

Leading the Practice of Social Justice through Evangelical Congregations:  
A Multi-Case Study

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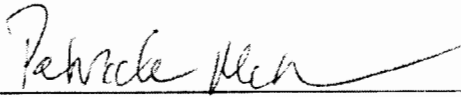
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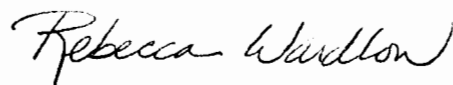
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## Abstract

If Evangelical pastors are going to lead their congregation in the practice of social justice, it is essential that these pastors receive appropriate training on social justice engagement. This qualitative study identified the required skills that an Evangelical pastor needs for leading a successful social justice engagement through their respective congregations. The problem this study addressed is the lack of training of Evangelical pastors in the skills that can guide their leadership of social justice efforts in their communities. Some Evangelical Pastors assert that they received no training in social justice engagement in their seminary program. This multi-case study identified the skills necessary for social justice leadership efforts among Evangelical pastors. The researcher interviewed a broad cross-section of 16 Evangelical pastors on the experience of leading social justice efforts through their congregations. The findings indicated that self-education was the primary source of training in social justice. Secondly, the Bible, Martin Luther King Jr., and injustice were major factors of influence that inspired them to acts of social justice. Thirdly, passion, communication skills, and vision were the core competencies that corroborated with the Transformational Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2007).

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The majority of religious organizations share the concept referred to as the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule has become the fundamental virtue of addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable in their respective communities (Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, for example, all teach that God created the world, and expects its adherents to treat others fairly (Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). Pastors for the Christian Church have accepted the calling to engage in social justice efforts to assist the poor (Koku & Acquaye, 2011; NAE, 2012). Furthermore, Evangelicals are called to poor relief as described in *The Evangelical Manifesto* (Neuhaus, 2008). However, the research literature on this subject indicates that many of these pastors are not leading their congregations in social justice due to a lack of seminary training (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

The American Baptist Churches, USA is an Evangelical organization. This religious body conducted a random survey of 255 of their pastors, examining their leadership, and their involvement in the spiritual, political, and social aspects of pastoral leaders (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). The American Baptist Church has 1.5 million members in approximately 5,800 congregations. African Americans make up 46%, and White Americans 51% of the census. The Native Americans, Asians, and Hispanics, however, comprise only 3% of the congregational enumeration (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). After the survey, Cohall and Cooper (2010) reported that the changing demands on urban pastors and their lack of seminary training in social justice efforts had left them ill-equipped to lead their congregations. African American pastors in this report displayed a greater investment in social and political leadership in their respective communities. Lastly, the

report indicated that better-preparing pastor leaders are essential for all of these congregations (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

Adequate preparation for leadership regarding social justice efforts in local communities is vital because pastors are sometimes the only leader of poor communities can look to for help (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). If Evangelical pastors are going to lead their congregation in the practice of social justice, it is essential that these pastors receive appropriate training on social justice engagement. This qualitative study identified the required leadership skills that an Evangelical pastor needs for successful social justice engagement with their respective congregations.

### **Background**

It is possible for Americans to have different views regarding the practice of social justice, by education, socio-economic status, and experience (Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). According to The Evangelical Manifesto, Evangelicals regard the Old and New Testament Scriptures as the authority that determines preaching and praxis in their congregations (Neuhaus, 2008). Both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics practice social justice. Roman Catholics, however, are more unified in their perspective on social justice, through the teachings of Thomas Aquinas' system of ethics, which is fundamental to modern Catholic social teaching (Thompson, 2010). This unified doctrine among Catholics makes it easier for the priests in the local parish to lead their congregation in efforts of social justice. Evangelicals, however, have lacked a consensus on social justice (Blee & Creasap, 2010).

