and Frey (2002) noted:

> Decision-making groups in organizations are often expected to function as a 'think tank' and to perform 'reality testing' to detect the best alternative. A biased search for information supporting the group's favored alternative impairs a group's ability to fulfill these requirements. (p. 563)

Productive conflict can help mitigate the negative consequences of team bias and groupthink.

Conflict avoidance can result in groupthink while team conflict "can have a productive impact upon the creative process" (Crossley, 2006, p. 33). Lê and Jarzabkowski (2015) noted, "conflict leads to increased scrutiny of information and, consequently, better decisions" (p. 440). Indeed, "some conflict actually helps bolster and refresh organizations" (Flink, 2015). Unfortunately, productive conflict can sometimes deteriorate into relational conflict.

Conflict resolution is needed when productive conflict becomes relational conflict. While productive conflict can benefit a team, "interpersonal conflict has a detrimental influence on project performance" (Zhang & Huo, 2015). Unresolved conflict "can negatively impact the health and success of the organizations" (Patterson, 2010). This highlights the importance of resolving conflict and ensuring unresolved conflict does not hinder a team. Effectively dealing with conflict does lead to greater employee performance (Ojo & Abolade, 2014). Unsurprisingly, teams comprised of healthy relationships will be less susceptible to the negative effects of conflict (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016). Team relationships should be continually developed to safeguard against inevitable conflict and conflict must be resolved when it shifts from productive conflict to relational conflict.

These were just a few LLX attributes. Future research will undoubtedly add to this list of features. This section has evaluated leader maturity, including leadership approaches like transformational leadership, servant leadership, emotional intelligence, and authentic leadership, team attributes, including guiding documents, team size, time, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability, and relational features including team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution. It was hypothesized that each of these LLX domains and features would be related to effective shared leadership in Christian ministry teams and some of the benefits that have been associated

with shared leadership in the academic literature. These LLX features will be the focus of continuing research.

Some Benefits Associated with Shared Leadership

This project has focused on LLX features in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries. For this reason, the literature review will continue with an investigation of various characteristics common among organizations employing shared leadership techniques. Additionally, social-exchange and team-exchange principles will be considered briefly. This will provide background information that will be enormously helpful when investigating LLX features in Christian churches and ministries.

This investigation of shared leadership addresses the results of the practice as a whole, without differentiating between specific shared leadership structures. As previously stated, shared leadership can yield exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Each will be discussed in more detail below.

Exceptional outcomes. Exceptional outcomes can be experienced using shared leadership models. Shared leadership can lead to improved performance (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Daspit et al., 2014; D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, & Kukenberger, 2014). Team leadership can also lead to group potency and group performance (Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002). It has been associated with increased motivational and cognitive advantages (Solansky, 2008). Shared leadership has been shown to maximize leadership behavior, while helping teams function more efficiently and effectively (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012). This leads to team effectiveness (Daspit, Tillman, Boyd, & Mckee, 2013; Haward, Amir,

Borrill, Dawson, Scully, West, & Sainsbury, 2003; Hiller, Day, & Vance, 2006; Wang et al., 2014). These results hold for knowledge work, not necessarily manufacturing work (Fausing, Jeppesen, Jønsson, Lewandowski, & Bligh, 2013). Today's information age demands a knowledge-oriented approach to work and leadership. Shared leadership also leads to increased productivity and proactivity (Erkutlu, 2012; Olivia & Shao, 1996). It can lead to improved quality (Olivia & Shao, 1996) and continuing quality improvement (Perry, 2000). It is also related to superior service (Olivia & Shao, 1996) and the "quality, cost effectiveness, and consequentially the sustainability of the service process" (Manz, Skaggs, Pearce, & Wassenaar, 2015, p. 611).

Shared leadership can also lead to team success (Shipper et al., 2014). In fact, shared leadership was found to be a common feature of unusually successful school programs for disadvantaged students (Anderson & Pellicer, 1998). Increased team success has also been witnessed in Christian ministries employing shared leadership practices (Wood & Fields, 2007). David Thompson has associated it with exponential growth and billion dollar companies (as cited in Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2009) and Marcus Buckingham (2005) has corroborated that in numerous successful technology companies (p. 274). This will be revisited in the coming section of the paper on sustained growth. These are a few of the exceptional outcomes that have been associated with shared leadership approaches in various types of organizations.

Enhanced decision-making. Enhanced decision-making is another benefit of shared leadership. Distributed decision-making has definite advantages (Petrovia & Hristov, 2016) but these are best realized when there is a formal group decision-making process (Bourgault, Drouin, & Hamel, 2008). Collaborative decision-making outperforms individual decision-making when

information and knowledge are shared (Brodbeck, Kerschreiter, Mojisch, & Schulz-Hardt, 2007; Supovitz & Tognatta, 2013).

There are different approaches to group decision-making. Consensus based decision-making is commonplace in shared leadership structures (Pearce et al., 2014). Other organizations delegate decision-making authority to different roles but then require that decision-makers consult co-workers who will be impacted by their decisions (Laloux, 2014). Holacracy includes elements of both decision-making approaches (Robertson, 2015). Ultimately, shared leadership affords the opportunity for including a wide range of expertise and skill and multiple unique ideas and approaches in decision-making while including built in accountability that guards against groupthink.

The importance of information sharing is clear, as it is required for effective collaborative decision-making (Panahifar, Heavey, Byrne, & Fazlollahtabar, 2015). This is antithetical to groupthink, which often plagues traditional hierarchical organizations (Bénabou, 2013). Groupthink naturally results from power and hierarchy and it limits group creativity (Rhode, 2006). Shared leadership does the opposite. The diversity of team members, communication, and roles of planners are critical factors in successful collaborative planning (Deng, Lin, Zhao, & Wang, 2015).

Additionally, trust, information technology, communication technology, and quality information sharing help collaborative decision-making processes (Hollmann, Scavarda, & Thomé, 2015). IT tools can be an important resource in such processes (Moskowitz, Drnevich, Ersoy, Altinkemer, & Chaturvedi, 2011). Sharing information, considering team members' information, evaluating the potential of all of the information and possibilities, and processing all of that information systematically has been shown to predict decision quality in collaborative

decision-making (McLeod, 2013). Even though quality collaborative decision-making can be difficult, its benefits are greater than its costs (Hong & Banerjee, 2012). Some of those benefits will now be considered.

An important antecedent of collaborative decision-making is information sharing, something that is critical in the modern information age (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Hierarchical distance can hinder the flow of information (Reitzig & Maciejovsky, 2015), although this is not always negative as it can force managers to rely on objective data more than subjective data (Liberti & Mian, 2015). Either way, information flow is critical in the modern information based workplace.

Again, information sharing is important in today's environment (Brodbeck et al., 2007; Hollmann et al., 2015; McLeod, 2013; Panahifar et al., 2015). This makes a collaborative approach to leadership an appropriate model for the information age (Trevor & Kilduff, 2012). Shared leadership is also typically accompanied by collaboration, interaction, self-reflection, empowerment, involvement, and continued learning (Quintana & Morales, 2015). All of this entails collaborative decision-making processes.

Complex problem solving. Complex problem solving, another advantage of shared leadership, involves information sharing and decision-making, but it is still unique. The world is changing at a faster pace than at any time in history as both technology and technological devices are multiplying at unparalleled rates; today's teams need to be equipped to thrive in this dynamic environment full of opportunities and obstacles (Karlgaard & Malone, 2015). With this unprecedented change in mind, Karlgaard and Malone (2015) emphasize the value of "a flat organization with little hierarchy" (p. 219). Shared leadership equips teams to thrive in this new and complex environment, especially when it comes to complex problem solving.

Problem-solving capacity in contexts of challenges and complexity requires knowledge sharing something made possible through shared leadership (Clarke, 2012). This also leads to creative problem solving (Carmeli, Gelbard, & Reiter-Palmon, 2013). Indeed, shared leadership benefits increase with problem complexity (Wang et al., 2014). This is one reason shared leadership is valuable in chaotic battlefield situations (Ramthun & Matkin, 2014) and crisis health situations (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2014). Shared leadership fosters the collaboration, information sharing, and creativity needed for solving complex problems.

Creative innovation. Creative innovation is another important outcome of shared leadership. Shared leadership leads to increased creativity (Pearce, 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Mohammed & Thomas, 2014). It has also been associated with a "high level of administrative creativity" (Alanezi, 2016, p. 50). Status asymmetry can hinder creativity and innovation while team relational strength can foster it (Tzabbar & Vestal, 2015). The former can limit access to diverse information while the latter can facilitate it (Tzabbar & Vestal, 2015).

Information sharing is an important feature of shared leadership and in a shared leadership context it increases creativity (Lee, Lee, Seo, & Choi, 2015) and can do so significantly (Lee, Lee, & Seo, 2011). Information sharing is critical to increased creativity (Carmeli & Paulus, 2015). This is significant concerning the importance of innovation in today's dynamic world.

Shared leadership can lead to increased innovation and innovative knowledge creation (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006; Shipper et al., 2014). Shared leadership "has a positive association with innovation" (Hoch, 2013, p. 159) and it leads to greater innovation as task complexity increases (Hui-ying & Jian-peng, 2013). Again, information sharing, which is implicit in shared leadership, is critical to this (Jiang, Gu, & Wang, 2015). Creativity and

innovation are commonplace in collaborative teamwork (Nurmi, 1996). Creative innovation is an important attribute of shared leadership and one that is essential in today's dynamic environment.

Team-member fit. Team-member fit is another valuable derivative of shared leadership. Team-member fit is a term coined to describe overall team-member satisfaction, involvement, and commitment. Job satisfaction has been related to shared leadership (Hansen & Høst, 2012; Steinert, Goebel, & Rieger, 2006). Increasing shared leadership and team-member participation can increase job satisfaction (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). This was one outcome observed in staff members of Christian ministries using shared leadership techniques (Wood & Fields, 2007). That same study found that shared leadership reduced role confusion, role overload, role conflict, and job stress (Wood & Fields, 2007). Obviously, a reduction of those organizational ills will boost job satisfaction and team-member fit.

Additionally, shared leadership can lead to increased ownership, and participation (Bamford-Wade & Moss, 2010). Moe, Dingsøyr, and Kvangardsnes (2009) noted, **"**Self-organizing and self-managed teams have been found to stimulate participation and involvement" (p. 2). All of this leads to increased organizational commitment (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2014; Lee-Davies, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse, 2007) and team-member retention (Kleinman, 2004). Improved team-member satisfaction, involvement, commitment and retention lead to increased team-member fit, another valuable attribute of shared leadership.

Team synergy. Team synergy is critical to organizational effectiveness and it is another effect of shared leadership. Shared leadership fosters increased team performance (Carson et al., 2007) and effectiveness (Wang et al., 2014). It accomplishes this through building trust among team-members (Drescher, Welpe, Korsgaard, Picot, & Wigand, 2014), something that will be further investigated later. It is also related to greater team coherence (Mathieu, Kukenberger,

D'Innocenzo, & Reilly, 2015). Considering virtual project teams, Hoegl and Muethel (2016) noted, "Many virtual project teams perform better when leadership is shared (rather than centralized with the formal team leader)" (p. 7). This is also one element of successful sports teams; in spite of typical hierarchies, with coaches and managers, shared leadership evolves among team members in a way that can do more good than the hierarchically instituted leadership (Fransen, Van Puyenbroeck, Loughead, Vanbeselaere, De Cuyper, Vande Broek, & Boen, 2015). Again, it can help teams of soldiers excel even in unpredictable and dangerous battlefield situations (Ramthun & Matkin, 2014). Because of this, shared leadership can lead to team synergy (Somboonpakorn & Kantabutra, 2014).

Consequentially, synergistic and collaborative teamwork has the highest impact on problem solving, creativity, and innovation, other benefits of shared leadership (Nurmi, 1996). Shared leadership can also help increase team accountability (Bamford-Wade & Moss, 2010), which is critical to consistent achievement of team potential and goals (Lencioni, 2005). Team synergy is valuable and it is another significant aspect of shared leadership.

Organizational vitality. Organizational vitality is another consequence of shared leadership. Organizational vitality is a term that was devised to describe an organization's ability to make the most of its resident talent while simultaneously thriving in the midst of a constantly changing world. Shared leadership enables organizations to maximize their employees' strengths, talents, and leadership potential (Miles & Watkins, 2007) and helps them make the most of all of the talents represented on their teams (Lee-Davies et al., 2007). Many of these benefits have been confirmed elsewhere as well (Ulhøi & Müller, 2014). Organizational talent maximization is critical. This occurs on shared leadership teams through role differentiation.

Shared leadership typically centers on the responsibility of team members to own roles according to their individual expertise and talent, in a way that collectively benefits the team as a whole (Robertson, 2015). Indeed, shared leadership spreads the leadership expertise required for the accomplishment of an organization's tasks across a spectrum of leaders and tools available to those leaders (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). This is one of the strengths of the holacracy model (Robertson, 2015). Diversification of roles necessitates reliance on team members, something that requires sharing of information and active collaboration in the decision-making process.

Organizational vitality, including an organization's ability to maximize its talent while successfully adapting to needed changes, is vitally important. Organizational vitality is another benefit of shared leadership. It is also something that is related to healthy organizational culture, which will be discussed next.

Healthy organizational culture. All leadership precipitates organizational culture (Schein, 2009). Schein (2009) states that what leaders pay attention to, react to, devote resources to, model and teach, reward, and look for in employees forms organizational culture (p. 131). Leaders directly influence the cultures of their organizations and their effectiveness is also impacted by the cultures in which they lead (O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, & Doerr, 2014; Padma & Nair, 2009). All of this indicates that the cultures set by leaders who share leadership would uniquely emulate the values epitomized by those leaders.

This benefit was not initially expected but it was discovered throughout the course of the interviews performed with various ministry co-leaders. Nearly every participant referenced the trickle-down effect of their shared leadership models. They insisted that the way they modeled

relational harmony and authenticity perpetuated those qualities throughout their organizations. This led to further consideration of this benefit.

Upon further review, this benefit is also supported in the academic literature. Shared leadership has been associated with organizational knowledge sharing cultures (Taylor, 2013). It has also been related to a culture of inquiry and collegiality in schools (Khourey-Bowers, Dinko, Hart, 2005). Additionally, shared leadership lends itself to the cultivation of adaptable organizational culture, something that is critical in the modern context (Robertson, 2015). Agile organizational cultures are critical to organizational success in today's dynamic environment (Laloux, 2014). Today's workers are drawn to organizations with "higher learning culture and higher job complexity" (Joo & Lim, 2009, p. 48). Schein (2010) realizes this and highlights the importance of learning cultures (p. 365). Organizations that foster such cultures solicit the commitment of their staff (Joo & Lim, 2009). This requires cultivating cultures of "psychological empowerment" (Joo & Shim, 2010, p. 437).

In today's rapidly changing and often chaotic environment, agile and adaptable organizational cultures are key (Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2009, p. 16). As stated previously, these cultures are commonplace in organizations using shared leadership principles. Indeed, organizational structures, which solicit the contribution and involvement of all types of employees, like holacracy, naturally lend themselves to this type of cultural adaptability (Robertson, 2015). Agile and adaptable cultures can facilitate positive organizational change, another attribute of shared leadership (Park & Kwon, 2013).

Maintaining a healthy organizational culture is something that is critical to organizational success. This benefit of shared leadership is important. The research findings and conclusions sections will elaborate on this in further depth.

Individual health. Again, this benefit was not initially considered but it surfaced numerous times throughout the interviews. Almost all of the co-leaders interviewed highlighted the impact this model had on their personal heath and longevity in ministry. As described in the team-member fit section, shared leadership has been associated with job satisfaction (Hansen & Høst, 2012; Steinert, Goebel, & Rieger, 2006; Woods & Weasmer, 2002) and reduced role confusion, role overload, role conflict, and job stress (Wood & Fields, 2007). These are clear individual health benefits. Lovelace, Manz, and Alves (2007) found that shared leadership led to "fitness and flow benefits" and supported "healthful regeneration and increased engagement" which were vital to the leader's ability to manage work stress and create an active work environment" (p. 374).

These are just a few of the benefits shared leadership can have on individual leaders. Again, this topic will be further addressed in the findings and conclusions sections. There, the individual health benefits that were uncovered during the research will be considered in more detail.

Sustained growth. Sustained growth, arguably one of the most significant outcomes of shared leadership, is a feature leadership research has sought to achieve for decades. Pearce, Manz, and Akanno (2013) found that "decentralized, shared leadership was a better predictor of firm growth rates than centralized, vertical leadership" (p. 250). Malburg (1997) even noted "explosive growth" as a common feature of "flat organizational structures" (p. 67). David Thompson has demonstrated how shared leadership among differently gifted co-directors (one type of shared leadership) is associated with exponential growth and billion dollar companies (as cited in Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2009). Similarly, Marcus Buckingham (2005) has drawn

attention to this in numerous successful technology companies like Apple, AOL, Netscape, Oracle, and Microsoft (p. 274).

Again, shared leadership draws out an organization's strengths, talents, and leadership potential (Miles & Watkins, 2007) helping organizations make the most of all of their talent (Lee-Davies et al., 2007); this is critical to sustained growth. Explosive and exponential growth are good but difficult to sustain. Wagner (2015) stated that although "a very welcome opportunity" growth can test and stress an organization immensely, noting, "Many companies have grown themselves out of business" (p. B-44). Shared leadership also helps foster organizational sustainability (Pearce et al., 2013). Shared leadership can catalyze organizational growth and it can also help sustain that growth over time.

Shared leadership has been associated with exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Because of this, shared leadership can arguably be considered a better determinant of leadership effectiveness than historical concepts of leadership style (Clarke, 2012). It seems logical that no single leadership approach can possibly outperform a conglomeration of many leadership approaches. Shared leadership can accomplish this with incredible results.

Although less common in churches, there are churches and ministries using this model of leadership. Some of them will be investigated for this project. So far, there has been minimal research on shared leadership in churches and ministries (Veliquette, 2013). Some of the research that has been done has demonstrated that churches using this model of leadership experience many of the benefits previously described of other organizations run with shared leadership structures (Brown, 2014; Veliquette, 2013). Again, these benefits include exceptional

outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational structure, individual health, and sustained growth. One notable study of two hundred church staff members found that churches employing shared leadership enjoy increased team member satisfaction and team success while concurrently reducing role ambiguity, role overload, role conflict, and stress (Wood & Fields, 2007). The current research will add to the information on shared leadership in churches and ministries.

Additionally, this research has probed whether the three LLX domains, including leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, are related to any of these benefits on shared leadership teams in Christian ministry. A positive relationship between these three domains and the aforementioned benefits, would build a case for the LLX approach. This relationship is of crucial importance to this work.

Relationship to Current Research

As stated previously, this research has focused on collaborative harmony and LLX features in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries. Having investigated the biblical precedent for shared leadership and the attributes of shared leadership in various organizations, an investigation of these features in a handful of churches and ministries following similar leadership models is possible.

Summary

This literature review has provided a solid foundation for the ensuing research. This review has demonstrated the biblical basis for shared leadership, highlighting plural eldership in the New Testament. This review has also evaluated shared leadership across a large spectrum of modern institutions, including organizations involved in healthcare, education, energy, new

ventures, road maintenance, manufacturing, food processing, technology, government, consulting, sales, law enforcement, banks, non-profits, volunteers, the armed forces, and cross-cultural leadership teams. Additionally, social exchange and team member exchange research were considered. The academic literature has demonstrated the value of the shared leadership model in the modern information age. This research has yielded a wealth of information concerning shared leadership and has paved the way for the investigation of LLX features in shared leadership teams in Christian churches and ministries.