For example, some Evangelicals have chosen to merge their Christian faith with a particular political agenda, an effort that fueled the politicization of religious

Conservatives such as the New Right (Blee & Creasap, 2010). Still, there are other Liberal Evangelicals that believe Christianity has been called to transform society, by applying their understanding of Christianity to the problems of the contemporary world. Christianity implemented in this way resembles the efforts of Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Luther King Jr. (Evans, 2010). Furthermore, research has shown that Liberal congregations tend to favor social justice efforts as compared to Conservative congregations (Todd & Rufa, 2012). This study is critical to the training of Evangelical pastors that want to be successful in leading their congregations, regardless of the conflicting views of social justice.

### **Statement of Problem**

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of training of Evangelical pastors in leadership skills that can guide their direction of social justice efforts in their communities (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Evangelical pastors are often called upon to lead their congregations in efforts to remedy instances of social injustice in their communities (Tangenberg, 2008). Surveys have shown, however, that Evangelical pastors receive no training in this area (Todd & Rufa, 2013). For example, Evangelical pastors in the African-American community in New Orleans were poised to lead their congregations in community disaster planning, which is a type of social justice activity in response to Hurricane Katrina. Research has shown that this group of Evangelical pastors during Hurricane Katrina could have made avoidable mistakes had they received the minimal essential education, training and technical assistance in leading social justice efforts (Alawiyah, Bell, Pyles, & Runnels, 2011). Similar studies have documented the need to identify the skills that pastors would need to lead their congregations in social justice

efforts (Todd & Rufta, 2012; Turner, 2010).

Research has shown that if congregations are to engage in social justice efforts, the pastor of the congregation must be the driving force to lead these efforts (Todd & Rufta, 2012). When the leadership is lacking the required training, then the needy in their respective communities will not be served (Todd & Rufta, 2012). Evangelical pastors assert that they received no such training while in seminary (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Therefore, the needy in their community go underserved.

The Catholic Church engages in social justice activities based on a doctrine called the Catholic Social Thought (Thompson, 2010). Evangelicals have within their Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008) the mission to care for the needy. However, when compared to the Catholic Church, the Evangelical congregations lack consensus in their interpretation and practice of social justice (Todd & Rufta, 2012).

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this multi-case study (Yin, 2009) was to address the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. The researcher asked pastors what they needed for training and assessed the strengths the pastors currently have. The principal investigator selected from an interdenominational cross section of Evangelical pastors.

The Evangelical pastors in this study have a record of pursuing social justice programs in their congregation. Based on the literature review and standards in the field, 16 was the number of participants the researcher chose to interview until data saturation. The geographical region of the study will be the southwest area of the United States. This study aimed to address the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with

Evangelical congregations. The researcher accomplished this by examining pastors' perceptions of the training needs and the skills that need to be developed to lead their congregations in social justice engagement successfully. Qualitative methods were used to ascertain this information. The researcher used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with pastors to elicit the thoughts, feelings and stories (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) regarding social justice work. Collected from each pastor was background data including their age, ethnicity, gender, denominational affiliation, the length of time in ministry, congregational size, the city where their ministry resides, and the type of social justice activity operating through their congregation.

Additionally, reports, brochures, fliers or other archival data were collected that describe the kind of social justice activities the pastors have been leading. These documents are an essential source that testifies to leadership challenges associated with social justice engagement through an Evangelical congregation. The archival data was used to triangulate primary data from interviews with pastors. The findings will be useful in seminaries, clergy conferences, pastoral workshops for educating future and existing Evangelical pastors on the needed skills for social justice engagement.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was transformational leadership theory (Sagnak, 2010). Burns (1978) viewed leadership as transactional or transformational. Leaders who are transactional lead by exchanging one thing for another, e.g., provide incentives to employees for their production (Burns, 1978). Leaders with a transformational leadership style seek to achieve extraordinary outcomes for their followers (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders tend to accomplish their goals by

inspiring and motivating others by aligning the needs of the individual with the needs of the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Psychologists have researched transformational leadership and found it to be more than just a social exchange between leaders and followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In psychology, some have examined the role that charisma plays in influencing others to achieve individual goals (Weber & Henderson, 2012). Past researchers had known that leadership was more than offering rewards to followers for good behavior and some form of retribution when they failed (Levison, 1980). Researchers realized that leaders must address the self-worth of the followers to engage them in some form of commitment to a personal goal or organizational task (Bass & Riggio, 2006). It is this notion that transformation leadership addresses, by motivating others to do more than what is intended, set challenging expectations, and achieve higher performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders tend to have more committed and satisfied followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). One of the traits of transformational leaders is that they focus on the needs of their members by assisting them in developing their leadership potential (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leadership has four principal components. The first element of transformational leadership is Idealized Influence. Idealized influence is when the transformational leader behaves as a role model for the follower. The leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. Members identify with the leader and want to emulate them (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The second element of transformational leadership is Inspirational Motivation. Inspirational motivation is when leaders display the kind of behavior that motivates and

inspire through the provision of meaning and challenge to their followers' work.

Transformational leaders help members envision a better tomorrow; they can clearly communicate the expectations and commitments that are required to attain future goals and the shared vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The third component is Intellectual Stimulation. Intellectual stimulation is when transformational leaders stimulate their followers to be innovative and creative by addressing old problems in new ways (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The fourth component is Individualized Consideration. Individualized consideration is where leaders focus on the developmental needs of their followers through mentoring (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Finally, transformational leadership has much in common with charismatic leadership (Weber & Henderson, 2012). The transformational leadership style of the pastor of a congregation displays more of a charismatic style of leadership, whereby Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation work hand in hand (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The subject of this study is Evangelical pastors, and how they lead their congregation in the practice of social justice. Pastors have reported that while attending seminary they received no training on social justice (Todd & Rufta, 2013). The researcher addressed the lack of training in the area of social justice engagement through this study. Transformational leadership from an applied perspective is the best place to look for a description of skills that a pastor needs for social justice involvement (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). The pastor is the transformational leader of his or her congregation (Rowold, 2008). When the pastor functions as a transformational leader their role is to lead, motivate and inspire parishioners in the congregation's mission (Paarlberg &

Lavigna 2010). When a pastor lacks the essential skills to lead the congregation in its mission training is necessary to develop those skills (Carter, 2009). The effectiveness of the pastor correlates to their transformational leadership skills (Carter, 2009). This study was guided by the Transformational Leadership Theory (Sagnak, 2010) to achieve the research goals of this project. Research has shown the success of the Theory of Transformational Leadership when evaluating the leadership skills of pastors (Rowold, 2008). The principal investigator included a section in the literature review that highlights the use of this theory in evaluating pastoral leadership.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this study align with the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to identify skills required for leadership in social justice efforts to address the lack of training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. Pastors are the key personnel in leading congregations in social justice engagement within their community. The interviews consisted of Evangelical pastors that have led or are leading social justice engagement programs through their congregations. The following research questions guided this study:

- Q1.** What type of training have Evangelical pastors received prior to launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?
- Q2.** What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?
- Q3.** What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem important in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?
- Q4.** What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are important to leading

their congregations in social justice engagement?

**Q5.** What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastor for social justice engagement in their communities?

### **Nature of the Study**

The researcher used qualitative methods to achieve the research goals. Quantitative methods by comparison to qualitative methods are too impersonal, especially for collecting data from personal interviews (Dobrovolny & Fuentes, 2008). The researcher chose the multi-case design, with the intention to conduct in-depth interviews (Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis is each Evangelical pastor and congregation in their readiness to conduct social justice efforts. The qualitative method and multi-case design enabled the researcher to capture pastor's perception and practice of social justice, and the transformational leadership skills they used in leading social justice activities through their congregation.

### **Significance of the Study**

Evangelical Pastors has the calling to lead their congregation in addressing the needs of the poor in their respective communities according to the Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008). However, the lack of training at the seminary level has left many pastors ill-equipped to leading successful social justice activities (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). This study was important because it can be helpful in establishing training programs for Evangelical pastors, which desire to lead successful social justice activities. The findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding transformational leadership and pastors.