Again, shared leadership is both effective (Pearce et al., 2013) and biblical (Getz, 2003; Grudem, 1994; Hellerman, 2013; Knight, 1999; MacArthur, 2004; Newton & Schmucker, 2014; Piper, 2000; Strauch, 2003; Viola & Barna, 2008; Wallace, 2004). Previously cited research demonstrated that shared leadership can lead to exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Similarly, numerous theologians, scholars, and biblical passages, which support biblical shared leadership, have been referenced.

Negative outcomes have not been found in the academic literature. Because of this, careful attention was given to this in the research. Although the research did uncover five risks, the utility of the model was not rebutted. Accepting the pragmatic value and theological grounding for a shared leadership model, this investigation will now turn to the actual research.

The next chapter will introduce the methodology that will be utilized in the analysis. This methodology will include a descriptive approach that will utilize semi-structured interviews. The interview questions will be described in detail. Chapter three will be followed by the research

findings, in chapter four, and the conclusions, discussion, and suggestions for future research in chapter five.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Introduction

There is a need for research on collaborative harmony on shared leadership teams. Research on shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries is still minimal (Veliquette, 2013), highlighting the need for research in this area as well. Additionally, there is a growing amount of research on the relationships between social-exchange and team-member exchange theories and shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This research has paved the way for a new Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX) approach to shared leadership. This project has investigated this novel concept according to the following methods. The results of this investigation will shed new and needed light on shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries and it will add to the overall field of shared leadership research as well.

Method of Research

As previously noted, there is minimal research on shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries. Additionally, the concept of LLX and its relationship to effective shared leadership is a novel one. Because of these constraints, and the goal of emergent design, a qualitative approach was selected. The rich description provided by this approach will lay the groundwork for future investigations. Purposive sampling enabled the selection of key churches and ministries using shared leadership models. This qualitative investigation has utilized a descriptive approach that employed semi-structured interviews. The qualitative method has been selected with the intention of elucidating a broad, baseline description of LLX relationships in shared leadership teams in Christian ministries and churches.

Research Design

This qualitative investigation utilized semi-structured interviews in order to obtain a large amount of data from the churches and ministries being studied. These interviews were conducted using Skype.com software for online interviews, the TapeACall app for phone interviews, and the Voice Record app for in person interviews. Except in cases where it was not possible, interviews were done either on Skype or in person. This permitted a better understanding of each interviewee's facial expressions and body language, providing a more robust understanding of their answers. The conversations were recorded and transcribed for future reference. The online transcription software and tools available at Trint.com were used for transcription. The results will be kept anonymous and will be preserved digitally in a folder on the author's password protected computer. Copies of the interviews will be kept under lock and key for a period of three years.

Research Questions

Critical research questions were previously outlined. These will be listed again below. These questions will guide the investigation of shared leadership in Christian ministry teams.

Research question 1. What do these ministries' shared leadership structures look like and are there common elements to those structures, which could be standardized and prescribed for other churches and ministries?

Research question 2. Concerning team-member maturity, which leadership approaches do leaders on Christian shared leadership ministry teams exhibit? Are transformational leadership, servant leadership, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership or other leadership approaches evident among team members?

Research question 3. What team attributes are present on shared leadership teams? Are guiding documents, team size, time and shared history, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability present? Are there other attributes?

Research question 4. How have relational features among leaders impacted shared leadership on these teams? Are team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution evident among team members? Are there other aspects?

Research question 5. What outcomes have these ministries observed as a consequence of shared leadership? Are the ten benefits observed in the literature observed in Christian ministries using this model as well? Are there any negative consequences? What kinds of relational consequences are there?

Research question 6. Is effective shared leadership in these ministries related to collaborative harmony and its subdomains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features?

Population and Sampling

This investigation of Leader-Leader Exchange in shared leadership ministry teams included thirteen interviews with pastors and leaders in seven churches and ministries that operate with plural eldership and shared leadership structures. These leaders co-lead ministries ranging from smaller para-church ministries to mega-churches from multiple evangelical, Christian denominations. Each of these organizations is located in the continental United States. These ministries share more than twenty thousand members and have made numerous impacts far beyond their local settings. The individual leaders interviewed in this research included many of the most respected practitioners and academic voices on this topic in Christianity.

The Piedmont International University Institutional Review Board (IRB) process has been completed and the privacy and rights of the participating organizations has been ensured. Interviewing leaders of these seven churches and ministries has provided a robust understanding of their shared leadership models and the LLX features present in their shared leadership teams.

Instrumentation

This qualitative study has employed semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted using Skype.com software for online interviews, the TapeACall app for phone interviews, and the Voice Record app for in person interviews, and these interviews were recorded for future reference. Again, the online transcription software and tools available at Trint.com were used for transcription. The results will be kept anonymous and will be preserved digitally in a folder on the author's password protected computer. Copies of the interviews will be kept under lock and key for a period of three years.

Based on these research questions, the following interview questions were utilized. These questions were developed considering the advice of Dr. Larry Osborne, a respected pastor and advocate of this model and he approved the questions and approach before the interviews were conducted. The following twenty interview questions were utilized.

Interview question 1. In your experience, what makes or breaks shared leadership in Christian ministry?

Interview question 2. What does your church or ministry's shared leadership structure look like (Is there true equality among your co-leaders, consider issues like income, decision-making superiority, etc.)?

- Leadership is rotated and shared according to a schedule or plan (ex. a different director each year).

- Leadership is integrated & shared according to needs that arise (ex. people naturally step up where they are needed).
- Leadership is distributed across specific roles (ex. teaching pastors, worship pastors, etc.).
- Leadership is shared comprehensively across the entire organization (ex. there are teams in charge of everything).
- Other ways we share leadership include:

Interview question 3. How is your shared leadership structure maintained in your organization? Is it governed by a charter, is this someone's role, or is there a different way that you make sure leadership is shared correctly?

Interview question 4. Which of the following leadership approaches do leaders on your shared leadership/plural eldership team exhibit (interviewer will clarify each style as needed): Authoritarian leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, laissez faire leadership, or other approaches?

Interview question 5: Follow up question (s) on their answers concerning leadership styles.

Interview question 6. How do the leadership approaches you selected affect how leaders on your team relate to each other and the rest of the ministry?

Interview question 7. How do you think leadership approaches affect leadership sharing (either positively or negatively)?

Interview question 8. Which of the following team attributes are present on your shared leadership/plural eldership team and how do these affect leadership sharing?

- Guiding documents determine how leaders relate to and lead with each other.
- Team size is just right for the work we do.

- The team has served together for quite some time.
- Team members have diverse strengths and approach things from different angles.
- There are well-defined roles.
- There is a clear decision-making protocol.
- There is true accountability on our team.
- Other team attributes present on our team include:

Interview question 9: Follow up question (s) on their answers concerning team attributes.

Interview question 10. How do the team attributes you selected affect how leaders on your team relate to each other and the rest of the ministry?

Interview question 11. How do you think team attributes affect leadership sharing (either positively or negatively)?

Interview question 12. Which of the following relational aspects are present on your shared leadership/plural eldership team and how do these affect leadership sharing?

- Relationships on the team are very strong, demonstrated by familiarity, family friendships, time spent together outside of ministry, and genuine interest in each others' personal lives and ministry success.
- Prayer is an important part of how the team operates.
- There is genuine trust for each other.
- There is effective communication.
- There is productive conflict that leads to innovation and creativity.
- There is quick conflict resolution when relational conflict occurs.
- Other relational aspects present on our team include:

Interview question 13: Follow up question (s) on their answers concerning relational aspects.

Interview question 14. How do the relational aspects you selected affect how leaders on your team relate to each other and the rest of the ministry?

Interview question 15. How do you think relational aspects affect leadership sharing (either positively or negatively)?

Interview question 16. Academic research has associated some of the following benefits with shared leadership. Which of these have you noticed in your church or ministry (please check all that apply)?

- Exceptional outcomes (like improved performance and team success).
- Enhanced decision-making (less groupthink, more collaboration).
- Complex problem solving.
- Creative innovation.
- Team-member fit (increasing team member satisfaction & commitment).
- Team synergy.
- Organizational vitality.
- Sustained growth.
- List any other benefits you have observed:

Interview question 17. How have leadership approaches, team attributes, and relational features been related to the benefits you described?

Interview question 18. Have you observed any negative outcomes that have been associated with shared leadership?

Interview question 19. How would you rate your relationships with your co-leaders and with those you lead and why?

Interview question 20. What impact has shared leadership had on you (personal growth, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, ministry motivation, etc.) and your organization (include quantifiable outcomes like innovative solutions, ministry growth, etc., and climate outcomes like work environment, relationships, etc.)?

The six research questions previously described have guided the present research. The twenty interview questions that ensued encompassed the majority of this research. These semi-structured interview questions were adapted as needed. The results have provided robust information on collaborative harmony and LLX features in shared leadership ministry teams.

Data Collection

The instrumentation that was used for data collection in this research was previously described. The data collection began in October of 2016, after the dissertation proposal had been approved and the IRB process had been completed. The data collection phase of this project lasted through the middle of January of 2017.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using various tools. The online software and tools available at Trint.com were used to transcribe the audio recorded in the interview phase of the research. This provided a high level of transcription accuracy. The Trint.com software transcribes the audio file and aligns the text with audio time stamps. It then allows the user to edit the text while listening to the audio to ensure accurate transcription. This was then supplemented with MaxQDA12 qualitative data analysis software. The data were then organized, consolidated, categorized, and analyzed according to the larger framework of the study and with regard to the

shared leadership and social exchange research included in the literature review. The summary interpretations and analysis of the data will be explained in chapter five.

Summary

This project was designed in order to ascertain the collaborative harmony and LLX features present among thirteen leaders in seven shared leadership teams in various evangelical Christian churches and ministries in the United States. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted, stored, and analyzed using online, state of the art technology. The information that was derived from this study will add to the growing field of shared leadership.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

Introduction

This qualitative investigation of Leader-Leader Exchange in shared leadership ministry teams involved thirteen interviews with some of the most respected Christian leaders in the country who utilize shared leadership approaches. The data presented here were collected from interviews with thirteen pastors and leaders in seven churches and ministries that operate with plural eldership and shared leadership structures. These interviews were conducted between October of 2016 and January of 2017.

The ministries investigated included a para-church ministry with global influence, a smaller church with an ambitious vision, large churches making worldwide impacts, and mega-churches impacting thousands of members and other ministries emulating their practices. These ministries included multiple evangelical, Christian denominations. Each of these organizations is located in the continental United States. These ministries share thousands of members (church sizes ranged from two hundred to more than twelve thousand), have collectively planted hundreds of churches around the globe, are involved in numerous areas of ministry beyond the scope of their immediate context, and together manage tens of millions of dollars of ministry resources.

The leaders interviewed in this research included a professional sports team chaplain, co-pastors of one of the few churches whose shared leadership model has been investigated in the academic literature, multiple accomplished authors, and some of the most respected practitioners and academic voices on this topic in Christianity. After interviewing these thirteen leaders, a brief summary of the findings was presented to two of the most respected leaders in this field, Dr. Joseph Hellerman and Alexander Strauch. They provided analysis concerning the research

findings that helped conceptualize the significance of these results in a more coherent way. Some of their comments have been included here.

The findings will be presented according to the following outline. First, shared leadership in Christian ministry will be addressed. This section will focus on the antecedents of effective shared leadership in Christian ministry, how shared leadership was structured in the ministries evaluated, and how those ministries maintained those structures. Second, Leader-Leader Exchange, including the three domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, in the ministries that were researched will be considered. Finally, outcomes of shared leadership in these ministries will be summarized. This will include an assessment of the benefits listed in the literature review, a consideration of some of the negative outcomes of shared leadership, and some of the relational outcomes these interviews highlighted. The research findings will then be summarized before proceeding to chapter five and the conclusions, discussion, and suggestions for future research.

Shared Leadership in Christian Ministry

As described in the literature review, shared leadership is an approach to leadership that has been correlated with numerous benefits. Again, shared leadership is both effective (Pearce et al., 2013) and biblical (Getz, 2003; Grudem, 1994; Hellerman, 2013; Knight, 1999; MacArthur, 2004; Newton & Schmucker, 2014; Piper, 2000; Strauch, 2003; Viola & Barna, 2008; Wallace, 2004). Numerous churches and ministries are utilizing this model. The following presents the interview research data examined under the previously stated headings.

Antecedents of effective shared leadership in Christian ministry. Respondents stated that relationships, humility, and trust, in that respective order, were the most important antecedents of successful shared leadership. They highlighted relational features like time spent

together and communication and emphasized the importance of relational unity. They also explained that humility was a critical trait for team members, noting the importance of security and the dangers of individual insecurities. Respondents also stressed the value of trust and its correlated trait of vulnerability. A biblical conviction concerning the importance of this model and authentic relationship with Jesus were also mentioned as foundational to the whole endeavor. Pride was described as the biggest danger to successful shared leadership and that was followed by related weaknesses of fear and insecurity.

Participant one emphasized that for shared leadership to work, team members had to be mutually committed to the biblical model and to relationships with each other. These principles surfaced throughout many of these interviews. He stated that this was critical to effective shared leadership in Christian ministry. Participant two agreed, claiming that relationships were the most important element in successful shared leadership teams. Participant three affirmed the importance of "Relational trust and humility among the leaders."

Participant four elaborated, "God is a relational God. So relationships, I believe, and how we view them, have everything to do with how we minister together, how we make decisions together." He also highlighted the relational features of vulnerability, trust, and communication. His team was comprised of six co-leaders that equally shared responsibilities and voting power. Within that model he emphasized the need to trust and rely on God and the people he had put on the team. He stated that pride and insecurity were detrimental to shared leadership.

Like participant one, participant five articulated the importance of a biblical conviction that shared leadership is the model God has prescribed. After that he also stressed various relational aspects. He explained the importance of trusting "the heart, the motives, the competency" of one's co-leaders. He also added, "The relationship is most important." In other

words, shared leadership in Christian ministry must rest on the foundation of the biblical injunction concerning this model and it must be built from there with strong relationships. Strong relationships proved critical to effective shared leadership.

Participant six added to the statements from participants one and five on the importance of a biblical conviction. He extrapolated to include the necessity of beginning with Christ. He clarified:

> If people are about themselves rather than about Christ there's a siloing, there's a kingdom building that takes place where it becomes about the individual, it becomes about their identity. If their identity isn't completely wrapped up in Christ, all the service, all the organizational stuff, everything becomes about them and that's the bottom line.

He emphasized how each co-leader needed to be absolutely certain of "their identity in Christ." Because of this, he claimed that humility was critical to effective shared leadership and warned that pride would destroy it.

Participant seven reiterated the relational feature of communication. He insisted, "I really believe that that's a core essential for just relationships as a whole." He was sure that communication made shared leadership work and that a "lack of communication is what really ends up breaking it."

Participant eight stated that security was critical to effective shared leadership. He warned, "Insecurity is what breaks it and a sense of security is what makes it work." He noted that if people "are threatened or insecure it won't work and when they're secure, it seems to work pretty well." This is an obvious relational feature that is critical to how team members relate to each other.

Participant nine was firm about the importance of relational intimacy among co-leaders. He expounded, “What makes it is taking the time to have and develop intimacy among those who share leadership. It can’t simply be, this is my role this is your role.” He added, “If you’re going to corral our natural tendencies, our temperaments, our egos,” you will “have to put time in with each other.” He summarized, “you have to have a community.”

Participant ten emphasized the importance of humility and teamwork; two relational features that complement many of the others listed thus far. He insisted that team members have to be focused on the good of the team, not personal recognition. He, like others, also claimed that pride was detrimental to effective shared leadership. In summary, participant ten asserted that his entire church was based on one-on-one relationships.

Participant eleven highlighted the importance of relationships and commitment to the process of shared leadership. He stated, “if those relationships aren’t committed to each other and to this process it isn’t going to work.” He also highlighted the importance of recognizing the hierarchy within shared leadership. He believed that shared leadership only worked when a leader made sure of it. As stated in the literature review, the biblical view of shared leadership involves a respect for faithful leadership. Allowing team-members to thrive in their strengths and respecting those who have led well is always conducive to effective shared leadership.

Participant eleven also warned about the way the model could break relationships. Sometimes people can feel hurt because of the reality that their expectations and desires are not always met within the context of shared leadership. Because of this, participant eleven highlighted the need for relational depth capable of weathering these personal storms. He stated, “this model more than any other model, like I said, is going to step on toes. It’s going to strain relationships. And you gotta have that relationship base that holds this.”

Participant twelve stated that communication and unity in purpose were fundamental to successful shared leadership. Participant thirteen was adamant that the relationships between co-leaders were critical to successful shared leadership. This articulately summarized many of the qualities described by his counterparts.

After considering these findings, Alexander Strauch and Dr. Joseph Hellerman provided the following thoughts. Strauch emphasized themes that were present throughout these interviews. He noted, "The elders or leaders must be fully committed to the biblical principles of conduct and relationships. Jesus clearly outlined them: Brotherhood, servant leadership, love as He loves, humility, forgiveness. We could call it the fruit to the spirit" (personal communication, January 18, 2017). Dr. Hellerman agreed, summarizing these findings well, stating, "The nature of the relationships among the leaders is what makes or breaks shared leadership" (personal communication, January 6, 2017). He continued, "You can't share leadership without strong relationships" (J. Hellerman, personal communication, January 6, 2017).

Shared Leadership Structures Employed in Christian Ministry. As stated in the literature review, shared leadership can be structured in rotated, integrated, distributed, and comprehensive ways (Pearce et al., 2014). Eight of the participants interviewed stated that their ministries employed comprehensive shared leadership structures. Three participants referenced distributed models. Finally, two respondents stated that their ministries used integrated models of shared leadership. None of the ministries used rotated models and several participants doubted whether rotated shared leadership was either beneficial or truly shared leadership.

Comprehensive shared leadership. Participant one defined his ministry structure as "comprehensive, a combination between integrated and distributed." A comprehensive model also best describes the church with which participant five serves. He stated that his ministry was

run in an integrated way but had elements of the others as well. Having researched the organization, the distributed model is also clearly evident in their ministry. These different elements together comprise a comprehensive approach. Although his co-leaders each share distinct roles, he also noted that leadership was shared "according to a number of things. It's time and availability, it's according to passion, gifting, and some of it is just, 'hey man, you just need to do this.'" Their team even had hints of a rotated model in some cases. Overall comprehensive best describes that team.

The church led by participant six also utilized a comprehensive approach to shared leadership. Participant six is the senior pastor in his church. In that capacity, he is tasked with the teaching of the church. The church, however, is led by a group of elders, of which he is one. This group collectively leads the church and each elder has different areas of responsibility. Participant six was clear that there were elements of each of the other three structures cited in the literature review present in his church.

Participant seven also claimed that his church used a comprehensive approach to shared leadership. Participant eight did as well, stating, "It would be much more comprehensive in our model." He was careful to clarify that his ministry does not share leadership just to patronize people but does it with the best interest of the church in mind. He explained that their emphasis was focused on "Who are the best players and what team works together to play well."

Participant nine claimed that his church's leadership structure was a comprehensive hybrid of distributed and integrated shared leadership. Participant ten stated that his church, which consisted of an attendance of six thousand, used a comprehensive shared leadership model. The ministry with which participant twelve led used a comprehensive approach to shared leadership as well.

Distributed shared leadership. Participant two detailed a distributed model wherein each elder was responsible for a specific role in the ministry, including one elder who was primarily focused on keeping the team accountable to each of their roles and responsibilities. Participant eleven claimed that his church was run with a distributed shared leadership model that allowed co-leaders to own specific roles that they were well suited for. Participant thirteen claimed that his ministry utilized a distributed shared leadership approach.

Integrated shared leadership. Participant three believed that his ministry's structure was mostly integrated but also acknowledge distributed characteristics. Participant four was a part of a team that utilized an integrated model.