### **Definitions**

**Evangelical.** The terms Protestant Evangelical, Evangelical Protestant and American Evangelical, are terms used synonymously in this study. The researcher has defined an Evangelical to be a Christian, which patterns faith and its practical application, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the United States, this would include Christian denominations that believe followers should have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Furthermore, this would include denominations that share the message of Christ with others, and live their lives as examples of the message they preach. Roman Catholics were not included in this study because their denomination has a consensus on the meaning and practice of social justice (Neuhaus, 2008).

**Leadership Skills.** Leadership Skills are the specific attributes that a leader uses in influencing their followers toward the desired goal (Northouse, 2007). The skills of a leader are the following: (a) establishing direction by creating a vision, clarifying the big picture and setting strategic goals; (b) aligning people through communication, seeking commitment and building teams; and (c) motivating, inspiring empowering subordinates, and addressing their unmet needs (Northouse, 2007). In this study, the principal investigator examined the skills that are used By Evangelical Pastors when they led their congregation in social justice activities.

**Multi-Case Study Design.** The Multi-Case Design is a type of case study method that examines a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context (Yin, 2009). A researcher uses The Multi-Case Design to obtain a thorough understanding of more than one case and then make comparisons across them (Yin, 2009). In this study the principal investigator has identified each Evangelical Pastor to be interviewed as a single case.

**Pastoral Training.** Pastoral Training usually occurs in a seminary setting where the student receives an education on various subjects related to the role of a pastor (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Additionally, pastoral training may occur as post-seminary instruction in the form of seminars, workshops, clergy retreats, denominational conferences or mentoring sessions by seasoned clergy (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

**Social Justice.** Social Justice has both political and religious definitions in society. The perceptions of social justice among American Evangelical Clergy have the possibility to yield a variety of interpretations depending on the experiences of each clergy person. However, for the purpose of clarity, social justice is defined as efforts to relieve poverty and hunger, to promote world peace and justice, or as addressing local issues (Todd & Allen, 2011).

**Social Gospel.** The Social Gospel is a message inspired by the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus Christ to address other social ills and injustices in the community. The Social Gospel is a synthesis between the ethics of the Christian faith and social/political activism (Barnes, 2010). The Social Gospel emerged as a movement in the United States in the late 1800's and peaked in the 1920's (Zurlo, 2015). The movement emphasized that Christians should demonstrate responsibility by applying their Christian values and ethics to the problems of society thus making a better world for the Kingdom of God (Zurlo, 2015).

**Transformational Leadership.** Transformational Leadership is a type of leadership behavior that transforms and inspires followers to exceed the norm for the purpose of the public good (Trmal, Ummi Salwa Ahmad, and Mohamed, 2015). Transformational Leadership is the ability to lead change efforts by inspiring others to

champion to their cause. Transformational Leadership employs the use of four factors known as Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration in leading others (Bass, & Riggio, 2006).

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the practice of the Golden Rule, shared by different religious groups (Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). Practicing the Golden Rule and caring for the needs of the poor are forms of social justice (Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). Within the Christian faith, both Evangelical Protestant and Catholic the pastor or priest assumes the role of dealing with the needs of the poor in their respective community (Koku & Acquaye, 2011). However, many Evangelical pastors have disclosed that they never received any seminary training on how to lead social justice activities through their congregation (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Research has shown that Catholic dioceses are better equipped to addressing social justice needs because they universally espouse a doctrine referred to as the Catholic Social Thought (Thompson, 2010). Evangelicals have not in been in agreement with the practice of social justice (Blee & Creasap, 2010), despite the mandate outlined in The Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008). This lack of agreement or consensus in Evangelical congregations includes a lack of training in social justice engagement (Todd & Rufa, 2013). This study addressed the lack of training among Evangelical pastors, by identifying the skills required to lead social justice efforts (Todd & Rufta, 2012; Turner, 2010).

In this first chapter, the researcher identified the qualitative method and the case study design (Yin, 2009) as the means to collect data from 16 clergy participants. Evangelical pastors that have successful social justice programs are the clergy

participants for this study. The researcher indicated that the Transformational Leadership Theory (Sagnak, 2010) was the theoretical framework for this study. Several research questions are explored, (e.g., What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem necessary in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation? What should the training entail that would adequately equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities)?

Lastly, this chapter pointed that the findings from this study will contribute to the knowledge base regarding transformational leadership and pastors. This study could also be a resource for developing a social justice training for Evangelical congregations.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to identify the skills necessary for pastors to lead social justice efforts in their communities and to address the lack of pastoral training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. The conceptual framework that guided this study was the Transformational Leadership Theory (Sagnak, 2010). The Transformational Leadership Theory is the process that changes and transforms people, by modeling a unique kind the influence that inspires trust and motivates followers to exceed ordinary expectations (Sagnak, 2010). Transformational Leadership Theory incorporates the charismatic and visionary style of leadership (Sagnak, 2010). (Northouse, 2007). Transformational leadership inspires respect for the mission (Ruggieri, 2009 and motivates individuals to complete the tasks associated with the mission (Paarlberg & Lavigna 2010). Transformational leadership motivates members to have an increased commitment to the organization (Castro, Perinan, & Bueno, 2008). Regarding this study, the pastor is the transformational leader (Rowold, 2008) that led their congregation according to the principles and practices of their respective faith group (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Therefore, the key person responsible for leading Evangelical congregations in the practice of social justice engagement is the pastor of the local church.

The research studies in this literature review were the knowledge base for this study. Establishing the need for this dissertation required the consideration of each of these studies, because of the data it contained regarding clergy education requirements. Next, the researcher reviewed the studies that defined the meaning of social justice engagement through a religious organization and the involvement of Evangelical

churches in social justice activities. Lastly, the researcher reviewed the studies that examined practical suggestions and interventions for churches that seek to address the societal ills in their communities and sustain a social justice ministry.

Poor and vulnerable populations exist in every community where there are local Evangelical congregations. The National Association of Evangelicals has made it clear in their Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008) that included in the mission is the mandate to conduct outreach to the poor and vulnerable in their respective communities. Minimal training in social justice engagement in the seminaries where Evangelical pastors have attended was proven to be lacking (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). The actual statistics of the schools where the pastors attended were not available in that study. Therefore, if both present and future Evangelical pastors are to fulfill their mission of social justice effectively, they will need to receive the adequate training to do so. When social justice engagement did not occur due to a lack of training among its pastoral leaders, both the Evangelical mission and the community's poor will be neglected. The researcher will use the knowledge generated from the findings of this study to be a training resource for Evangelical pastors and their mission of social justice.

### **Documentation**

The NCU Library was the primary resource to access scholarly articles from ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and other databases for this brief literature review. The search inquiries included social justice engagement and religious organizations, clergy education and social justice, Evangelicals and social justice, and the social justice ministry and the poor. The database search resulted in nearly 250 related hits, the abstract of 63 of those documents were read, and 8 of those sources were reviewed and included in this literature

review.

### **Martin Luther King Jr., Evangelical History and the Praxis of Social Justice**

There were diverse opinions about Martin Luther King Jr. and their Evangelical History. During the Civil Rights Movement, Evangelicals criticized the methods that Martin Luther King Jr. used to end racial discrimination (Evans, 2009). However, the majority of Evangelicals were vocal in their publications condemning racism during that period but did not agree or actively engage in any of marches (Evans, 2009).