Shared leadership structures can be maintained in different ways. Some organizations maintain their shared structures by establishing clear protocols and responsibilities in their charters, bylaws, or founding documents. Others maintain their shared structures by delegating this responsibility to one of the co-leaders; this individual is then tasked primarily with maintaining shared leadership on that team. Other teams approach this more organically.

The organizations evaluated for this study were somewhat evenly split between structures maintained by some form of charter and structures maintained by a role on the team. The charters were typically the organizational bylaws while the individuals tasked with maintaining a shared leadership structure were often the founders or other prominent team-members who surrendered their power and worked to maintain a shared approach. Evident across most of the organizations was an organic structure that superseded both charters and roles and evolved according to the relational health of the team, the unique skill sets of different team members, and the needs of the organization.

Participant one highlighted the importance of the biblical shared leadership principles adopted by the church. He insisted that those on the shared leadership team in his church had been thoroughly trained in the church's shared leadership principles, had publicly affirmed them, and spent time weekly together. This training in and commitment to the church's shared leadership principles had laid the foundation for the effective administration of the shared leadership team.

Participant two elaborated on how his team delegated the role of "integrator" to one of their six elders. His role was designed to keep each of the other five accountable to their distinct roles and areas of ministry. The integrator was also tasked with maintaining shared leadership on the team.

Participant three stated that shared leadership and the ways in which the team would share leadership was described in his team's bylaws. He also recognized the importance of a complimentary organic approach, what he called a "sweet spot between being organic and being organized." Participant four claimed that his team was run relationally, mentioning, "It's not chartered it's understood." He emphasized the importance of prayer and seeking unity on his team.

Participant five explained the importance of grounding shared leadership in a biblical conviction. His team is convinced, "this isn't just what we feel intuitively, this really is what God would have for us." Because of that they are able to function in a shared capacity. They also have a team-member who is tasked with keeping the team accountable to the structure.

Participant six insisted that the church's constitution served as the charter and described how this was written in such a way as to guide the elders in the administration of the church. He also explained how the constitution allowed for some flexibility when needed. The ministry with

which participant seven led had both ordered and organic elements to its shared leadership administration as well. In addition to clearly outlined roles and corresponding responsibilities, the team was highly relational in their approach to leadership sharing.

Participant eight claimed that shared leadership in his church was overseen by the pastor who started it. He stated that this pastor was careful to share his responsibilities in a real way with the co-pastors he had selected. He clarified that the co-pastors were not just co-pastors but partners in the entire endeavor.

Participant nine stated that his church's shared leadership was "inculcated" in the church. This occurred through the church's bylaws, trainings, and affirmations of the approach by the leaders. He also indicated that the leaders were committed to this and embraced this lifestyle of ministry. In other words, although there was a foundational grounding for the model, the leaders operated at "at a higher level" that flowed from their commitment and relationships.

The church led by participant ten was run by a directional planning team of five men. The senior pastor who started the church had instituted the shared leadership approach and was responsible for maintaining it. By all accounts, this leader was anything but authoritarian and truly shared real authority with his co-leaders.

Participant eleven emphasized how the organic way that he and his co-leaders mutually maintained their shared leadership structure. He emphasized the importance of communication in this process. He opined, "If you've got big 'L' leaders who are doing this we leave it up to the big 'L' leaders that are doing it to keep it going and do it well."

Participant twelve used the word "random" to describe how his team's shared leadership structure was maintained. This team was highly relational and highly organic in their approach.

Participant thirteen stated that his team's shared leadership was enforced by the church's bylaws yet maintained organically by team members. He was clear that the "organic stuff is really important."

It became clear that successful shared leadership entailed both mature co-leaders and effective relationships. Alexander Strauch affirmed the first trait explaining, "the key to an effective shared leadership is that the elders themselves have prepared the men" (personal communication, January 18, 2017). Dr. Hellerman explained how the church's bylaws provided a safeguard for the team but insisted the team had to lead relationally in community (personal communication, January 6, 2017). In other words, the organization's structure and guiding documents guard the team while team relationships guide the team.

Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX) in Christian Ministry

The LLX concept envisions the quality of the relationships between leaders on shared leadership teams as directly proportional to the effectiveness of those teams. This model also considers the three domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features as foundational to the quality of relationships on a team. Whereas some leadership approaches would naturally lend themselves to relationships and leadership sharing, others might not. Similarly, team attributes seem to inherently foster or limit team interaction, relational strength, and collaborative harmony. Finally, considering the overarching importance of relationships in shared leadership teams, various relational features, which seem necessary for authentic relationships, have been considered. Each of these domains and their relationships to team relationships and leadership sharing have been investigated.

Leader maturity. Of the leadership approaches present on the shared leadership teams investigated in this study, authentic leadership was the most common style; twelve participants

reported authentic leadership on their teams. This was followed almost immediately by servant leadership; eleven participants reported servant leadership on their teams. Next was transformational leadership; nine participants reported transformational leadership on their teams. Finally, eight participants reported emotional intelligence on their teams. One participant astutely described his team's leadership approach as relational leadership, a term that seems to summarize authentic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence in a shared context.

A few participants noted that some co-leaders naturally demonstrated authoritarian tendencies but emphasized how these team members needed to guard their authoritarian approaches for the health of the team. Most agreed that authoritarianism was antithetical to shared leadership. One participant admitted the negative reality of some laissez faire tendencies on his team noting that this can be a weakness of this model. A couple others had observed traces of this approach as well. Another participant stressed the need for accountability, warning that if something is everyone's responsibility it is really no one's responsibility.

Most of the ministries surveyed claimed their teams demonstrated authentic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence. Very few admitted to authoritarian or laissez faire approaches. Here are some of their responses in more detail.

Authoritarian leadership. Participant two acknowledged his failed attempts at leading with an authoritarian approach in the context of the shared leadership in his church. He emphasized that this approach, "just doesn't really work in our context." He quickly found that authoritarian leadership was antithetical to the low power distance culture that shared leadership had perpetuated throughout the ministry. Participant three added, "I don't think you can be a true

plurality of leadership and have an authoritarian leader." He then concluded, "you can't be a team and have an authoritarian leadership."

Participant five stated that one member on his team was naturally an authoritarian leader. This leader was participant two who previously articulated his failures with this model. Participant five highlighted how the group of leaders on his team were collectively growing to predominantly demonstrate servant leadership.

Participant six warned about the dangers of authoritarian leadership. He insisted this controlling approach was antithetical to Christian leadership. He warned that authoritarianism on shared leadership teams had to be confronted gently but firmly. Participant one also highlighted the importance of correcting usurping team members quickly.

Participant seven was aware of some authoritarian tendencies for co-leaders who had overseen their spheres of influence for extended periods of time. He noted that their predominant style was evolving into transformational leadership and that that evolution was directly related to a decrease in authoritarianism.

Participant eight cautioned about the danger of authoritarian leadership and said the culture of the church was quick to eliminate this leadership approach. Participant nine agreed, noting the incompatibility between authoritarianism and the humility needed to lead in a shared leadership context. Participant ten was emphatic, "We are absolutely not authoritarian."

Conversely, participant eleven acknowledged that there was some authoritarian leadership on his team and he described the negative consequences of authoritarian leadership on his team. He was not alone in recognizing how this approach to leadership was not conducive to effective shared leadership. Participant twelve acknowledged a small amount of authoritarian leadership on his team. So did participant thirteen, who noted that the team member who

exhibited this had learned to temper it. He considered this approach "problematic" and insisted, "relationships do need to rein in authoritarian approaches."

Transformational leadership. Participant two claimed that transformational leadership was present on his team. Participant three astutely noted that as his team demonstrates servant leadership, authentic leadership, and emotional intelligence they "see transformational happening" as a consequence. Participant four stated that transformational leadership was present on his team. Participant five claimed that one of his co-leaders was a naturally transformational leader. Participant six had observed transformational leadership on his team and insisted it was an expected consequence of Christian maturity on a healthy team. Participant seven had observed each of the leadership approaches described in this section but insisted that his team was shifting mainly to the transformational style as they grew together.

Participant eight claimed that this was one of the leadership styles present on his team. Participant nine did as well. Participant ten claimed that transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, and emotional intelligence were present on his team but surmised, "Transformational leadership and empowering others would be the predominant descriptor for our organization."

Participants eleven and twelve stated that transformational leadership was present on their teams. So did participant thirteen, who claimed that a couple of his co-leaders were naturally transformational leaders.

Servant leadership. Participant one highlighted this as a critical leadership approach. Concerning the most important leadership approach on shared leadership teams he stated, "Definitely servant leadership. We are there to operate as a body for the well-being of the church and we are committed to serving one another, trusting one another, submitting to one another,

giving one another an opportunity to do something maybe others wouldn't want to do." Participant three emphasized this characteristic as well and reported it on his team. Participant four also noted that servant leadership was present on his team.

Participant five stated that two of his team members were naturally servant leaders. He also explained that servant leadership was becoming the predominant style as his team continues growing together. He clarified, "We really are committed at the core to serving, serving the people, serving kingdom purposes. That's really where we are collectively." He also recognized other styles among the different co-leaders.

Participant six claimed that servant leadership was one of his team's primary leadership styles, explaining that this was also a byproduct of Christian maturity. He noted that when this was absent it was evidence that leaders were losing their focus on Christ. Participant seven associated this style with his team as well. So did participants eight, nine, ten, and twelve. Participant thirteen stated, "Authentic leadership and servant leadership characterize the guys across the board." Still, he emphasized servant leadership as the primary style his team demonstrated.

Emotional intelligence. Participant one defined emotional intelligence as a qualification of leadership, basing this on the biblical passages that insist leaders be self-controlled, gentle, and balanced. Participant two also noticed this on his team. He said, "We try to use emotional intelligence and always be aware of ourselves and the people around us so that we know how to lead in that scenario." Participant three also affirmed that this approach was present on his team. Again, participant five observed this on his team, claiming that it was the predominant leadership strength of two team members. Participant six acknowledged emotional intelligence was present on his team but did not elaborate on it in much detail. The same was true for participants eight,

nine, ten, and twelve. Participant thirteen referenced one co-leader who excelled in this style of leadership in a way that benefitted the entire team.

Authentic leadership. Participant one acknowledged the importance of authentic leadership as well. Participant two agreed. He articulated:

> The authentic leadership comes in that we always describe ourselves as fellow strugglers. I mean we're not people that have arrived. We are people that understand that journey is part of everyone's process and everybody is just at some point along the journey and everyone is in process. He who began a good work in you will see it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Participant three included authentic leadership in his team's leadership approaches as well. Participant four claimed that authentic leadership was also present on his team.

As he did with both transformational leadership and servant leadership, participant six described authentic leadership as a derivative of an individual team member's focus on Christ and mature Christian walk. He also ascribed this leadership approach to his team. As with emotional intelligence, participant six mentioned that authentic leadership was a feature present on his team but did not elaborate on it beyond that. Participants eight, nine, ten, and twelve also defined this as a leadership approach present on their teams.

Participant eleven associated authentic leadership with relational leadership. This was his predominant leadership style. In spite of co-leading a nationally renowned mega-church, he was intentional about investing time in his relationships with team members. He stated:

> Every time I travel and speak somewhere I take one to three team members with me. I am in their offices far more than they are in my office. I'm hanging out at water coolers constantly. I leave about fifteen hours a week open purely for staff relationships.

He reiterated the importance of this leadership approach in contemporary ministry stating, "especially with our Millennials, they will stay and go anywhere because of relationship." This relational approach to leadership was instrumental to the leadership success he experienced on his shared leadership team.

Previously, participant thirteen asserted that this, along with servant leadership, was a defining leadership style epitomized by most of the co-leaders on his team. He reiterated that authentic leadership was "a pretty common trait shared by all."

Laissez faire leadership. Participant one admitted that without clear accountability to good organizational principles, shared leadership teams can be susceptible to this negative form of leadership. Participant seven stated that all the leadership approaches described here had been observed on his team but that the team was shifting to a predominantly transformational approach. In this statement, he admitted that laissez faire approaches were present among team members. He insisted that as the team grew to be more transformational, the laissez faire approach decreased and ceased to exist on the team. Participant twelve also acknowledged a small amount of laissez faire leadership on his team.

Participant eight stated that this was not present on his team and stressed the danger this can pose to shared leadership. Participant ten agreed, "we are not laissez faire. Not even, no."

Participant six elaborated on the importance of leader maturity noting that first and foremost leaders had to be rightly related to the Lord and walking in the Spirit. He believed that leaders who operated with biblical maturity would demonstrate maturity in their leadership approaches as well. Conversely, he warned that a lack of leadership maturity was directly traceable to where team members were at in their walks with the Lord. Participant eleven astutely affirmed the importance of leader maturity emphasizing the importance of having big

"L" leaders rather than small "l" leaders on the leadership team. Participant thirteen acknowledged the risk of laissez faire approaches stating, "we probably could be more directive in some areas."

Participants were asked what effect the leadership approaches they had selected had on team relationships. Although they did not elaborate on the effect of each style, they did emphasize the positive effect the leadership approaches they had selected had on their team relationships. Again, authentic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence were the leadership approaches that were most prevalent on the teams studied. Generally, they were positively related to team and organizational relationships.

The participants stated that leadership approaches should be considered as the right approaches can foster healthy relationships on the team and in the ministry and these relationships can then enable the team to rein in negative approaches like authoritarianism. The positive leadership approaches were correlated with team relationships, approachability, humility, trust, respect, communication, understanding, and serving. One participant noted that each team member's individual relationship with Christ was foundational to how they led on the team.

Participant one stated, "Immature people, emotionally unstable people, are constantly in conflict with others." He noted how this type of immature leadership was incompatible with effective shared leadership. Participant two elaborated, "Exercising authentic leadership and emotional intelligence is critical to relationships" and exercising "those two values, emotional intelligence and authentic leadership, helps to solidify relationships."

Participant three described how servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence led to trust on his team. Obviously, this is critical to

relationships. Participant four described how mature leadership approaches naturally lead to mutual respect, something that is critical to authentic relationships.

Participant five noted that in spite of a diversity of leadership approaches, individual talents, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds, his team was growing into a mutually supportive group. He mentioned, "We know and are getting to know each other, we trust one another. There really is trust. We love. We value one another." The team members were growing in these relational strengths as they grew into mature leaders and a mature team.

Participant six stressed the importance of growing in individual Christian maturity and keeping one's focus on Christ, insisting that this approach led to respect, appreciation, and bonding among team members. He previously associated this foundational principle with the transformational, servant, and authentic leadership he had observed on his team. He concluded that this was also essential to genuine relationships among team members.

Participant seven described how authoritarian and laissez faire approaches eroded team trust while the other approaches, particularly the transformational approach that was beginning to epitomize this team, cultivated trust. He correlated that increase in trust with relational growth on the team. He attributed the transformation on his team to the work of the Holy Spirit in team members.

Participant eight noted that the leadership approaches his team exhibited created a culture of approachability throughout the organization. In spite of twelve thousand members, he claimed there was no strong hierarchy and an "approachability throughout our entire system." This fostered healthy relationships. Participant nine added, "Some of them play into our capacity, and our ability, and our desire to humble ourselves to each other without blindly capitulating or just going along."

Participant ten affirmed the connection between his team's leadership approaches and team relationships stating, "It's certainly not negative in any way." He continued:

> My job as a leader is to make you more successful and so what does that mean. Not just in nickels and noses but I just want you to feel like you're able to use your gifts, you're able to speak into the process, you're able to be innovative and creative, you know, whatever you gift sets, I want you to be able to thrive.

In other words, his team's transformational approach led to selfless relationships.

Participant eleven added, "You have to know how the other guys lead and take that into account because it is going to affect your relationships." Participant twelve insisted that these different approaches brought a "balance of perspective" and a "balance of ways of handling situations" that was healthy.

Participant thirteen previously highlighted authentic leadership and servant leadership on his team. He insisted that co-leaders needed to demonstrate these qualities both in their leadership in the church and in their interactions with each other. In so doing, relationships on the team were fortified.

The leaders who were interviewed associated the different approaches present on their teams with effective leadership sharing. Some noted how the plurality and diversity of approaches equipped the team to be more effective than any individual operating alone would be. This enabled team members to trust other team members with skills and approaches different than their own and to value others' leadership styles. This led to collaboration and effective leadership sharing and helped set a culture of mutual reliance that perpetuated shared leadership.

Participant one agreed on the connection between leader maturity and leadership sharing stating, “Again, you’re coming back again to just fundamental things. We are talking about working relationships, good working relationships are based on mature people.”

Participant two did as well, noting, “These leadership approaches help the collaborative process.” Participant three noted that servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence precipitated team collaboration. Participant four claimed that the diversity of leadership approaches on his team led to mutual respect and a willingness to let co-leaders lead in areas they excel in.

Participant five stated that leader maturity and leadership approaches related “positively” to leadership sharing, explaining:

> We know each other, we’re getting to know each other better, we trust each other, and we embrace the diversity of styles and gifts. So I think it affects us positively in that regard. Because you’re willing to follow a guy’s lead even though it may not be the way you might approach it.

This willingness to rely on others with different approaches and skills became evident in many of these interviews.

Participant six stressed a willingness to share leadership and gratefulness for one’s team members that accompanied this model of leadership. Participant seven highlighted the “openness” that emotional intelligence, and transformational and authentic leadership styles had produced on the team. He elaborated on how these approaches enabled team members to contribute regardless of their status on the team.

Participant eight noted that their leadership approaches affected leadership sharing “very well.” He stated that, in spite of having an attendance of about twelve thousand, he did not even

know where an organizational flow chart was. He admitted one had been drawn up for a legal reason at one point but no one even knew where it was. The shared culture of the church enabled them to share leadership with whoever was best suited at any given time and in any given area to best help the church.

Participant nine surfaced an interesting concept. He stated that these different leadership approaches enabled his team "to create purposeful teams." In other words, because different team members embodied different mature leadership styles, the team was able to assemble sub-teams comprised of uniquely gifted team members, capable of meeting unique needs.

Participant ten explained how his team's transformational approach was foundational to how the whole church solicited the help of its members. He articulated, "You have to be transformational if you want to get volunteers to serve in a high capacity, people that don't have to show up, that don't have to get paid. I don't know any other way." By leading transformationally, his team was able to share leadership throughout the organization.

Participant eleven warned that the relationships between leadership approaches and leadership sharing was "the biggest piece and the trickiest piece for anyone doing shared leadership." He elaborated concerning the role of a "leader among equals" on the team, stating that this leader had to approach leadership with the perspective that "My entire role and goal here is to make these guys better. Let these guys lead. I'm here to serve, I'm here to fan the flame." In other words, he was adamant that an authoritarian approach to leadership would stifle true shared leadership. He insisted that authentic shared leadership had to go beyond simply changing titles; it had to include real power sharing.

Participant twelve did not directly connect these different leadership approaches with leadership sharing. He did, however, mention how these different approaches required team

members to grow in the area of communication. He believed this was critical to their collaboration. Participant thirteen confirmed that leadership approaches had a "huge" impact on leadership sharing.

Alexander Strauch recapped that and the significance of leader maturity stating, "I could summarize the apostolic qualifications both in Titus and in Timothy and in 1 Peter 5 as mature Christian well-balanced men. You don't even qualify if you're not a mature leader" (personal communication, January 18, 2017). Timperly's (2005) warning of the potential for a "distribution of incompetence" on shared leadership teams (p. 417) was not new to any of these participants. There was an acute awareness of the importance of team member maturity. Team members who demonstrated mature leadership approaches became valuable assets on shared leadership teams.

Team attributes. Most of the team attributes described in this study (guiding documents, healthy team size, team history, diversity of skills and approaches, well defined roles, a clear decision-making protocol, and true accountability) were present on most of the teams studied with one notable exception. A significant number of organizations had no guiding documents and governed their shared leadership structure mostly organically. One participant, whose team had both a charter and an organic approach, stated that the organic approach facilitated a healthy relational atmosphere while the charter provided a safeguard for the relational approach in case anyone were ever to try to hijack the team.

Participants one, three, nine, and ten stated that each of these team attributes were present on their ministry teams. Participants two, four, and five claimed that all except guiding documents were present on their teams. Participant six leads in an elder run church that has been

transitioning to this model over the last several years. Consequentially, they were growing in many of these team attributes but not yet proficient in most of them.

Participant seven acknowledged most of these attributes but admitted that the team lacked a shared history and that this lack of a shared history created a need for growth in other areas, like in the area of accountability. There was more observable growth in this team and the other team surveyed that lacked a long shared history. In other words, it seemed that younger teams were typically preoccupied with growing in these areas while more mature teams had reached a productive equilibrium.

Participant eight affirmed all of these attributes except guiding documents and well defined roles. Although not necessarily well defined, he claimed their roles were clearly defined. He insisted they approached ministry this way because of an organizational commitment to maintaining an organic and fluid culture.

Participant eleven claimed that most of these attributes were present. By design, his team did not have guiding documents. He also thought their team size of four was too small and preferred a team size of six to eight. Finally, his team lacked a clear decision-making protocol and this was causing some issues.

Participant twelve affirmed all of these attributes accept accountability. He was one of the few participants that noted some laissez faire tendencies on his team. He admitted that authentic accountability was an area of needed growth. Participant thirteen affirmed each of these traits but believed his team's size was a little too large. He believed their optimum size was between six and eight team members.

Guiding documents. Participant one emphasized the importance of the biblical principles found in Scripture and how those principles needed to guide every aspect of the team.

He stated, “Our guiding document, by the way, is the Bible,” and described how his church used Alexander Strauch’s book *Biblical Eldership* since it fairly represented the relevant biblical texts on leadership. Participant three stated that his team did employ guiding documents. He mentioned that their bylaws and the truths on this topic expressed in the Bible, Alexander Strauch’s book *Biblical Eldership*, and Dr. Joseph Hellerman’s books were foundational to their approach.

Participant four elaborated, “We don’t have any guiding documents. Sorry. It’s more understood, understood policies that are not written down on paper.” The team on which participant five leads had numerous “tools and resources but not one single document.” As previously mentioned, the church led by participant six did have a constitution that guarded how co-leaders related to and interacted with each other as they led the church. They also relied on the principles of plural eldership outlined by both Strauch and Getz in their books on the topic.

The team on which participant seven leads had guidelines and structure but also approached leadership sharing organically and relationally. Participant eight was emphatic, “We definitely don’t have any guiding documents.” He stressed the organic approach to administration that his team employed.

Participant nine was unsure of his team’s guiding documents but upon further investigation it was determined that they did have bylaws that governed their practice of shard leadership. Participant ten was certain of his team’s guiding documents. He affirmed, “We have guiding documents on how we should relate with each other on the team. It stems from something we call leadership expectations, which we all subscribe to.”

Participant eleven reiterated that his team had no guiding documents. His team, like some of the others interviewed, used an organic approach that they thought better fostered authentic

relationships. He reiterated, “it is up to the leaders on that team to constantly guide and decide how we do this.”

Participant twelve affirmed the presence of basic guiding documents. However, his ministry was quite organic in their approach to shared leadership. The same could be said for participant thirteen. He agreed that his team’s by-laws guarded the team.

Team size. Participant one stated that his ministry’s elder board was the right size and that it had fluctuated between five and eight members. Participant two noted, “Team size is just right for the work we do” but clarified that their six co-pastors held too much responsibility and needed to delegate more to leaders within the congregation. Participant three noted that their sweet spot was between seven and nine co-pastors. Their current team had ten members and that was creating some difficulties.

Participant four claimed that his team size of six co-leaders was “just right.” Participant five did as well. His team, which was a different team than the previous participant’s, also had six co-leaders. Participant six stated that their team size of five elders “has been good” but added that they were in the process of considering a sixth elder.

Participant seven thought his team size was adequate but saw room for improvement. Participant eight stated that his team size of four co-pastors was “either just right or close to right.” He warned of the increased complexity of teams that grew too large.

Participant nine leads on a team that currently has nine members and he said their sweet spot was between seven and nine. Participant ten insisted that their team size of five co-leaders was just right for their ministry of six thousand. He did admit that they were contemplating adding a sixth co-leader. They were, however, considering this for the sake of team diversity not team size. He admitted, “we’re a little reluctant because five people is great.”

Participant eleven led with four senior pastors who shared the leadership of the church. This team oversees a large mega-church. He believed this team was too small and thought six to eight would be a preferable size.

Participant twelve believed that his team's size of six members was about right. Participant thirteen believed that his team, which had ten members, had grown a little too large. He had preferred six to eight team members.

Team history. Participant one stated that many of the elders had served together for decades and that their shared history had led to deep relational harmony. He stated, "We have deep, deep, long relationships. My best friends are my fellow elders." Participant two agreed, stating, "there is good longevity for our team and I think we're better for it because of that." Participant three emphasized the importance of team history, noting this on his team.

Participant four noted that many of his co-leaders had been on his team for varying amounts of time. There were some with whom there were long shared histories and others who were much newer to the team. Participant five affirmed this attribute. The newest member on his team had been there for four years while the rest of the team had been serving together for ten to thirteen years. He believed that their team history had led to trust and relationships.

Participant six explained how most of his team's elders were relatively new to the team. Two have been on the team for four years, three for a little over a year and one was recently added. As a consequence, the elder team was growing together but did not have a long shared history.

Participant seven said that his team lacked this attribute as some of the team members had only served together for a short time. The team led by participant eight had a long shared history, spent significant time together, and had minimal turnover. Participant nine affirmed this

trait as well. Participant ten did too. He elaborated, "There is a long history, so we've all known each other for a decade plus. So we trust one another."

Participant eleven concurred noting the long team history shared by the four co-leaders. Participant twelve's team had not been together nearly as long but he still felt that they had enough of a shared history to work well together. Participant thirteen's team members had a robust history together and had been on the team between four and twenty years.

Team diversity of strengths and approaches. Participant one admitted, "we're definitely not equal in our gifts." He also noted how one elder's preaching gift had grown the church, how another's administrative gift had been instrumental, and how another's evangelistic gift had led to innovative outreach ideas. These co-leaders found success in leadership through relying on each other's diverse strengths. Participant two affirmed this as well, mentioning that his team had all the key leadership gifts mentioned in Ephesians four except a gifted evangelist. There was a plurality of diverse gifts with this one exception. Participant three said that his team comprised a diversity of strengths. He noted how the recent addition of an African-American co-pastor had strengthened the rest of the team.

Participant four affirmed the value of recognizing diverse strengths and gifts on his team saying, "I really accept this diversity as a positive thing." He continued:

> God gives us different gifts, He gives us different talents, he gives us different strengths, he gives different weaknesses, and He created all that so that the body could come together. And my elbow, so to speak, could support you because your elbow is broken and your finger can support me because my finger is broken. So we're working together and we need each other. God created us. I'm passionate for this, not to isolate, not to dictate, but to serve together.

He summarized, “it’s amazing how He [God] builds love and trust and patience through diversity.”

Participant five is a member of a diverse team with diverse strengths, skills, and gifts, ministering in a diverse context. He recognized that diversity was “absolutely an attribute,” and added, “we embrace that.” Participant six agreed, “We do have diversity of strengths. I don’t have any yes men; that’s a fact. None of these guys has said whatever you want pastor and I’m thankful for that because there’s no accountability in that.”

Participant seven added, “I would also say that we definitely have diverse strengths and diverse approaches to things which is healthy.” Participant eight affirmed this attribute stating simply, “Very much diverse strengths and approaches to things.” Participant nine affirmed this trait as well. Participant ten agreed, “We have different strengths and we approach things from different angles.” He added, “we do have that and we’re aware of that and we want to embrace that.”

Participant eleven echoed that sentiment stating, “We definitely have diverse strengths and approach things from different angles. We love that. We allow that.” Participant twelve agreed, “We definitely have diverse strengths and approaches to things.” Participant thirteen said his team did as well.

Well defined roles. Participant one stated, “Every elder has a job description.” He previously outlined various skills and abilities that different elders had and how those had benefitted the church. Again, participant two acknowledged the presence of well-defined roles on his team. It was his team that had six co-pastors with distinct roles; five held unique ministry roles while the sixth was tasked with keeping the others accountable to their roles. Pastor three

admitted that this had been a struggle in the past but insisted their team was growing in this important area.

Participant four insisted that his team had well defined roles and that these roles were "very defined," "very, very well defined." The team on which participant five leads also had very clearly defined roles but they were still growing in this area. Participant six claimed that his team was still growing in this area as well, even though team members did have specific roles. He elaborated, "We probably need to define the roles in a much more specific way."

Participant seven agreed, "We do have specific roles that each of us has." Participant eight differed somewhat claiming that although they did have role distinctions their roles were only generally defined. They were intentional about fostering an organic and relational culture and wanted to leave room for flexibility. Additionally, he insisted that no role, regardless of tenure, guaranteed an individual would be tasked with a specific responsibility. His church was careful to ensure that young leaders always had opportunities to thrive and made room for a plurality of younger leaders across a wide spectrum of opportunities. He clarified, "There's not confusion about what roles are but the boundaries are not solid. People can move in and out of roles."

Again, participant nine affirmed the presence of well defined roles on his team. So did participant ten whose ministry co-leaders each had different areas of responsibility to which they were accountable. Participant eleven agreed, "We let any issues, problems, decision making, leadership come up. We always say, 'Who does that best in their strengths?' And allow them to lead out of their strengths." The team with which participant twelve led did this and they had well defined roles.

Participant thirteen made an interesting contribution here. His team had well defined roles in the church but not within the leadership team. In other words, within the church, each team member was tasked with specific responsibilities. However, at the leadership team level there was total equality in decision-making.

A clear decision-making protocol. Participant one stated, "We're pretty good at making decisions." He continued, "we don't argue. A presentation is made, one brother will take the lead and unless we see something against it, let's go with it. We'll give our objections and if he stands his ground, let's go." He concluded, "We can make decisions very rapidly." The team on which participant two serves had a clear decision making protocol. Their team empowered leaders to make decisions in their individual spheres of responsibility, sought consensus on church decisions, and highlighted the importance of listening to team members who strongly advocated for or disagreed with different decisions. Participant three described his team's decision-making protocol simply as "consensus."

Participant four stated that his team's decision-making protocol involved focused prayer, open communication and a simple majority vote. Participant five leads on the same team as participant two and their decision-making protocol is clearly defined. Again, participant five stated that his team was continuing to grow in this area but noted that as they grew speed in decision-making was becoming commonplace. He elaborated:

> One of the criticisms of shared leadership is that it's slow, decisions can't be made quickly enough. But I think as we have progressed in trusting each other and also in some of the other things, like clarifying roles, decision making, we've gained speed in our decision-making.

It should be noted that participant one shared virtually the same sentiment about speed in decision-making.

Participant six explained his church's history and how they had been transitioning to this model over the past several years. Although they had grown in this he claimed that they still needed to articulate better protocols for decision-making. Their elder team strives for consensus in their decision-making.

Participant seven said that his team was growing in the area of collaborative decision-making and that their protocol was becoming clearer. The team led by participant eight had a slightly different approach. He explained:

> I would say there's generally clear decision-making protocol. There's a sense, unspoken, we kind of know how things are done here. But our decision to be fluid and organic creates some confusion at times. That's the downside of it. The upside is flexibility.

Most of the teams included some type of relational, organic component in their decision-making protocol.

That was true of the team on which participant nine leads. His team did have a decision-making procedure but they left room for team interaction and plasticity. He injected humor into this conversation articulating this as "Holy chaotic." He concluded that there is a protocol but there is also room for flexibility.

The team led by participant ten had a firm approach to decision making. He explained, "There is a clear decision making protocol for every decision we make." They strived for consensus, what their team called "a fist of five." In times when enthusiastic consensus was not possible, the team sought to achieve a decision that everyone could at least support. Participant ten admitted, "I have to get to that fist of five. You know, I might not like it. I might not think

it's best, but I got to get to a place where I will support it." He concluded, "we all have to commit before we leave a meeting."

The team with which participant eleven led approached shared leadership in more of an organic way. He admitted some differences of opinion on how to proceed with different decisions facing the ministry. Other ministries with clearer decision-making protocols seemed able to circumvent this type of impediment. Their ministry had embraced one practice that did expedite decision-making. Whenever two senior pastors agreed on something, it was "set in motion." This allowed their team to avoid "bottlenecks and logjams."

Participant twelve affirmed a clear decision-making protocol "for the most part." Participant thirteen also affirmed this attribute. His team began with open and transparent communication and then observed the trajectory of their conversation to see how God was leading the team as a whole. This team was careful to emphasize the humility and love amongst team members throughout the decision-making process over the decisions that were made.

True accountability. Participant one stated, "Yes, there is real accountability." He also emphasized that without real accountability that is guarded by good organizational principles, organizations can succumb to the risk of a lack of follow-through, what he called an "organizational sand trap." Participant two explained how his team had fallen pray to the lack of accountability that can be a risk to teams but had compensated for that by adopting a new approach to accountability (which included delegating the responsibility for keeping the team accountable to one team-member). With the advent of increased accountability the team had thrived. Participant three also mentioned how many things were left undone on their team prior to adopting a better approach to accountability. Participant three agreed that this attribute was present on his team too.

Participant four emphasized the importance of accountability, stating, “We passionately believe in accountability. God created us to have accountability. We need it.” The team on which participant five leads also had a fairly rigorous approach to accountability but, as stated in participant two’s response, this had grown out of past failures in this area. Participant five noted that his team was growing in this key attribute.

Participant six highlighted the accountability on his team stating that the elders kept each other accountable. Participant seven affirmed accountability on his team but acknowledged a need for continued growth in this area. There was definitely accountability on participant eight’s team but he added, “You probably get more time to fail here, which means we’re slower to deal with failure. We’ve fired eight people, I think, in the history of this church, in the thirty-six years I’ve been there.” Participant nine corroborated the existence of true accountability on his team as well.

So did participant ten. His team put their decisions and responsibilities in writing and on the calendar and kept each other accountable to these items. They added an interesting feature to accountability. They made it a point to ask each other for “the last ten percent; that piece that most people don’t want to share.” In other words, they were careful to go beyond just giving lip service to accountability. They actively surfaced the uncomfortable and easy to glance over failures in the hopes of keeping the team strong. He summarized, “we often utilize that language and that technique to make sure that our team is healthy.”

Participant eleven believed that accountability on his team was good and attributed this to the co-leaders’ commitment to keeping each other accountable. Participant twelve saw this as a weakness on his team and thought a good way to grow in this area was to ask deeper and more authentic questions. Participant thirteen affirmed the presence of true accountability on his team.

Most of the team attributes considered were positively related to relationships in the leadership team and throughout the organization. Some of the attributes, like team size and team history, were reiterated over and over. These will be discussed in more detail below. Many of these team attributes were associated with traits like teamwork, respect, and trust that were related to positive relationships and effective shared leadership. Again, the importance of individual leaders' walks with the Lord was reiterated as a foundational issue.

Participant one affirmed the relationship between these attributes and team relationships. Participant two did as well, saying, "They reflect positively." He emphasized the importance of team accountability, team size, and team communication, stating that these were critical to team relationships.

Participant three agreed, mentioning that although these attributes do not "guarantee you're going to win every time," with them everything "just works better." Participant four insisted that these features led to mutual respect and that determined how team members related to one another.

Participant five agreed, prioritizing the trust that had been cultivated on the team. He explained that since different team members approached leadership in different ways, "We just trust each other. When an assignment is given, you trust that a guy is going to get it done." By allowing each team member to thrive in their different areas, they allowed each other to be the firsts among equals in the different areas of their strengths. He emphasized the importance of mature leadership stating, "You want to have Biblical leaders. We have biblical leaders."

Although he saw the value of these attributes and their relation to relationships, participant six was quick to go deeper, again referencing the foundational element of the co-leaders' individual walks with the Lord. He clarified:

> And so the question is how are we learning to walk with God in the midst of this as brothers to where we're not allowing things that are insignificant to divide us and we are staying true to the Gospel staying true to Christ by his grace by his strength by his power.

He summarized, stating that healthy protocols were related to healthy relationships but again emphasized the primacy of the "spiritual element."

Participant seven elaborated on many of these attributes and their relationship to team relationships. He realized the protective benefit of team guidelines, noting how they kept team members accountable in a way that fostered healthy relationships. He realized that their smaller team size was conducive to deeper relationships on the team. He also recognized how the diversity present among his team members fostered a sense of healthy interdependence. Finally, he emphasized the health that accountability led to on the team. Previously he related this with team trust and associated trust with deeper relationships.

Participant eight noted that the team attributes present on his team facilitated successful shared leadership in their environment. He believed their organic approach had an impact on their culture and created freedom for team members. He emphasized the importance of "authenticity, relationships, being organic, and letting people move around," contending "those add to shared leadership."

Participant nine was convinced that these team attributes cemented "a sense of confidence in one another" and allowed team members "to have more intimacy than the time we spend would allow or not allow." Participant ten agreed stating that these attributes created a sense of peace with co-leaders that enabled them to lead with stability and consistency and without fear and stress, things that can obviously harm workplace relationships.

Participant eleven claimed that healthy team attributes were the glue that held the team together and fostered the healthy relationships needed for shared leadership. He summarized, "every one of these is critical to the relationships and doing them well or not doing them well is going to make or break the system." Participant twelve emphasized the attribute of time and how it had benefitted his team.

Participant thirteen summarized each of the attributes and described a positive correlation between proficiency in these attributes and team relationships. His only exception was the guiding documents, for which he did not see an immediate benefit to relationships. Elsewhere, he and others eluded to the way in which the guiding documents protected the team. In summary, it could be said that relationships guide shared leadership teams while guiding documents guard them. Guiding documents might be more appropriately titled guarding documents.

Unsurprisingly, proficiency in various team attributes was also associated with effective leadership sharing. Respondents were not asked to correlate each team attribute with relational outcomes but they were quick to affirm the relationships between the attributes listed and team relationships. These attributes were related with mutual reliance and trust that precipitated leadership sharing. These characteristics also led to speed on teams. A lack of efficiency was often referenced as one of the weaknesses of shared leadership but this seemed to be compensated for on teams who comprised more of these team attributes. These team attributes did foster effective leadership sharing on the teams investigated in this research.

Participant one stated, "We're implementing all the things above, so all of them together certainly give us a rather effective team group that each man is contributing quite a bit to the team." Participant two explained that his team's shared leadership model led to a culture where team members were mutually committed to their collective success. This led to an openness to

sharing leadership. Participant three summarized the importance of these attributes and their relationship to leadership sharing saying, “They’re great.” He added:

> We all know what our strengths and our weaknesses are. And there’s a genuine rejoicing that somebody else is better at that. And when they do it well we’re rooting for them. You know there’s just this sense of rooting for one another.

This mutuality led to a willingness to share leadership with team members.

Participant four emphasized how these attributes led to team settings in which it was easier to trust God with His work. He concluded, “I have the peace that passes all understanding that God’s in control.” As previously mentioned, participant five claimed that speed in leadership sharing and decision-making had become an outcome as the team grew in these attributes. He was clear that growing in these attributes over time led to better team functioning and enabled the team to circumvent the perceived weaknesses of shared leadership.

Participant six explained that proficiency in the aforementioned attributes led to a “recognition of fit” that enabled team members to thrive in their individual strengths and trusting others in the areas they are better fit for. Participant seven explained how certain of these attributes in conjunction with diverse situations faced, diverse personalities on the team, and diverse gifts and approaches shared by co-leaders led to increased leadership sharing on the team.