The theological position that Evangelicals held during that time contributed to their disagreement with the theology and practice of social justice by Martin Luther King Jr. (2009). Proponents of Evangelical theology at that time held the position that social change can be achieved by amending the hearts of men through the preaching of the gospel (Todd, 2010). Evangelicals accused Martin Luther King Jr. of preaching a type of social gospel that only emphasized social change without a relationship with Jesus Christ or personal salvation (Evans, 2009). However, Martin Luther King Jr. made an address at the Holt Street Baptist Church in December 1956. He stated that the church should emphasize a social gospel coupled with a gospel of personal salvation (Marsh, 2005).

### **Philosophical and Theological Traditions of Hope and Social justice**

Some of the contributors to the theoretical insights on hope and social justice are Martin Luther King Jr. and Cornel West (Sandage & Morgan, 2013). For example, Martin Luther King Jr. implied that hope and a “deep faith in the future” (1986a) are the essential elements for remaining committed to social justice. Dr. King experienced a variety of persecutions while leading the civil rights movement. Dr. King understood that the trauma of these experiences enabled him to understand the commonplace for those

working towards social justice (Sandage, Crabtree, & Schweer, 2012). Dr. King knew that without a mature hope that it would be impossible to remain courageous in the work of social justice while facing the onslaught of resistance from systemic racism (Sandage et al., 2012). According to Cornel West it was important to have the kind of hope that would overcome resentment (West, 2004). West and King both described the type of hope that is not afraid to challenge the status quo and remains committed to the cause of social justice (Sandage et al., 2012).

### **The History and Message of the Social Gospel Movement**

The Social Gospel Movement was an event that influenced the structure of religious organizations in the United States. Walter Rauschenbusch was one of the leaders who believed that the Christian church has a calling of social responsibility to address the social problems (Todd, 2010). Rauschenbusch, therefore, developed a systematic theology where Christian ethics were used to address the social ills of that day (Rauschenbusch, 1916).

The Social Gospel movement originated in the late 19th century by Protestants and was later embraced by Jews and Catholics. The advocates believed that the tenets of the Christian faith could be applied to understand and challenge inequality, social injustices, and racial discrimination (Barnes, 2010). Social Gospel advocates believe that the Christian Church had a dual responsibility of proclaiming the gospel as well as safeguarding the economic, political, and social well-being of the members of society (Barnes, 2010). If these claims are true, then it follows that pastors need to acquire leadership skills that can help them implement the social gospel vision.

Rauschenbusch's work was a type of liberal theology that embraced social change and personal change simultaneously, and many of his critics accused him of being a socialist rather than being a theologian (Rauschenbusch, 1916). On the one hand, religious conservatives began to view any social action of the Church outside of "saving souls" as being beyond the scope of the mission of the church. On the other hand, mainline Protestants and liberal Christians embraced the Social Gospel because they saw their faith related to the social action (Todd, 2010). This event marked the beginnings of a liberal/conservative divide around the interpretation of the Scripture and the role of the church when engaging with society (Todd, 2010).

The division between liberal and conservative Protestants still exists in the 21st century. Liberal Evangelicals today still emphasize personal salvation through evangelism and support social justice activities as part of their Christian mission, according to their Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008).

However, Conservative Evangelicals like conservative Protestants are not as involved in social justice activities as the Liberal Evangelicals as their Evangelical Manifesto depicts (Todd, 2010). The Conservative Evangelicals like the Moral Majority became more interested in advancing individuals to political positions that held their worldview (Wallace & Lewis, 2007). This group of Evangelicals is more aligned with Conservative political groups, such as the Republican Party. Furthermore, Liberal Evangelicals and mainline Protestant denominations that share similar beliefs include social justice practices along with their Christian Mission of saving souls (Barnes, 2010). Lastly, there is a close association with Liberal Evangelicals and Liberal political groups, such as the Democrats (Wallace & Lewis, 2007).

## **Black Megachurches: Social Gospel Usage and Community Empowerment**

Barnes (2010) examined the Social Gospel usage and Community Empowerment in Black Megachurches. Advocates for the Social Gospel suggests that the Christian church should engage in political activism, social reform, and community empowerment. The researcher used ethnographic material and content analysis to determine the usage of the Social Gospel in Black Megachurches.

Barnes (2010) described The Social Gospel as a message inspired by the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus Christ to address other social ills and injustices in the community. The Social Gospel is a synthesis between the ethics of the Christian faith and social/political activism (Barnes, 2010).

The data was collected in the time frame of two years using qualitative and quantitative inquiry. The data included interviews with clergymen, sermons, articles, and the historical background of 16 Black Megachurches. There was 12 clergy interviewed, and 4 were clergy representatives. The meetings included demographic information on the congregations and data regarding the pastors' attitudes and behaviors regarding church polity, organizational leadership, congregational dynamics and community outreach programs (Barnes, 2010). The researcher found it necessary to examine each sermon to understand how scriptural interpretations reflect the view of the Social Gospel. Qualitative methodology and content analysis were essential in uncovering emergent themes related to the message of the Social Gospel.

The demographic findings indicated that the membership for the 16 Megachurches ranged from 1,300 congregants to exceed 25,000 congregants. The average church size reported in this study was slightly above 8,039 congregants. The

denominations represented in this study are Baptist (n=8), non-denominational (n=3), African Methodist Episcopal (n=1), Church of Christ (n=1), Disciples of Christ (n=1), Holiness Church (n=1) and the Pentecostal Church (n=1).

The location of the 16 Megachurches is as follows: nine churches are in the urban community, and one is in the rural community and six located in the suburbs. The study revealed that the class category for seventy-five percent of the churches is diverse. However, two of the churches have memberships that identify with the middle and upper class; two of the churches are serving communities where a majority of the congregants are of the working class and in poverty. The pastors are not bi-vocational but serve their congregations in a full-time capacity. Furthermore, 13 of these pastors have completed Seminary with a Doctor of Ministry degree. Lastly, 13 of the churches have CDC's known as Community Development Corporations, and 12 of the churches have more than 40 community service programs or ministries (Barnes, 2010).

Theological syncretism existed among the 16 churches, whereby the pastors combined a type of Liberation theology that suggested the Church should address societal oppression (Barnes, 2010). Only one of these churches embraced a Prosperity Gospel, which posits a belief that by confessing Scripture and applying them can be the means of financial success and well-being in life (Barnes, 2010).

However, 13 of the Black Megachurches appeared to incorporate some aspects of the Social Gospel message in the church polity. Furthermore, the study revealed that 87.4% of the pastors affirm that the congregations where they serve were conducive to social justice engagement. Another 33.3% of the congregations heard sermons that entail some aspect Liberation Theology periodically (Barnes, 2010).

The results of the study concluded that nearly all of the Black Megachurches embrace some aspect of Social Gospel theologically and have programs in their congregations that reflect the message and practices of the Social Gospel. Some of those programs included HIV/AIDS programs, Half Way Houses for former inmates to reenter society and community development corporations. Other programs included before and after school activities, credit unions; neighborhood revitalization efforts, child and adult daycare programs, health clinics and substance abuse programs (Barnes, 2010).

It is apparent that these churches practiced the message of the Social Gospel in this study. These pastors have found a way to embrace these social justice activities and lead their congregation accordingly. This dissertation study sought to identify the training needs for pastors to engage in social justice efforts like those in this study to model the tenets outlined in the Evangelical Manifesto. Instead of examining sermons of pastors the pastors were directly interviewed.

### **Congregations Involved in Social Justice Activities**

Todd and Rufa (2013) recently investigated social justice work among 15 faith-based leaders from a cross section of Catholic and Evangelical congregations. The researchers in this study employed a qualitative methodology along with a grounded theory approach assessing the Catholic and Evangelical pastors. The reason for the survey was to examine how self-identified Christians understand and work for social justice.