Participant eight warned, “Some of those attributes on the list would help and some on the list, I think, undercut true shared leadership.” He said the danger was in the rigidity. He gave two examples. He claimed that if guiding documents were too rigid, relationships might suffer. He also warned that if a team had a long shared history, there might be an unwillingness to

accommodate new leaders. He summarized, “So I think a lot of these attributes, it all depends on how rigid they are. The more rigid they are the less true shared leadership you’ll have.”

Participant nine emphasized how these attributes fostered a sense of mutuality that enabled team members to appreciate each others’ gifts and strengths and personalities.” This led to proficiency in sharing leadership but also helped the individual leaders grow in their individual capacities, as they became the point people for their ministry in the areas of their strengths. He elaborated, “We’re more competent individually because of our capacity to interact with each other, share with each other, trust each other.”

Participant ten added that because of these attributes, “we rely on each other’s strengths” and that “allows us to share.” Considering the impact of these team attributes on the capacity for leadership sharing, participant eleven explained, “It’s going to work or it’s not going to work based on can you do these.”

Participant twelve again emphasized the element of time and how it had helped develop his team to be able to better function together. Participant thirteen also correlated these attributes with effective leadership sharing. He was careful to emphasize that certain features, “like the size of the team, how long the team has been together, defined roles, decision making protocol,” had a greater impact on leadership sharing than others like “the jots and tittles on a guiding document.”

Dr. Hellerman affirmed that these team attributes, in different capacities, were important to quality team relationships and effective leadership sharing (personal communication, January 6, 2017). Strauch agreed, “These attributes absolutely lead to mature relationships” (personal communication, January 18, 2017). The relationship between team attributes and team relationships and leadership sharing was evident.

Relational features. The relational features in consideration (team relational strength, prayer, genuine trust, effective communication, productive conflict that leads to innovation and creativity, and quick conflict resolution when relational conflict occurs) were all present in growing capacities on most of the teams studied. This was expected as teams that share leadership will inevitably be forced to cultivate healthy relationships for continued survival. Of the relational traits considered, prayer seemed to be the trait most teams were weakest in. Most teams had also acknowledged the importance of traits like communication and accountability and emphasized how they had been forced to commit time and energy to growing in these important areas. The value of team relationships was continually emphasized underscoring the importance of these traits.

Participant one affirmed the presence of these relational features on his team stating, "We are right on target with every one of them. We would be committed to all these right here. We would be highly committed to exactly what you stated." Participants three, four, six, nine, and eleven also acknowledged each of these features on their teams. Participant seven did too but admitted some were weaker than others. Participant two emphasized the importance of these features but acknowledged that they were easy to neglect if not intentionally pursued.

Participant five said his team exhibited each feature except effective communication but was quick to assert that the team was taking intentional steps and growing in this area. Participant eight had observed most of these attributes on his team with one notable exception. Although the leadership team did pray frequently with the rest of the staff, they were not frequently praying as a leadership team. Additionally, he did not elaborate on whether there was productive conflict but did stress that his team was quick to resolve relational conflict. Participant ten's response was similar. He affirmed the existence of each of these traits on his

team but noted his team's weakness in the area of prayer. Interestingly, the two largest ministries surveyed for this research both noted a weakness in the area of prayer.

Participant twelve admitted his team was weak in most of these relational features. His team had been together for the shortest amount of time of any of those surveyed. It was clear that they were still in the learning stages of shared leadership. Remember, his team was also lower in accountability and had some laissez faire tendencies. He perceptively observed, "I think we could be much further than we are but that's where we extend the grace to one another and understanding of who we are in our differences."

Participant thirteen affirmed each of these features on his team. He was careful to note that prayer was not as strong as it had been on his team in the past. Concerning these relational features, he argued, "All these attributes kind of rest on the time that is spent together and the transparency and authenticity as we share our personal lives."

Team relationships. Concerning the depth and authenticity of relationships on his team participant one reiterated, "My best friends are my fellow elders." Participant two continued, "I think generally the relationships are good." Participant three stated that "Absolutely" relationships on his team were very strong.

Participant four noted that relationships on his team were "strong and getting stronger." Participant five was firm, "relationships are very strong collectively." Participant six agreed, "I would rate our relationships as strong." Participant seven claimed that team relationships were "very strong." He claimed that team members were taking time away from ministry to cultivate their relationships.

Participant eight confirmed, "relationships on the team are strong." Participant nine agree, "relational strength, that's one of ours." Participant ten was emphatic, "The first one is an

absolute. Our relationships are strong." Participant eleven agreed, "Relationships, highly strong. Hanging out together, traveling together, a genuine interest together, doing stuff outside of church together. Definitely."

Participant twelve was a bit of an anomaly here as he admitted that relationships on his team were not very strong. Remember, this team had a shorter history than many of the others surveyed so this was somewhat to be expected. He did confirm that relationships were growing over time.

Participant thirteen had no reservations about relationships on his team. He enthusiastically confirmed, "Relationships on the team are very strong, that's a big yes." He added, "the team members like hanging out with each other outside team meetings." The relationships on this team seemed to be particularly strong. That became evident in this interview and interviews with two of this leader's co-leaders.

Prayer. Participant one stated that his team began each of their meetings with a time of prayer together. Participant two realized the importance of team prayer but acknowledged that sometimes it can fall through the cracks without diligent intentionality. Participant three agreed with this feature, mentioning that his team met together for prayer each Tuesday.

Participant four explained how his team opened each meeting with prayer and had a prayer meeting each Monday but admitted, "prayer is something we could improve on." Prayer is fundamental to how the team on which participant five leads functions. Participant five explained:

> Prayer is an important part of how our team operates. We pray regularly together. Every team member is involved in prayer. Sometimes we are more expedient than we are

> prayerful but generally we take time to talk about what's going on, what are the needs, then we take time to pray. It could be a third of our time together.

This commitment to prayer laid a foundation for this team's leadership sharing in ministry.

Participant six highlighted this feature on his team stating, "prayer is a real key in terms of our time together. Some of my favorite times with the elders are our prayer times. No question about it. There is something very, very sweet about that." Participant seven also emphasized the importance of prayer on his team stating that they were continually recognizing the importance of prayer and often praying together.

Participant eight agreed, "Obviously prayer is an important part of our ministry," but then admitted, "but not how the team operates." Although the church was committed to weekly prayer times the co-pastors were not meeting frequently to pray together.

The leadership team with whom participant nine led was quite different; they were absolutely committed to team prayer on a weekly basis. He clarified, "Prayer: Yes, yes, yes. I'm not trying to be rude but whatever you say about prayer is true of us. A lack of prayer can erode relationships." He insisted that their team prayed frequently together for both ministry needs and personal needs. This led to harmony on his team. He summarized, "You can be mad at each other, or irritated with each other, or sick of each other but you can not have animosity with each other when you do that sincerely on a regular basis."

Participant ten was contrite about a lack of sufficient prayer admitting, "Sadly, I don't know that we're praying for each other enough. I think we pray for guidance and direction to make good decisions. It's probably not prevalent enough; we could certainly do more."

Participant eleven affirmed prayer was present on his team but acknowledged a deficiency in this area. Participant twelve did not comment on the issue of prayer on his team.

Prayer had traditionally been a strong point for the team with which participant thirteen led but as the team had grown large they found themselves praying less than they would have hoped.

Trust. Participant one acknowledged the importance of trust stating, "Trust is important. How do you relate to anyone without trust?" Participant two affirmed this on his team asserting, "There is a genuine trust for one another." Participant three agreed that this feature was present on his team as well.

Participant four was adamant about this stating, "There's definitely genuine trust for each other, no question about that." Participant five agreed, "absolutely!" He clarified, "There really is trust," "we trust each other." He believed the love and the trust the co-leaders shared with each other enabled them to lead effectively as a team.

Participant six said that there was genuine trust on his team but stated this with a caveat. He continued, "Fundamentally we don't trust one another. Fundamentally we trust Christ. The Lord is who we trust in order to keep each and every one of us in line." In other words, as the team follows Christ and trusts Him, they are quick to trust each other because of Christ's work in the team and its members. He concluded, "fundamentally we want to trust the Lord but we also want to build trust with one another and I think there's genuine trust that the motives of each person on this team are for the kingdom, for the Lord."

Participant seven agreed that there was genuine trust on his team, noting, "We're open. We're vulnerable. We talk about things that can even be seemingly uncomfortable to talk about." Participant eight added, "Yeah, we have genuine trust, it's very high." Participant nine agreed. So did participant ten, who explained, "We do have a genuine trust for each other. We're going to believe the best. That's a term we frequently use."

Participant eleven highlighted his team's organizational culture that prioritized the concept of "high trust and no surprises." He stated, "You have to have high trust and no surprises, and we are very, very big on high trust and no surprises."

Participant twelve admitted, "over time we've learned to step into trust in small ways. But I do think there's a lot of area for growth in that." Participant thirteen was much less reserved. He was adamant about the team's high level of trust.

Effective communication. Participant one stated that with poor communication, "you're going to be sunk and you're going to have poor relationships and poor leadership." As previously mentioned, participant two correlated effective communication with successful leadership sharing. He also referenced "an ease of flow of information" in his organization. Participant three explained how this had often been an obstacle his team had needed to overcome but modern communication technology and tools had made this easier.

Participant four agreed that communication is important to shared leadership. He explained, "Communication is so important; it's golden. And that makes or breaks you. I think you can always work to improve communication and that's something we're really focusing on right now." Although growing in this area, participant five admitted, "Communication is an area that we have struggled with from top to bottom. So I'd say it's improving. We're intentionally working to improve it." Participant six witnessed effective communication on his team too.

Participant seven repeated a typical theme, effective communication was happening on his team but it was an area the team realized they needed to grow in and were taking steps towards that goal. Participant eight had a different perspective; he confidently asserted, "Generally, very effective communication." Participant nine also affirmed this attribute but admitted, "we get an eighty for that instead of a hundred."

Participant ten was confident in his team's effective communication skills. He explained how the team met weekly for two ours of conversation and began each day of the week with a five-minute conference call between each of the co-leaders. Because of their proficiency in communication, their team members were in complete alignment.

Participant eleven stated that his team was deft in effective communication as well. Participant twelve was less optimistic, noting that his team's communication was "very much a work in progress." Participant thirteen affirmed effective communication on his team.

Productive conflict. Participant one described the importance of allowing co-leaders to lead with their strengths. He stated, "we don't want shared leadership to hold down good leadership." Because of that, the team was committed to hearing each other out and allowing co-leaders the leverage to lead in new areas. He emphasized how this had led to innovative decisions. Participant two also noted his team's experience of productive conflict. Participant three shared this conviction, stating, "especially over the last couple of years we've had some great conflict."

Participant four believed that his team exhibited productive conflict that led to innovation and creativity. He stated that productive conflict built humility into team members allowing them to see that they did not always have all the answers and that sometimes other team members did. Participant five claimed that his team was not afraid of productive conflict. He explained, "We embrace conflict. We all show up ready to duke it out because something good is going to come out."

Concerning this benefit, participant six exclaimed, "There's productive conflict for innovation and creativity. Yeah." Participant seven agreed, associating productive conflict with increased communication and contribution among team members. Participant nine affirmed this

on his team as well. So did participant ten, who saw the value in this stating, “We’re not afraid to challenge each other on some hard things.” He added, “I can’t imagine not being able to do that.”

Participant eleven affirmed that his team was “doing productive conflict incredibly well.” He added that they were committed to “Shutting the door, locking it and saying, ‘Bar the door, it’s go time.’ And just putting stuff on the table and letting it out.” This type of productive conflict was commonplace on these teams and often led to incredible outcomes.

Participant twelve agreed that there had been productive conflict on his team. So did participant thirteen. He quipped, “I don’t know how much innovation and creativity results but we do not beat around the elephant in the room.”

Conflict resolution. Participant one noted that there are an endless number of things that can lead to conflict among co-leaders. He emphasized the importance of quickly addressing conflict and keeping each other accountable to biblical principles of harmonious relationships. Participant two was quick to admit that conflict did become personal at times but clarified, “We do resolve that conflict when it comes up.” Participant three acknowledged the importance of quick conflict resolution but noted, “to be real honest, hardly ever does it [productive conflict] turn personal.” He elaborated, “that type of conflict is rare. Maybe three or four times over the last ten or fifteen years.” He clarified that high trust on the team led to productive conflict, whereas a lack of trust could lead to relational conflict. In other words, his team’s high level of trust safeguarded them from relational conflict.

In cases where productive conflict led to relational conflict, participant four was clear, “We don’t let the sun go down on our anger, in general. We don’t carry a bunch of stuff against each other.” Participant five admitted that sometimes productive conflict veered into personal conflict but was clear that this relational conflict was always cleared up quickly.

Participant six was adamant that whenever division, frustration, or anger appeared on the team the first priority was to get that right with the Lord. He realized that resolving such conflict was critical to the team's capacity to experience God's strength and power in ministry.

Participant seven admitted that productive conflict did become relational at times and that they were "learning as a team to rightly and quickly handle any kind of relational dispute that we might have amongst each other as soon as possible." Participant eight agreed, "We handle conflict really well. Otherwise we would have much more turnover." Participant nine said his team was quick to resolve conflict as well.

Participant ten confirmed that his team was quick to address and resolve conflict. They tried to do this in a respectful, one-on-one way but were willing to do it in their leadership meetings when needed. Interestingly, shortly before the interview, this participant had finished a phone call with a co-leader with whom he had recently had a disagreement. The ministry with which he led was clearly committed to this biblical principle.

Whenever productive conflict became personal, participant eleven affirmed that his team had "pretty quick conflict resolution." Participant twelve said that there had been quick conflict resolution at times and that his team had failed in this area at other times. Participant thirteen was confident about this, stating that his team was quick to resolve conflict whenever relational conflict occurred.

Participants noted the value of relationships and agreed that the health of relationships on the team was proportional to the team's capacity to effectively share leadership. With that in mind, the relational features described were positively associated with team relational strength.

Participant one was emphatic about the relationship between these features and the team's relationships and leadership sharing. Participant two was adamant about this also,

maintaining, “Without those relational aspects we’d be dead in the water, they’re just that important to get things done. Otherwise you’d end up with five or six people with six different silos and territory and all of that junk.” Participant three described the importance of relationships noting how proficiency in these relational features led to stronger relationships, which reinforced these features, and vice versa.

Participant four asserted that this relational approach to leadership was God’s design for leaders; He insisted, “I think when you have a team working together it’s a model in the sense of the Body of Christ, because God doesn’t create us to isolate. He doesn’t create us to be solo heroes.”

Participant five explained how team relationships were really founded on the relational feature of trust. He elaborated, “I would go back to trust. It adds another strand to the trust tangle. When there’s trust you’re willing to give more, to engage more, to keep giving more of your self.”

Participant six confirmed that the relational features that were previously described really helped relationships on the team. Participant seven summarized, “All of these really increase the quality of the relationships that we have.” Participant eight explained how leadership sharing did lead to close relationships within the leadership team but explained that the organization was so large there was not an opportunity for close relationships with everyone. He noted their shared leadership culture that included teams throughout the organization. He described close relationships on the different teams but not necessarily among everyone throughout all the teams.

Participant nine stated, “we’re a better team because of the strength of our relationships.” He described how their relational strength helped their team persevere through hardship and

failure and grow in honesty and authenticity. As they battled through these things together, as a team, the strength of their relationships grew.

Concerning the impact of these relational features on co-leader relationships, participant ten exclaimed, “phenomenal” and “awesome.” Participant eleven added:

> Because relationship is the most important part of shared leadership, you have to be strategic to pursue relationships with each other. You can’t just let that organically happen like it would, you know, in the church office most of the time. You have to intentionally pursue relationships.

In other words, these relational features were so critical that they had to be strategically pursued in order for shared leadership to work.

Participant twelve realized how these relational features affected team relationships. He was quick to assert how important it was for each of the leaders to allow God to transform them to be used how He desired. He concluded, “As a leader I’m not excluded from this work that God has in my life. We’re all in this process together, leader or follower.”

Concerning team relationships and their relationship to these relational features, participant thirteen was clear, “They are absolutely crucial to it.” He added, “They basically are the way we relate to each other and they affect the rest of ministry at so many levels.” He was convinced of the necessity of these relational features.

Again, the participants highlighted the importance of relationships and noted that relational commitment made leadership sharing possible. These relational features were associated with shared leadership and participants mostly agreed that apart from them effective shared leadership would not be possible. The relational features outlined seem critical to effective shared leadership in Christian ministry.

Participant one affirmed the value of these relational features and their relevance to leadership sharing stating that when these relational features are present, "you're going to have success." Participant two articulated:

> There's a mutual respect, mutual appreciation of giftedness, and understanding of commitment. Those all allow us to see each other as God's gift to the church. So we look at the different gifts, we've got a visionary, we've got a finance guy, we've got a worship guy, we got people who are gifted, capable, and competent leaders in their respective areas. We mutually appreciate what each other bring to the table.

Participant three added that because of these relational features, "I'm not just trying to be the successful one but I see part of my job as helping everybody else to be successful."

Again, participant four highlighted the metaphor of the Body of Christ working in unison, emphasizing how this model facilitated a willingness to share leadership. He explained, "Our goal is not to work against each other, it's to work with each other, you know, and it's to compliment each other. I just think it's really a beautiful thing."

Again, participant five focused on the connection between the relational feature of trust and the team's capacity for leadership sharing. He noted, "Because there is trust, you continue to lead more, to give more, to give more leeway. It allows the whole mechanism to work, to keep flowing."

Participant six reiterated the theme of being rightly related to the Lord first. He affirmed this principle that was a hallmark of his view of leadership arguing:

> When we're rightly related with Christ, we're going to be rightly related with one another which means we're going to be encouraging one another in the role of leadership that the Lord has for us and there's an affirmation in that, there's a recognition that our

> weaknesses actually bind us together. We need one another, we can't do this on our own, we're much stronger when we do this together.

Basically, his contention is that a right relationship with the Lord leads to a right relationship with others, which leads to a humble willingness to share leadership with others.

Participant seven added, "I don't believe that apart from these qualities you could really have effective shared leadership." Participant eight was clear, "If you don't trust and you don't have commonality, a common value system, you can't share very well." Participant nine was adamant about the relationship between these relational features and the team's capacity for leadership sharing. He responded, "They are the foundation of it, they are the keys to it, and they are the success or failure of it." Participant ten agreed.

Participant eleven warned that because of the relational tensions that naturally accompany shared leadership, cultivating strong relationships was critical to effectively sharing leadership. He saw no other way the model could work. He believed that these relational features were absolutely critical to leadership sharing.

Participant twelve highlighted the importance of being proactive to grow in these relational features. He noted that personal growth in these areas precipitated growth throughout the leadership team. This in turn led to more effective shared leadership.

Participant thirteen highlighted the importance of relationships throughout his interview. He claimed that relationships among team members were what made shared leadership work. It came as no surprise that he affirmed the relationship between these relational features and a team's capacity to share leadership. These interviews constantly reiterated the fundamentally relational nature of shared leadership and the reality that outside of strong relationships the model would not work.

Strauch elaborated, “If you have all these qualities you just listed, you’re going to see some good things in relationships. It’s just sort of self perpetuating” (personal communication, January 18, 2017). Dr. Joseph Hellerman added:

> You can’t share leadership without strong relationships, effective communication, trust, prayer; you simply can’t share leadership without the ability to engage in conflict without being threatened knowing that you’re going to come out on the other end still friends” (personal communication, January 6, 2017).

This research has demonstrated that relational features are clearly related to effective leadership sharing.

Results of Shared Leadership in Christian Ministry

Benefits. As described in the literature review, academic research has correlated shared leadership with numerous benefits, including exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Healthy organizational culture and individual health were not initially included in the interview questions but as they surfaced in the interviews these topics were explored in more depth. Both topics were added to the literature review after the interviews were completed.

The leaders interviewed for this research had observed these benefits in their ministries as well, but were careful to clarify a couple of these terms. Exceptional outcomes and sustained growth are somewhat subjective terms. These two features had been observed in their organizations but not always the way they might typically be interpreted. For example, healthy relationships were an exceptional outcome frequently observed, even in organizations that were not growing rapidly. Another example was sustained growth. Even though the average size of the

churches interviewed was around four thousand (the largest church interviewed had a weekly attendance of more than twelve thousand while the smallest had a weekly attendance of around two hundred), most of the churches interviewed, even the smaller ones, were heavily involved in multiplicational endeavors, making impacts across a large spectrum outside of their organizations' immediate spheres of influence.

Participant one confirmed that he recognized each of these benefits on his team. Participant two had observed most of these features on his team. Participant three observed each of these benefits but was careful to explain that sustained growth was not necessarily numerical. This team was having incredible influence outside of their church but the church itself, although healthy, was not growing drastically.

Participant four recognized each of these benefits but was careful to clarify that growth was not a product of the model but rather something that only God could produce as his people followed Him. He did note that the model was in no way adverse to growth.

Participant five observed each of the benefits described here but clarified that sustained growth involved more than just numbers. Although his church had recently been through a difficult trial and had seen their membership drop, God was using them in many exciting ways. Participant six had observed all of the benefits except exceptional outcomes, a benefit he failed to elaborate on. Participant seven was firm, "I observe several of these."

Participant eight was clear stating that every single one of these benefits is "very descriptive of what we experience." Under his leadership, this church had grown from one hundred and eighty to nearly twelve thousand, an obvious corroboration of his statement. He did not further elaborate on any of the individual benefits. Participant nine agreed that each of these benefits had been observed on his team. Participant ten did too.

Participant eleven stated, “Every single one of those is present. I mean you just go down the list, “Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.” He continued, “So yeah, team member fit, synergy, organizational vitality, sustained growth, all those are like, ‘Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.’ That’s why you do this model.” He concluded, “What you just mentioned are the benefits of shared leadership.”

Participant twelve had seen some of these benefits but was less certain of them. Remember, his team had been together less time than any of the others that were interviewed. Similarly, his team had been doing this for a shorter time than any of the others surveyed. In spite of this and some of the setbacks the team had experienced he saw the incredible benefits of shared leadership. He summarized, “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Participant thirteen affirmed the existence of each of these benefits on his team. He did so being careful to define the benefits of exceptional outcomes and sustained growth. Although his church had not been growing dramatically in attendance, there were numerous other areas of incredible growth in ministry influence.

Exceptional outcomes. Participant one agreed with this benefit stating, “There should be very healthy outcomes as a result of a mature well tested experienced eldership or shared leadership group.” Participant two realized that not all outcomes were exceptional but clarified, “I would say that we’re winning more often than not.” Participant three had observed exceptional outcomes on his team.

Participant four was blunt, “Yeah definitely. Obviously, if you have more input you’re going to have more output. At least that’s how I see it.” Although his church was involved in many exciting areas of ministry, participant five emphasized the outcomes in members’ lives. He explained:

> I'm hearing the stories of individuals and the changes taking place in their lives. How they've been invigorated by the work that we're doing. People saying, "My life has changed because of what's happening here with God's presence."

He related this and other outcomes they were observing to their shared leadership approach.

Participant seven noted "vast improvements" that the shared approach had led to in his ministry. Participant nine was confident, "Exceptional outcomes: Absolutely! Yes. Yes." Participant ten was equally bold, noting, "Yeah, exceptional outcomes like improved performance and teams success, that is across the board."

Participant twelve leads on a team that has only recently begun transitioning to shared leadership. He agreed that as leadership has been shared "outcomes have changed." He enumerated spiritual growth among their members as an outcome that he had observed.

Participant thirteen was willing to affirm this benefit but with a caveat. This leader realized that exceptional outcomes could mean different things to different readers. This church had an incredible history and was experiencing success in many different ways. Some of these differed from what modern evaluations might deem exceptional outcomes. The church was highly focused on cultivating a family atmosphere. This was modeled by the co-pastors and came to epitomize the culture of the church. This was one example of an exceptional outcome.

Enhanced decision-making. Participant one emphasized, "Good relationships make good decision makers and quick decision makers." Participant two previously detailed a very effective approach to decision making that their team had achieved after many years. Participant three agreed with this benefit as well, noting, "I definitely think we make better decisions when we put our heads together."

Again, participant four acknowledged this on his team. He stated, “Even the Bible says there’s wisdom in a multitude of counsel. So we take that very seriously.” Participant five believed his team was thriving in the area of enhanced decision-making. Participant six described the collaborative process of seeking God’s will together and ascertaining His will for the church.

Participant seven explained how his team’s decision-making protocol was becoming much clearer, more effective, and that the team was making better decisions. Participant nine also associated this benefit with shared leadership in his ministry. So did participant ten, who elaborated:

> We’re making a better decision together when we get to talk through it. I mean there is collaboration for sure. I mean you come up with an idea and you’re not aware of your blind spot and the three things that somebody else might have. So we’re always making better decisions, I believe.

This ministry was clearly sold on the value of collaborative decision-making and participant ten even correlated this with his team’s high level of job satisfaction and commitment.

Participant twelve had observed this benefit in his ministry. He noted, “in the area of enhanced decision making, I think we’ve found the freedom for collaboration and not group think.” Participant thirteen affirmed this outcome. He claimed that it was certainly a benefit that his team had observed. He summarized, “the more collaboration the better the decisions.”

Complex problem solving. Participant two directly affirmed the presence of complex problem solving in his group. Participant three added, “[we are] definitely better problem solvers as a group than I am as an individual.” Participant four agreed on this benefit as well, stating, “with more input there’s more chance that we’re going to make a good Spirit filled and Spirit led decision.” Participant five reported this benefit on his team as well.

Participant six noted this benefit and related it to his team's focus on prayerfully seeking God's will for their church together. The nature of the ministry with which participant seven led included "many, many very complicated cases." In spite of the complexity of the problems they had to deal with on a daily basis the team was able to find better solutions by considering the problems from the various and diverse perspectives present among team members. Again, participant nine agreed, as did participant ten. He concluded, "We are solving problems and we're taking ownership."

Participant twelve also agreed that "Complex problem solving has improved over time." Participant thirteen was up front about this benefit of shared leadership. He was confident that his team was successfully addressing complex problems. He related this benefit to the previous one of enhanced decision-making due to increased collaboration.

Creative innovation. Participant two correlated this with the previous benefit of complex problem solving and observed both on his team. This team had recently launched an incredibly visionary area of ministry that evidenced this in a dramatic way. Participant three said that creative innovation was a real benefit but warned that without clear accountability its implementation could be hindered.

Participant four also saw creative innovation as a natural consequence of shared leadership. He explained, "Creativity is greater if you have several people creating than just one." Participant five also noted creative innovation on his team.

Participant six associated this with the previous benefit of complex problem solving and had observed both in his team. He added:

> I think the reality of it is spiritually what we're really trying to do is, "Lord, what do you want us to do, You're the most creative being there is and so how would you lead us in your creativity to do this to the best."

His team was able to ascertain pragmatic, creative solutions as they sought God's will together.

Participant seven highlighted how shared leadership solicited the individual inputs of diverse team members in a way that fostered team creativity. Participant nine also reported this benefit and connected it with the team's capacity to build on each other's ideas.

Participant ten was succinct about the creative innovation that was present across his ministry because of shared leadership. He elaborated:

> We are creatively innovating, that's just our culture. I mean it's not just at our level, it's at every level, you know. You know, we share write everything we share brainstorm everything. We don't think that one person has a patent on it all.

This benefit of shared leadership was prevalent in the academic literature and it was in this ministry and many of the others researched for this project too.

Participant thirteen was not as confident concerning creative innovation. He did admit that some of his team's decisions exceeded what he would have come up with on his own. He was willing to affirm this benefit he just was not as confident about it as he was about some of the others.

Team-member fit. Participant two explained the way in which differently gifted team members had learned to rely on each other and how this had led to longevity in ministry. Participant three agreed with this benefit saying simply, "Absolutely." Participant four was equally clear here as well, mentioning that shared leadership "takes a lot of pressure off of you if

you know that there's other people that are in there with you making decisions; not like it all rests on your shoulders. I hate that feeling, because I'm prone to mistake."

Participant five was confident about this benefit of shared leadership and had actually quantified it in an academic study on shared leadership in his church. Participant six explained how his team had a shorter history together. This obviously made long-term predictions about team member fit difficult. In spite of that he described the "recognition of fit" that co-leaders experienced when learning to lead in their individual areas of strength.

Participant seven emphasized that the team members were committed first to Christ and that this led to their fit on the team. He also acknowledged how there was room to grow in this area. Once again, participant nine conveyed that this benefit was present on his team. So did participant ten who explained, "There's commitment and satisfaction because we all are making decisions, it's not just one person, and so I feel like we all want to show up and play and our input is valued and necessary."

Participant twelve realized that there was more to team member fit than job satisfaction. He contended "job satisfaction" is "too small of a word." He continued, "first of all I don't really see it as a job. I see it as the life that God has called me into. And, in that, in this progression of life, in this quality of life, there is great satisfaction."

Participant thirteen stated that team member fit was "certainly characteristic of our shared leadership team." Again, many of this pastor's co-pastors had been on this team for many years. Additionally, this leader and many of his co-leaders were able to thrive in unique areas of ministry that they were passionate about. This even included responsibilities outside of their local church. This fostered a real sense of commitment to the church.

Team synergy. Participant two recognized this benefit on his team. Participant four believed this was an obvious derivative of the previous benefits. He elaborated, "if all these things are working it's obvious that you can accomplish a lot more because you have more knowledge, you have more wisdom, you have more accountability, you have more people that are seeking God's heart." Participant five agreed that this benefit was present on his team saying simply, "Team synergy, yes."

Participant six claimed that there was "a lot of team synergy" on his team because "everybody has an opportunity to speak to things." Participant seven acknowledged this on the team but astutely realized that it fluctuated in relation to personal issues and team relationships. This highlights the importance of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features. Participant nine simply answered, "yes," concerning this benefit. Participant ten was not much less brief; he stated only, "There is synergy. We do have that."

Participant twelve explained how his team was seeing more synergy the more they were committed to shared leadership. Participant thirteen agreed that team synergy had been a consequence of shared leadership on his team. Although a medium sized church, this church and its co-pastors were having unbelievable impacts both in their community and far beyond.

Organizational vitality. Participant two noted, "It really does contribute to organizational vitality." This is another benefit that participant three associated with shared leadership on his team. He confirmed that increased organizational capacity was one way that this was observed. Participant four acknowledged organizational vitality on his team as well, noting, "If you have healthy communication, and you have healthy accountability, and you have healthy respect, for your team then you're going to have a healthy, healthy, healthy organization. I think it's very simple."

Participant five described what this looked like in his church. “We’re a small congregation and it’s amazing what God has allowed us to accomplish and also the contribution that some of us are able to make outside of our own church.” Participant five elaborated, “Our capacity, both individually and also as an organization has increased.” This theme became evident throughout these seven organizations. Because there were more leaders leading in the areas of their individual strengths, the ministries they led had an increased capacity.

Participant six elaborated on the spiritual vitality of his ministry insisting that shared leadership forces the leaders and the church to “walk in true Christian community and that’s the bottom line.” Participant seven affirmed a vitality that was present and growing in the ministry that he served with. Participant nine also affirmed the issues of organizational vitality and capacity.

Participant ten did too, highlighting the increased relational and operational capacities of his team. He extrapolated:

> We are able to do more because we operate as a team and we share in it. I feel like we take on big audacious goals all the time. We are always coming up with something crazy but it’s not because I have to do it on my own, but because we’re going to do it together in the organization.

Again, these interviews reiterated how teams that shared leadership had greater capacity because of this leadership style.

Again, participant twelve mentioned that this benefit had been growing as the team grew in the area of shared leadership. Participant thirteen agreed with the benefit of organizational vitality. He also noticed the increased organizational capacity some other respondents described. He claimed that his “church is healthier as a result” of shared leadership.

Healthy organizational culture. Participant one emphasized the family culture this model fostered in the church. Participant two highlighted the cultural benefit mentioning, "the organization sees six guys operating in harmony without any power mongering, without any jockeying for position. They see us laughing and loving each other." This led to a collaborative, low power distance culture in his church. Participant three emphasized how shared leadership had contributed to "the overall health of our church." He added:

> One of the huge and most under-rated benefits is that our people see us modeling healthy community and healthy relationships at the highest level of leadership. Even the guy that's preaching to them on Sundays is accountable and in a mutually beneficial and humbling relationship with other guys.

This set a relational culture that permeated the church.

Participant four claimed that shared leadership had led to a more relaxed and trusting atmosphere in his ministry. He also believed that it had produced a "healthy, healthy, healthy organization." Participant five articulated his church's culture saying, "We are a church on the move. We are a church that is kingdom oriented."

Participant six echoed these findings. He focused on the cultural element that will be missing if the leaders fail to foster this through their relational example. He explained:

> God is, through our team, revealing himself to the body. If we can't walk in forgiveness with one another, if we can't walk in grace with one another, how do we have the authority in any way to tell the body that's what they need to do? It doesn't work.

He described how "one of the biggest issues with Christianity is the facades" and the fact that people "can tell whether you really love one another, whether you're really in unity, they can tell

whether there is genuine affection." Shared leadership had produced this authentic relational culture in his church.

This cultural element became a theme across most of the interviews. Participant seven was the first to use the term "trickle-down effect" to describe how the relationships and behaviors on the leadership team trickled down in a culture-setting way throughout the organization. Participant eight highlighted a culture of approachability that permeated his organization and related that to his team's leadership approaches and shared leadership structure.

Participant nine agreed, associating shared leadership with a church-wide culture of safety, confidence, relational harmony, and trust. Participant ten noted how the things that the leadership team modeled were the very things that the rest of the church followed. This should not be surprising to any student of leadership but it does corroborate the culture-setting capacity of shared leadership teams. He also highlighted the creative and innovative culture that shared leadership propagated throughout the entire organization of six thousand members. Participant twelve did not elaborate on this benefit.

Participant thirteen was adamant about the cultural impacts of this model of leadership. He was clear that the humility, relationships, and Christian maturity demonstrated by the co-leaders fostered a church-wide culture that emulated those characteristics. Again, this cultural benefit came out in almost all of these interviews.

Individual health. Participant one highlighted this benefit noting, "If you have good shared leadership and you have a philosophy of sharing the work, you will protect each other from burnout, from destroying the family." Participant two stated bluntly, "individual health is huge." He explained this well, stating, "there's never been a day when I felt the full weight of the ministry on my own shoulders." He continued:

> One of the main reasons that we are built for longevity is because we have a shared load. In our sixties we're not going to be these broke down guys who are bitter and burned out. I see myself as coasting into a very fruitful old age ministry.

Participant three emphasized this benefit, explaining, "There's less burnout among the leadership."

Participant four stressed that within this model "the pressure is off." Most of the participants acknowledged this benefit and the joy of leading in one's own strengths without feeling like the entire ministry rested on one's own shoulders. Participant five was one of those. He stated, "Individual health is huge. You know the burn out rate with those in leadership. We each have gone through a tough patch at some point but because we were a team we didn't get derailed." Participant six agreed:

> When you have a group of men around you that is in unity and they're with you, you can walk through some very difficult things with confidence and you don't feel like you've got the entire burden of the church and opinions and all the rest on your back.

The reality that this model alleviates the pressure of leadership that accompanies the top down approach was a clear benefit.

Participant seven recognized that personal growth was a feature of shared leadership. Participant nine did too, stating, "Just like a tree planted by the water, I cannot be moved." Participant ten affirmed this as well. He was verbose:

> I don't ever feel like I'm on an island. I feel like they have my back. They know I have their backs and we're in this together. It's more than a job. I think we all feel like owners. Because of the design and the collaboration and the shared leadership we're all owners of this company, it's not just that we're just employees.

He concluded, “I’m never going to use the word ‘I quit.’ I’m never going to think about the word, ‘I quit.’ I mean this, and I feel like everybody else on that team is right there with me.”

Participant twelve noted the positive effect this model of ministry had produced in his own life. Participant thirteen was convinced of the individual health benefit this model produced in individual leaders’ lives. He asserted, “I will absolutely affirm individual health. I can speak firsthand. I and my family have thrived in ministry and this team thing is one of the key deals.”

Sustained growth. Participant three agreed with this benefit but defined it somewhat differently. Although his church had not recently experienced significant growth, he associated shared leadership with the organization’s capacity to adapt in a healthy way and manage needed change. Additionally, this leader and many of his co-leaders were actively involved in numerous and prominent areas of ministry outside of their local church. In other words, there was a multiplicational dimension to their leadership. Participant four was also careful to clarify the meaning of sustained growth. He was clear that it was not limiting to growth. He noted, “Obviously it’s not adverse. It’s not an adverse situation to growth.” He also clarified, “God gives the growth. We don’t. We plant a seed, we water, we fertilize but God sustains the growth.”

At two hundred weekly members, his church was the smallest researched for this project, yet participant five noted numerous areas of growth. The church was in the process of completing a move into a new facility with incredible potential in the heart of their community. One of his co-leaders was helping others with financial planning. Another co-leader was mentoring pastors throughout their denomination. Participant five was also training leaders from around the globe. These were just some of the ways that this church was making an impact beyond their immediate congregation.

Participant six explained that true growth is discipleship growth, which begins with spiritual growth. He admitted that this would lead to numerical growth but wanted to make sure that the two concepts were clear. He insisted that this model of leadership forced the foundational issue of Christ's supremacy in His church to the forefront. He concluded, "the more we begin to learn to walk with the Lord and trust Him and depend on Him, we're role modeling something we won't recognize until we get to heaven the impact of that." Participant seven agreed, "I do definitely see sustained growth." So did participant eight whose church of nearly twelve thousand members clearly demonstrated this benefit.

Participant nine said that sustained growth existed as a consequence of shared leadership in his ministry but was careful to clarify what that meant. Although not a small church, the church had not been experiencing tremendous numerical growth. It was, however, making many impacts outside of the church's geographical setting. He described this as "multiplying." He continued:

> At the core of multiplying, healthy multiplying, is some shared leadership model. What is at the core of being able to multiply other than just wanting to? I think we're stumbling on to it. Why did the first century church multiply, and spread, and take over the world? Why were they so gangster? Probably the core of why it just exploded was they had this powerful gospel, we got that, and they had shared leadership. I'm going to go out on a limb, that's why it happened. Everything else is common other places. What we don't have today is a real strong ethos of shared leadership. Maybe that's how we get to revival and we get to where we want to go as it relates to evangelizing the world. Multiplication is probably a complete end result of shared leadership.

This multiplicational benefit is one that was noted across many of the organizations that were studied for this project.

Participant ten affirmed the benefit of sustained growth in his ministry. Again, his ministry had six thousand members and had grown to that size with its shared leadership model. This ministry had also helped launch more than two hundred and fifty churches across four continents in the past decade. Both sustained growth and multiplication were evident in this ministry. Participant twelve concluded, "The more committed to this [shared leadership] we are, the more we're seeing these benefits of synergy, of vitality, of growth."

Participant thirteen was certain of the benefits of the model but was careful to describe what he meant by sustained growth. The church had not recently been experiencing tremendous growth in its membership. Its pastors and co-leaders were, however, making incredible impacts far beyond the church's immediate sphere of influence. The co-pastors at this church included a chaplain for a professional sports team, an accomplished author that many look up to, multiple seminary professors, and a pastor involved in training numerous other pastors. Whereas numerical growth on Sunday mornings had plateaued, this leadership team's impact in ministry seemed to be growing dramatically.

In summary, shared leadership was associated with the following ten benefits in the organizations evaluated in this study. The benefits included exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth. Not only were these benefits affirmed in the interviews, they were also observed in the outcomes of these ministries as well.

These seven ministries shared over twenty thousand members, managed tens of millions of dollars, had collectively started hundreds of churches around the globe, were funding ministries around the globe, and were training countless upcoming leaders. They were all involved in countless areas of ministry outside of their immediate context. These leaders included nationally respected leaders who were teaching in seminaries, authoring influential books, and serving in very exciting areas. The benefits they eluded to were evident in their ministry effectiveness as well.

Of course, this comes as no surprise. Alexander Strauch summarized, "The benefits should be excellent because it [the shared leadership model] is healthy, it's right, it's good" (personal communication, January 18, 2017). In other words, since the model is healthy, it will produce healthy outcomes.

The relationship between the three LLX Domains and these benefits. Although relationships proved to be the most critical issue investigated, the participants were clear that all three modes, including leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, were critical to the benefits associated with shared leadership. One leader emphasized how these modes had to be grounded in authentic walks with God while others reiterated that they had to evolve organically. Everyone agreed concerning the importance of these three modes.

Participant one affirmed the relationship between the domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features and the benefits described. He confirmed, "They're obviously related. There's got to be a cause for all these good things." Participant two was adamant, "You need these things, in conjunction with relationship, to facilitate better outcomes." Participant three concurred, explaining how leadership approaches, team attributes, and relational features are "all tangled up together" and all related to overall team and church health.

Participant four noted that these attributes protect the team from any individual rashly making mistakes that could hurt the team. This safeguard helps foster an environment in which these benefits can be recognized. Participant five saw a clear connection between the three LLX domains and the benefits his team was experiencing. He exclaimed, "There's a direct correlation between them."

Participant six explained that leadership maturity, team attributes, and relational features all spiritually challenged the team to depend on and focus on the Lord. Again, this foundational focus on Christ was the theme of most of his answers. Participant seven was clear, "They're all definitely connected." Speaking of these benefits, participant eight articulated, "I think the things that I said in leadership approaches, team attributes, and relational features, the ones that are positive, have created this."

Concerning leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, participant nine confirmed, "Those ingredients have to exist for sustainable shared leadership" and "those are the ingredients that you need to come back to if you get off course." Participant ten agreed:

> Because it's a team, we really can't do it apart from one other, and I don't think anybody in that room wants to try to lead the organization solo. We know we're better as a team and we all submit to one another. There's just a humility about it that makes it all work.

Because of leader maturity and humility, a willingness to share leadership with differently gifted team members, and the relational mutuality present on their team, this team had been able to reap many of the benefits that often accompany shared leadership. Participant eleven added, "You miss on any of those three, and this isn't going to work."

Participant twelve added that as leaders cultivate these different aspects of shared leadership, they must remember that "there's an element of trusting God that has to be there." He

realized how this was something that the shared leadership model kept front and center. In other words, when shared leadership was done right positive outcomes resulted.

Participant thirteen was quick to correlate the benefits his church had observed with the antecedents of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features. He was unequivocal about the relationship between these precursors and the outcomes his team experienced. This was attested to across these interviews.

Alexander Strauch summarized, "There are consequences to good principles and good relationships and these are the consequences right here" (personal communication, January 18, 2017). Dr. Joseph Hellerman explained:

> Absolutely on all counts. If I was writing a paper, I could draw lines from all the healthy approaches, servant leadership, this kind of stuff, to things like organizational vitality, relational features like the time we spend together as a team outside of the meetings to enhanced decision making in the meetings. Yeah. I could draw lines from all those things, from many of those things to these individual deals here (personal communication, January 6, 2017).

This nicely summarized the connections between the three LLX domains, the consequent collaborative harmony among co-leaders, and the subsequent benefits.

Risks. The participants were in agreement about the value of this model and most reiterated that the only negative outcomes associated with the model were not inherent to it. One risk that was observed was the difficulty of the model. One participant noted how this is the hardest way to do leadership. He then clarified that it is also the best for many different reasons. It would be a pitfall to assume that the model would be simple. Another risk that was noted was the possibility for a lack of follow-through. Participants noted that this was a possibility in shared

leadership teams without clear accountability. Another risk observed was a potential lack of efficiency. Collaborative decision-making can take longer, but as discussed in the literature review, this is an up front cost for better outcomes (Hong & Banerjee, 2012). Additionally, participants clarified that efficiency is not necessarily more important than relationships, emphasizing the means of team unity over the end of efficiency. One difficulty highlighted multiple times was the general lack of acceptance of the model. Some participants explained how the universal emphasis on hierarchy makes it difficult for some people to accept or even understand a shared approach to leadership. Finally, one participant clarified the danger wherein younger co-leaders can proudly try to usurp authority even attempting to domineer over the rest of the group. Of course, this is not necessarily a problem with the model but rather with the team member in question.

Although not necessarily inherent to the model, these dangers are important to understand. These findings do supplement the academic literature on this topic since the literature is mostly silent concerning negative outcomes of shared leadership. Still, the fact that the model was not inherently associated with any clearly negative outcomes was surprising. Still, these risks should be considered.

Participant seven astutely noted, “shared leadership as a whole is never negative, it’s always positive.” He added, “Looking at shared leadership and the construct of what we have going on when it’s working properly, I’ve never seen anything really negative coming from it.” That is not to say that there are not risks inherent to the model. Several risks were uncovered during this research but, as participant seven mentioned, these can be circumvented when shared leadership is done correctly. Participant nine agreed. He bluntly stated that competency in the

three domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features was critical to successfully circumventing the risks that can accompany shared leadership.

Participant twelve reported the fewest team attributes, relational features, and shared leadership benefits of any of those interviewed. Still he was confident, “I honestly don’t think I can say I’ve seen negative outcomes. I can’t see any negative outcomes.” He did not attribute the challenges his team had faced to the model itself.

Although many were not aware of weaknesses that were intrinsic to the shared leadership approach, five risks did surface in this research. This research pinpointed five dangers of shared leadership. These include the difficulty of the model, a potential lack of follow-through, a possible lack of efficiency, a general lack of acceptance of the model in the public and even among followers, and the danger of immature or usurping team members.

The difficulty of the model. Participant six described some of the difficulties his team had experienced in figuring out their approach to leadership sharing. They had evolved a fairly complicated and somewhat confusing shared model that differentiated between elders, pastors, and staff. As a result, there was some confusion. He noticed this was not intrinsically problematic and had more to do with their particular structure. Still, this model can be susceptible to this kind of problem.

The potential for a lack of follow-through. Participant one emphasized this risk, calling the potential for a lack of follow-through an “organizational sand trap.” He continued, “In every form of governance there’s going to be weaknesses. In this one, it can be easy to hide behind one another, procrastinate.” He emphasized that accountability to good organizational principles was critical to overcoming this risk. Participant two mentioned this same danger. He clarified, “Absence of a real written, mutually agreed upon accountability culture, there is a great

possibility that because everyone owns something nobody owns it and nothing gets done." He noted that they had fallen into this trap prior to adopting their current commitment to clear accountability. Participant three highlighted this same danger. Participant three also mentioned that without clear accountability the implementation of creative ideas could be hindered. Participant thirteen also highlighted this risk.

The possibility of a lack of efficiency. Participant three acknowledge the potential for a lack of efficiency but clarified:

> God's highest priority is not efficiency. Sometimes we confuse sort of a western culture that is all about efficiency and bottom lines. And I think sometimes that collides with maybe what is biblical and what the values of Scripture are for the church and for leadership in the church.

The values he was referencing were the relationships and health of the church, things he associated with the shared leadership model.

Participant five agreed, emphasizing, "We believe God is more concerned about how we do what we do versus what we do or what we accomplish. He is less concerned about the accomplishment and more concerned about how we did it."

Obviously relationships and efficiency are not mutually exclusive. In spite of the biblical emphasis on relationships over efficiency, the possibility for a lack of efficiency was still a risk worth noting. Participant ten reiterated this risk admitting times when his team had gone "round and round on certain things" in a way that was "anti-productive" and wasted time.

Participant thirteen agreed with this risk. He explained how defining this as a problem "would depend on how one values efficiency." He was quick to refer to the biblical principles of

community and relationships and their value above efficiency. He was certain that the means of leadership were just as important, if not more so, than its ends.

The general lack of acceptance of the model in the public and even among followers. Participant five highlighted this potential risk. He stated:

> I think the only negative outcome that I can directly point to that would be somewhat unique to shared leadership is the response of some people to it. They just can't embrace it. It's too much for them, it's just too foreign for them. It doesn't make sense to them. It's a culture clash.

It would seem that human familiarity with position oriented, top-down, hierarchical power has predisposed people to question this model.

Participant thirteen affirmed this risk as well. He explained how "this is a very foreign kind of thing" to most people. He continued, "it's fine when things are going well but when there's a budget crisis or something, it's like we need a buck stops here kind of guy. We have to remind folks that that's not how we do things."

The danger of immature or usurping team members. Participant one highlighted the risk posed by immature leaders who can become jealous of their co-leaders. He emphasized the need to be aware of jealously and resentment and to be quick to deal with these things if and when they arise. Participant four added, "It's important not to have divisive people in there though because divisive people can ruin the whole party really quickly." Participant four echoed this concern saying, "I suppose it could be a disaster if you got a bunch of people on the board that just want to argue with each other." He was quick to clarify that he had not experienced this but recognized the possibility for this type of scenario.

Participant eight added, “there’s a tendency for those who are on your coat tails to think they’re wind beneath the wings.” He added, “There’s a Miriam and Aaron thing I’ve seen over and over.” He summarized, “There’s often somewhere along the line an attempted coup by somebody who has been so empowered that they think they don’t need the person that was there first.”

Participant nine also described this risk. He emphasized the reality that, although any personality type can thrive in a shared leadership team, some personality types were more prone to trying to hijack the team. He emphasized the importance of having a healthy team that is capable of surviving these types of attacks.

Relational outcomes. In addition to the results that were previously described, various relational outcomes were evident with this model. Every leader interviewed responded in a positive way concerning relationships with their team members. Many noted how shared leadership led to deeply satisfying personal relationships with other leaders that led to years of successful ministry. One noted that the model did not necessarily lead to better relationships between him and his church members simply because there is not sufficient time for that many strong relationships. He did mention, however, that the model vastly improved his relationships with his co-leaders and that their example led to immensely improved relationships among congregants. Each of the participants emphasized how their relationships were stronger because of this model of leadership. In summary, the research demonstrated that healthy relationships are foundational for effective shared leadership and shared leadership leads to healthier relationships. In other words, relationships and shared leadership seem to foster a positive feedback loop.

Participant one confirmed that his relationships with his co-leaders and those he leads are "excellent," clarifying, "My best friends are my fellow elders." Participant two agreed that relationships between co-pastors on his team were generally good. He admitted that there was room for growth. He added, "On some teams there are existing things between team members. I don't see any things between us." Participant three asserted that his relationships with his co-leaders were "really strong." He added, "my closest friends in the church are other fellow elders." He continued, "I have a great relationship with all of them. There's just a humility among all the leaders. We want to be God glorifying in all that we do and none of us are in it for our individual glory." He also emphasized the relational health in the church that this model facilitated.

Participant four was confident about how this model had affected his relationships with co-leaders. He stated, "I think that my relationships with the leaders have vastly improved." Having given up his rights as director several years ago, this man had been transformed to see the value of his team members and relationships with them. He concluded, "we need each other, we know that, we see it, we experience it, we live it."

Participant five claimed that his relationships with co-leaders were "very good." He continued, "Some relationships are stronger than others. But I have no adversarial relationships, no negative relationships. I think they're all at worst positive, some very, very positive."

Participant six reminisced about a disadvantage often attributed to top-down leadership warning, "If you're the only one, where the buck stops with you, boy that's a lonely place." He confirmed that his relationships with co-leaders and church members were strong.

Participant seven was emphatic, "They're very good, they are beyond what I ever probably thought or could have expected." Participant eight claimed that his relationships were

authentic, real, and close. Participant nine stated emphatically, "I would use the term outstanding, life giving." Participant ten said simply, "I think really, really high with my co-leaders and those I lead."

Participant eleven agreed, "With the co-leaders with the leadership team, incredibly high trust, loyalty, value." He added, "How do I rate the relationship with those that we lead? I may be that blind leader, but incredibly high. Our team right now is here because of that relationship." Participant twelve agreed, "overall I would rate them as good and getting better."

Participant thirteen summarized well, "With my co-leaders very high, and why, because we spend a lot of time together." He admitted that his relationships were not as strong with church members simply because he did not have the time to spend with each of them that he did with his co-leaders. Thankfully, however, because of the relational culture this model had fostered in the church, members' relationships with each other were very strong.

Strauch summarized by emphasizing the importance of leading with love and the impact this had both among the co-leaders and throughout the ministry as a whole (personal communication, January 18, 2017). He also reiterated the theme that the relationships among the co-leaders set the relational tone of the church. He explained, "Think of the eldership as a microcosm of the whole church. And so the eldership models all these principles you're repeating. They're modeling it and it trickles down" (personal communication, January 18, 2017). Dr. Hellerman agreed, "The relational culture that flows from plural leadership is key" (personal communication, January 6, 2017).

The leaders interviewed were deeply committed to shared leadership. This is probably because of the positive outcomes this model has had on them personally and on the organizations they have led. Each of these had been personally impacted by the model and had seen the

approach benefit their ministries. The leaders that were interviewed correlated shared leadership with personal health, maturity, growth, energy, and longevity in ministry. They also associated the model with numerous organizational benefits like ministry health, growth and vision, a trickle-down effect that resulted in authentic cultures and positive member relationships, and the elimination of bottlenecks. One leader summarized these statements stating that with this model, God gets the glory, since no single individual is preeminent in the organization. In summary, the leaders that were interviewed were convinced that this model was responsible for numerous benefits in their personal lives and many in their ministries as well.

Personal impacts. Participant one noted how this model had benefitted him stating, "Over the years I've become a wiser man, a humbler man, a sharper man. One of the great benefits of shared leadership is developing your character."

Participant two summarized, "Shared leadership has grown me and it has made me very self aware of what my strengths are and my weaknesses are as a leader." Compared to his previous experience in a top-down ministry he highlighted a sense of job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and hope that accompanied his present participation on a shared leadership team.

Participant three agreed, "Just speaking personally I know that I am much healthier. My marriage. Being a dad. All those other things are much healthier because of the team approach. I'm not bearing the burden for anything alone." He added, "I think I'm a much healthier individual, I think I'm a much better pastor because I've got the eyes and ears and wisdom of a group of guys around me that I trust."

Participant four concurred, "One big impact, I feel like the pressure is off." He continued, "I like work a lot better knowing that I'm working together with a team." He summarized:

> I think it's amazing. It's exciting. It's exhilarating. I feel like I can focus on what I'm supposed to focus on. I don't have to carry this whole boat on my shoulders. I think it's really helped. I can't tell you what a blessing it is and how peaceful. And you know the joy of the Lord is in my heart over this whole thing. It also makes you excited about the future. I can't wait to see what God's going to do tomorrow.

This sense of personal joy and health in ministry was commonplace among those interviewed for this project.

Participant five attributed his ministry longevity to the shared leadership model. He surmised, "the biggest benefit: I'm still in full time ministry." He described how this model had allowed him and his family to flourish in ministry in ways that the individual pastor model of leadership would never have allowed. He concluded, "This model of leadership has allowed me to stay and to be healthy."

Participant six believed this model of leadership was "incredible" and claimed that it had blessed him, and led to peace in his life and ministry. He also described its positive impact on his family life. Participant seven claimed, "I would say in both [his personal life and in the ministry as a whole] it's a very positive influence and also just inspiring of healthy growth in both."

Participant eight exclaimed, "it's given me a life." He also affirmed the freedom it produced for the leaders involved adding, "People don't think I'm the only one with the keys to kitchen." This reduction of work-related stress was a common theme and a benefit that has been confirmed in the academic literature as well. He also described a personal growth element stating that the model kept leaders humble by protecting against a celebrity culture. By eliminating the personality-focused component of ministry, the model ensured authenticity.

Participant nine realized that the model had expanded him, grown his self-awareness, and made him a better friend, husband, and family man. He insisted shared leadership had benefited and added to the quality of his relationships. Participant ten affirmed how the model had profited him including the way it had transformed his view of leadership from a top-down view to a shared one.

Participant eleven was emphatic about the many ways that shared leadership positively affected him. He explained:

> The personal, mental, spiritual, relational and physical health is off the charts. One person doesn't go to bed holding the weight of the organization on their shoulders. You can actually take vacation times and no one wants to contact you because other leaders are there to make the call. Your marriage is going to be healthier because you don't have to be at every event, you don't have to show up for every thing. Your spiritual health should be better because you have more time to get out and do the things you need to do because there are four or five other people shouldering again the burden of leading a church this size.

This leader's church had thousands of members yet he still experienced peace and health in ministry and he attributed that to shared leadership.

He mentioned that within this model there is "intimacy and doing life with someone else instead of being alone." With his customary humor, participant eleven elaborated on the many individual benefits of this model:

> Shared leadership should be done in such a way, where yeah, the moment you said, "Ah, it's too hard," your spouse would go, "then I'm leaving you. Because our marriage, our family health, our time together has never been better than when in shared leadership.

> Because you're not running around like you're the only yahoo trying to lead something anymore."

As convinced as he was about the individual health benefits intrinsic to this model, he also highlighted a Christian maturity benefit as well.

Participant eleven insisted that this model humbles leaders highlighting "a dying to self" that shared leadership produces. He added, "if you want to follow your own hopes, your own dreams, and build your own ministry, you should have stayed single. Because the moment you do shared leadership it cannot be about you any more." He concluded:

> If you really do this at the highest levels, I always tell pastors, your pride and your ego are just going to get demolished. Now last time I checked the Bible had a lot to say about pride and ego and none of it was really good. So maybe it's a good thing it's getting broken down.

Participant eleven was adamant that this approach to leadership produced clear personal and spiritual benefits.

Participant twelve had similar convictions. He stated, "Sharing leadership has had a huge impact on me. I mean, without analyzing it too deep, I would say it's just as impactful on my life as the ministry itself." He said this about both his growth as an individual and his growth in ministry.

Concerning shared leadership, participant thirteen admitted, "It's had a huge impact on me." He insisted this personal impact included personal health and growth, marriage and family health, relational health, job satisfaction, longevity in ministry, and perseverance through discouragement. He summarized, "So yeah it's just been very, very positive in my life."

Organizational impacts. Participant one noted how this model had benefitted his church asserting, "it makes a real difference in the church. It shifts all the focus from one man to Christ and the leaders are seen as real brethren, real brothers. It shifts the church to a more brotherly, sisterly, family type of organization."

Participant two highlighted the low-power distance culture shared leadership had cultivated in his church. Participant three stated, "We're a much healthier church because of it" and "I just think everybody's been better off for it." Participant four described another benefit to his ministry. He explained that in this model "there's only one that gets the glory, and that's Jesus Christ. Lord, might we decrease that you would increase. And this is a great model and a great way to live this principle out."

Participant five highlighted the impact shared leadership had produced in his church. He explained, "We are a church that is on a mission to impact this region with the gospel. And that is unique. And it's because of shared leadership."

Participant six was clear that this model forced leaders to keep Christ in His rightful place of authority. He elaborated, "If there's one thing this model will really emphasize over and over, it is that I am not the owner of this thing, I answer to the Lord, we answer to the Lord. It's His church, not mine." He continued, "I think conceptually the issue is we're all equal and the real issue is what the Lord said in Matthew which is there is one leader and that is Christ, that's the bottom line." He continued:

> That becomes the focal point and that's the deepening of the work that God does in our lives through this type of leadership because you're forced to submit to the Lord and to submit to one another and to do so in genuineness and transparency and all the community of what it means to walk as believers in love for one another.

In other words, the model perpetuates growth and relationships throughout the church.

Participant seven described this as "a trickle-down effect" whereby the interactions between co-leaders trickled down from the co-leaders and came to epitomize the rest of their group. Participant eight was clear, "For our organization, it's been nothing but positive. I can't think of a negative." He was self-deprecating about one way the model had benefitted the church. That benefit was the capacity of the model to protect the church from an individual's blind spots. He noted:

> There's plenty of days I'd love to be a dictator because I know what the right decision is, or at least I think, and it takes me a little longer to get everybody aboard. But the good side is sometimes I was wrong and they were right.

In his mind, the benefits to the church were indisputable.

Participant nine described the positive cultural outcomes the model had produced in the church and added that numerous members had actually stated that the model itself and the trust it engendered in their leadership is what kept them at the church. Throughout the interview, participant ten highlighted many different ways shared leadership had benefitted his organization. Considering the numerous benefits of the model, he stated that he wished every organization could operate with a shared leadership approach.

Participant eleven emphasized how this model benefitted the church stating, "in the church health, that the church gets it's through the roof." He elaborated, warning that there is "such a small bottle neck and lid" intrinsic to top-down leadership. He added, "I don't care how great that individual is. They are minimizing the effectiveness of the leadership in their staff." He explained how shared leadership counteracted the limiting nature of hierarchical leadership in his ministry. He stated, "Organizationally, it keeps us from having bottlenecks. It keeps us from

being led by one person's perspective or filter. It keeps us from being taught by one guy's view of Scripture and that's shared leadership." He concluded, "It allows an organization as large and complex as ours to continue to have great leadership because we've got multiple personalities leading it. Multiple strengths. It's the law of the lid. Maxwell's old law of the lid."

Participant twelve agreed, emphasizing how shared leadership had led to traction in ministry, a looser environment, and growing relationships. Participant thirteen was clear about the organizational outcomes of the model as well, highlighting some more obvious benefits but emphasizing the relational ones again. Concerning those relational outcomes he was emphatic, "That's a huge thing."

Summary

In summary, this investigation found all three LLX domains present in each of the ministries evaluated and these domains were all associated with authentic relationships and effective leadership sharing on the team. The benefits of shared leadership, which have been described in the literature, were also present in these teams and related to the three LLX domains that were highlighted. Ultimately, the predominant importance of relationships in this model was universally supported.

This research has demonstrated a relationship between collaborative harmony between co-leaders and effective leadership sharing. Participant eleven reiterated, "There's nothing, there's nothing more important than relationship in shared leadership." This model of leadership is both biblical and beneficial. This model of leadership was fully endorsed by all those researched for this project.

Participant eleven emphasized the biblical nature of this approach. He highlighted the critics who argue that the New Testament churches only used this model because they were

small churches "of maybe fifteen to forty people." He described the claim that this approach no longer works and that "the buck has got to stop with someone." He answered by taking this model back to God's very nature. He argued, "I always go to the Trinity. I go look, our God did not exist outside of shared leadership."

This team approach to leadership proved valuable throughout this investigation. Participant ten was hopeful that others would adopt this model, stating, "I wish every organization could operate this way." Participant four was reassuring about the feasibility of the model. He insisted, "It's a team effort. You either believe in the team effort or you don't. I believe in it, you know, and I love it. I am not afraid of shared leadership, that's for sure." Participant two was confident that this style of leadership would continue to grow and become utilized much more frequently. He concluded, "I believe the new school of leadership is very much going to be shared." Participant thirteen agreed, "People, especially younger people, find it refreshing that there's shared leadership."

This research investigated Leader-Leader Exchange in shared leadership teams in Christian ministry. LLX was described as collaborative harmony, something that included the three domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features. This study showed a relationship between these features, successful shared leadership, and the ensuing benefits. Strauch corroborated this relationship and its biblical basis summarizing, "Everything you said can be summarized by this: is our church leadership structure following the biblical principles of conduct, attitude, and relationships" (personal communication, January 18, 2017).

Chapter five will now turn to the conclusions, discussion, and suggestions for future research. These findings will be summarized briefly and they will then be compared to a few of the other academic studies on shared leadership in Christian ministry. The implications of these

findings will then be considered. Finally, the dissertation will conclude with suggestions for future research.

Chapter Five: Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

Introduction

This project sought to evaluate the phenomenon and practice of shared leadership across a broad range of Christian churches and ministries that use this model of governance. The research was particularly focused on collaborative harmony (healthy exchanges between leaders) and how that impacted the quality of shared leadership. This social exchange approach was titled Leader-Leader Exchange (LLX).

The LLX approach sought to elucidate the relationships between three critical domains, leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features, and successful shared leadership in Christian ministries. It also investigated whether there was a correlation between these domains and the benefits that have been associated with shared leadership in the literature.

Methods and Procedures

This qualitative investigation utilized semi-structured interviews that were conducted using Skype.com software for online interviews, the TapeACall app for phone interviews, and the Voice Record app for in person interviews. Except in cases where it was not possible, interviews were done either on Skype or in person. This permitted a better understanding of each interviewee's facial expressions and body language, providing a more robust understanding of their answers. The conversations were recorded and transcribed for future reference. The online transcription software and tools available at Trint.com were used for transcription. This was then supplemented with MaxQDA12 qualitative data analysis software.

Thirteen co-leaders from seven churches and ministries were evaluated for this project. As stated previously, these ministries included a para-church ministry with global influence, a smaller church with an ambitious vision, large churches making worldwide impacts, and mega-

churches impacting thousands of members and other ministries emulating their practices. These ministries included multiple evangelical, Christian denominations. These ministries share thousands of members (church sizes ranged from two hundred to more than twelve thousand), have collectively planted hundreds of churches around the globe, are involved in numerous areas of ministry beyond the scope of their immediate context, and together manage tens of millions of dollars of ministry resources.

The leaders interviewed for this research included a professional sports team chaplain, co-pastors of one of the few churches who's shared leadership model has been investigated in the academic literature, multiple accomplished authors, and some of the most respected practitioners and academic voices on this topic in Christianity. After interviewing these thirteen leaders, a brief summary of the findings was presented to two of the most respected leaders in this field, Dr. Joseph Hellerman and Alexander Strauch. They provided analysis concerning the research findings that helped conceptualize the significance of these results in a more coherent way. Some of their comments were included in chapter four.

It is quite possible that this is the most comprehensive academic investigation of shared leadership in Christian ministry to date. It definitely added to the academic literature in this unique area that was lacking. This project also categorized ten common benefits, uncovered five common risks, and described an LLX framework for shared leadership. The results of this investigation will be summarized below.

Major Findings

This research demonstrated the credibility of the LLX view of shared leadership. The three LLX domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features were all present

within the teams investigated. Each of these domains was associated with effective shared leadership on these teams and the benefits that have been correlated with this leadership style.

The teams interviewed for this study affirmed the benefits of exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth on their teams. There were two main clarifications. Both exceptional outcomes and sustained growth were somewhat subjective terms. Participants agreed with these benefits but some defined them differently than others did.

Although not necessarily derivatives of the model itself, the negative outcomes previously described were also new findings. These potential dangers included the difficulty of the model, a potential lack of follow-through, a possible lack of efficiency, a general lack of acceptance of the model in the public and even among followers, and the danger of immature or usurping team members. These dangers are obviously relevant and being aware of them could undoubtedly help prevent them.

In addition to the benefits and risks, a few key relational outcomes were observed. One clear benefit was the relational satisfaction this model produced. It has often been said that “it is lonely at the top.” The leaders interviewed had quite a different view of leadership, noting the robust relationships they had with co-leaders. Additionally, nearly every interview highlighted a trickle-down effect whereby the relational practices modeled in shared leadership teams saturated every other aspect of the organization. That often led to a healthy organizational culture. That was a new benefit that had not been expected.

Several new findings emerged as a consequence of this qualitative approach. Both humility and trust surfaced throughout the interviews; their importance in relationships cannot be

overstated. The organic relational context prevalent on many teams was another novel finding that seemed to be associated with healthy relationships. The structural and procedural elements of shared leadership were often a guard for the model while relationships proved to be a guide.

Other new benefits included organizational capacity and individual health. Nearly every participant highlighted individual health. Leaders also emphasized how the model allowed them to lead in areas of their individual strengths, maximizing their effectiveness. Multiplication was another key benefit this investigation uncovered. Most of the leaders involved noted how the model allowed team members the freedom to invest their skills and energy in areas outside the ministry's immediate sphere of influence, multiplying both the leader's and the ministry's influence.

A fairly intuitive finding seemed to summarize the rest of the findings well. The research demonstrated that relationships were critical to effective leadership sharing. It also showed that leadership sharing fostered healthy relationships. Thus, there was a positive feedback loop of sorts. In other words, as relationships grow stronger, leadership sharing is done better, which cultivates deeper relationships, which further enhances leadership sharing. This healthy feedback loop is a finding that was not expected but one that holds incredible promise for this model of leadership.

Discussion

This project began by highlighting two gaps in the academic literature on shared leadership. First, there is minimal academic research concerning leader-leader interaction, what has been titled collaborative harmony in this paper, and its effects on shared leadership teams. Second, there are only a handful of academic investigations of shared leadership in Christian

ministries. This investigation of LLX relationships on shared leadership teams in ministry has shed light in both of these areas.

Six research questions guided this research. Each of these questions was answered satisfactorily. A brief synopsis of those answers follows.

The first research question asked, what do these ministries' shared leadership structures look like and are there common elements to those structures, which could be standardized and prescribed for other churches and ministries? None of the ministries reported rotated shared leadership models. Eight of the participants interviewed stated that their ministries employed comprehensive shared leadership structures. Three participants referenced distributed models. Finally, two respondents stated that their ministries used integrated models of shared leadership.

Although many of the ministries investigated had by-laws and guiding documents, most functioned with a very organic and relational approach. It seemed that the guiding documents played an instrumental protection role while the relationships on the team played a guidance role. In other words, the co-leaders were tasked with relationally leading their ministries while their ministry infrastructures protected the teams from immature or usurping team members (one of the risks that became evident in this research).

Concerning team-member maturity, the second research question asked, which leadership approaches do leaders on Christian shared leadership ministry teams exhibit? Are transformational leadership, servant leadership, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership or other leadership approaches evident among team members?

The importance of team member maturity was evident and the value of mature leadership approaches was associated with effective shared leadership. Twelve participants reported authentic leadership on their teams. Eleven participants reported servant leadership on their

teams. Nine participants reported transformational leadership on their teams. Eight participants reported emotional intelligence on their teams. There were only a few teams that admitted the presence of authoritarian and laissez faire approaches and these styles were universally condemned by the interviewees. Mature leadership was critical to successful shared leadership on these teams.

The third research question asked, what team attributes are present on shared leadership teams? Are guiding documents, team size, time, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability present? Are there other attributes?

Most of these features, except guiding documents, were nearly universally affirmed. Again, these were not seen as being as important as the relational features on teams but they did provided an important safeguard on teams. The other attributes were associated with effective shared leadership.

The fourth research question asked how have relational features among leaders impacted shared leadership on these teams? Are team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution evident among team members? Are there other aspects?

Most of the teams reported the presence of these features as well. They also associated them with effective shared leadership. Most respondents were convinced that these relational features were the most important elements of shared leadership.

The fifth research question asked, what outcomes have these ministries observed as a consequence of shared leadership? Are the ten benefits observed in the literature observed in Christian ministries using this model as well? Are there any negative consequences? What kinds of relational consequences are there?

As stated previously, the teams interviewed for this study had observed the benefits of exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth on their teams. Again, with the clarification that some people defined exceptional outcomes and sustained growth in different ways.

Interestingly, the team that had been together for the shortest time was also the team that had been doing shared leadership for the lease amount of time. One leader on that team admitted weaknesses in many of these areas and that was mirrored by fewer of the benefits of shared leadership on his team as well. This provided a type of confirmation of the value of these attributes and their positive correlation with the benefits of shared leadership.

Five risks were also discovered. These potential dangers included the difficulty of the model, a potential lack of follow-through, a possible lack of efficiency, a general lack of acceptance of the model in the public and even among followers, and the danger of immature or usurping team members. The academic literature had little to say about negative outcomes of shared leadership. Although these risks do not necessarily precipitate negative outcomes, they are obviously important dangers to be aware of. This investigation highlighted many of these for the first time in the academic literature.

The sixth research question asked, is effective shared leadership in these ministries related to collaborative harmony and its subdomains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features? There was consensus among the respondents concerning the relationship between these subdomains, collaborative harmony, and effective shared leadership. The respondents also connected the benefits of shared leadership with proficiency in these qualities.

Conclusions

The LLX, Leader-Leader Exchange concept supposes that the quality of shared leadership hinges on the collaborative harmony between co-leaders. This concept has been adapted from leader-member exchange theory (LMX), which supposes that leadership effectiveness is proportional to the quality of the relationships between leader and subordinates. The investigation of collaborative harmony on shared leadership teams demonstrated the value of this approach.

Based on the aforementioned results, answers to the six research questions that guided this research can now be provided. The data collected support these conclusions. Each research question will be revisited here in the conclusion.

Question one: What do these ministries' shared leadership structures look like and are there common elements to those structures, which could be standardized and prescribed for other churches and ministries?

The answer to this question is that shared leadership structures in Christian ministries were most often comprehensive models that incorporated elements of both distributed and integrated approaches. Most of these teams were led in highly relational ways that were guarded by by-laws, "guarding documents," and even team-members who ensured the teams remained accountable. Churches and ministries looking to embrace shared leadership would do well to craft guarding documents to protect their teams, build strong relationships on their teams, and grow in their proficiency at sharing leadership over time.

Question two: Concerning team-member maturity, which leadership approaches do leaders on Christian shared leadership ministry teams exhibit? Are transformational leadership,

servant leadership, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership or other leadership approaches evident among team members?

Mature leadership approaches, like authentic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence are critical to successful shared leadership. Less mature approaches, like authoritarian leadership and laissez faire leadership were not. It seems clear that the maturity of the individual leaders on a shared leadership team is critical to effective shared leadership.

Question three: What team attributes are present on shared leadership teams? Are guiding documents, team size, time, diversity, role differentiation, decision-making protocol, and accountability present? Are there other attributes?

Most of these attributes will accompany successful shared leadership teams. These attributes will grow over time as the team grows together. Guiding documents were the least reported attribute but even these, when seen as guarding documents, fulfilled a protective role. These attributes are crucial to leadership sharing.

Question four: How have relational features among leaders impacted shared leadership on these teams? Are team relational strength, prayerful unity, trust, communication, productive conflict, and conflict resolution evident among team members? Are there other aspects?

Healthy relational features on teams are essential to the effectual administration of shared leadership. These elements were confirmed as the most important qualities in shared leadership. It seems clear that shared leadership will rise or fall according to the collaborative harmony and the quality of the relationships among co-leaders.

Question five: What outcomes have these ministries observed as a consequence of shared leadership? Are the ten benefits observed in the literature observed in Christian ministries using

this model as well? Are there any negative consequences? What kinds of relational consequences are there?

Exceptional outcomes, enhanced decision-making, complex problem solving, creative innovation, team-member fit, team synergy, organizational vitality, healthy organizational culture, individual health, and sustained growth are ten of the benefits that can be experienced using shared leadership. The difficulty of the model, a potential lack of follow-through, a possible lack of efficiency, a general lack of acceptance of the model in the public and even among followers, and the danger of immature or usurping team members are five risks that must be circumvented. The relational consequences of shared leadership can be exceptional and the deep relationships the model can produce can be enormously fulfilling.

Question six: Is effective shared leadership in these ministries related to collaborative harmony and its subdomains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features?

It seems evident that effective shared leadership is related to proficiency in the domains of leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features. These features have all been associated with competent shared leadership and the benefits it can produce. This confirms the veracity of the Leader-Leader Exchange view of shared leadership.

The Leader-Leader Exchange approach to shared leadership seems coherent. It can be concluded that collaborative harmony is critical to successful shared leadership. Collaborative harmony entails leader maturity, team attributes, and relational features. Proficiency in these three domains can precipitate effective shared leadership and its consequent benefits.

This investigation adds new information to two gaps in the field of shared leadership. First, it demonstrates the value of collaborative harmony on shared leadership teams. Second, it provides new information on shared leadership in Christian ministry.

The value of collaborative harmony is no surprise. Indeed, the concept is intuitive. Shared leadership is essentially and intrinsically relational (Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016; Wood & Dibben, 2015). Team relationships, interconnectedness, trust, and cohesion have all been associated with effective shared leadership (Friedrich et al., 2016). This dissertation has corroborated those conclusions and elaborated on them by describing the importance of collaborative harmony and the LLX concept.

Although less research has been done on shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries, this research was in alignment with other studies that have been done. Veliquette (2013) demonstrated that shared leadership in protestant house churches was associated with engagement, commitment, and healthy organizational culture. Brown (2014) concluded that this type of organizational structure in churches was comparable in its effects to other organizations that utilize shared leadership. Wood and Fields (2007) associated it with job satisfaction, and reduced role confusion, role overload, role conflict, and job stress in ministry staff members. The current investigation of the phenomenon in Christian churches and ministries parallels these other studies in this field and is in agreement with their findings.

In summary, this dissertation is in alignment with similar studies in the field and has expanded on them. It has done this with both the relational aspects of shared leadership and shared leadership in Christian churches and ministries. This project has both filled in gaps in the literature and expanded on previous research.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings, several suggestions for future research seem relevant. Each of these will be elaborated on below. This will provide direction for future inquiry.

First, future research should seek to quantify the relationship between the domain of leader maturity and effective shared leadership. This could involve administering leadership surveys and questionnaires to members of shared leadership teams. This would clarify whether the mature approaches listed previously were actually present on teams by eliminating potential self-serving bias in participants.

Second, the team attributes studied here could be expanded to produce a more comprehensive list. It seems likely that other valuable attributes exist. Discovering these could prove beneficial for teams wishing to grow in shared leadership proficiency.

Third, quantifying the effect of relationships on effective shared leadership teams would provide an interesting starting point for further research. Those data could be compared with similar data from more hierarchical organizations. This might confirm whether relationships on shared leadership teams truly are stronger. These data could also be compared with data from a wider array of shared leadership teams providing a baseline to correlate the relationship between team relationships and the benefits of shared leadership.

Fourth, quantifying the benefits that were previously described could provide an interesting foundation for comparing the effectiveness of shared leadership against that of more traditionally run organizations.

Fifth, the Leader-Leader Exchange concept is still in its infancy. Future research should add to this approach, elaborating on this view of shared leadership.

Summary

Human history is replete with examples of hierarchical, top-down, command-and-control, and positional power leadership. This is not the only way to lead. In a letter to his parents that was dated about one week before the battle of Iwo Jima, this author's grandfather, Fifth Marine

Division Staff Sergeant Gene Herbst, wrote, “The less I have to do with the regimentation and domination of the many by the few the better I’ll like it.” His statement captures the ethos of shared leadership. Wise leaders are capable of greater success when they share leadership with competent team-members while power-hoarding leaders fail to solicit the commitment and enthusiastic support of those they lead.

Shared leadership is both biblical and effective. Successful shared leadership requires mature leaders, competent teams, and authentic relationships. If proficient in these three competencies, shared leadership teams can achieve collaborative harmony. Collaborative harmony can help these teams circumvent the risks of shared leadership and experience its benefits. This epitomizes the Leader-Leader Exchange approach to shared leadership.

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