The following is the profile of these leaders: The average age of those who participated in this study was 47 years of age; 4 were women, and 11 were men. The racial and ethnic identities included 11 Caucasian and 2 African Americans. Additionally,

some of the participants were active in a range of social justice issues, such as racial, gender, LGBT civil rights, and disparities in health care. Others engaged in international peace work, anti-war efforts, economic justice, poverty, hunger, homelessness, disability, and housing (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

First, the study revealed some unique peculiarities in how these leaders define and work for social justice. All 15 of the pastors in this study expressed that it is a moral responsibility to conduct outreach to the poor and that this moral responsibility, according to their theological and religious beliefs.

Secondly, one of the participants stated that if they had received social justice training in the seminary, they would have been better prepared to engage the community in social justice activities. Furthermore, the researchers asserted that an excellent resource that could provide mentoring is pastors that have experience in social justice work (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

Thirdly, the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program is the usual requirement for those intending to pastor a church in most Evangelical denominations today. However, the Evangelical pastors in this study indicated that they received no prior training in social justice engagement at the seminary in which they attended (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

Seminary training is the educational seedbed for future pastors. Therefore, Evangelical pastors should be sufficiently equipped to perform all aspects of church work, including social justice engagement. Social justice training should be in seminary courses before graduation. However, if seminary training is not an option, then educational opportunities can be afforded to Evangelical pastors at their local church or in a pastoral conference hosted by their denomination or faith affiliation.

Finally, there were six pastors in this study that had experienced or foresaw barriers to engaging their congregation in social justice activities. One of those noted barriers is congregational resistance. Some pastors felt that to involve their congregations in social justice engagement would require training on how to overcome the resistance of having an effective social justice program in their church (Todd & Rufa, 2013). The next study identifies some of the characteristics of congregations involved in social justice activities. When Todd and Houston (2013) engaged in a study examining the patterns political, social service and collaborative involvement of religious organizations several unique characteristics were among these congregations. The investigators identified four distinct congregational groups in the study, which involved 2153 congregations. The method the researchers used was a random national sample utilizing a latent class and transition analysis.

The investigators for this study reported four categories of congregations involved in political activity, collaboration, and social services. The four congregational types are the Active Class, Not Active Class, Social Service Not Political Class, and Political Not Social Service Class. An explanation is forthcoming for each congregation. The Active Class had 9% of groups to fall into this class. These groups provided various social services, active in multiple political dimensions (marching, announcing political opportunities, and voting activities) and collaborating with multiple community partners. The Not Active Class had 32% of congregations in this class. These groups did not engage in social services, being politically active, or collaborating. The Social Service Not Political class comprised of 40% of the congregations in this study. This group focused on social services and collaboration, but not political activity. The Political Not

Social Service class represented 19% of the congregations in this study. The features of this group were characterized by activities focused on political activities involving voting (voter registration and voter guides) and announcements of political opportunities. Moderate endorsements were present for marches and providing food. Overall, this class was comprised of congregations focused on voting-related political activities with little social service activities or collaboration.

This study indicated that churches have different ways of engaging in community outreach. The investigators reported that Evangelicals were among the 19% and were involved politically by encouraging its members to elect individuals that reflected their religious beliefs. This group very little involvement in social services that met the needs of the poor or the marginalized (Todd & Houston, 2013).

There was also a study conducted by Todd (2012) on how and why religious networking organizations work for social justice, which revealed a few characteristics that were unique to Evangelical congregations. The researchers described a religious networking organization to be a conglomerate of congregations that consistently gather to address common goals in their community (Todd, 2012). The study examined two types of religious networking organizations. One of the organizations was Christian Networking Organization, and the other was an Interfaith Networking Organization. The study was conducted using an Ethnographic methodology and a grounded theory analysis to determine why and how religious networking organizations work for social justice in their local community (Todd, 2012). Over a period of eighteen months and 27 meetings, data collection from both networking organizations occurred in the form of ethnographic field notes. The researcher during this time was able to assess the value the organization

had to its members, especially surrounding the issues of social justice. During this ethnographic investigation, the researcher attended 15 meetings held by the Christian Network Organization and transcribed field notes at each meeting. The following is a profile of the Christian Network Organization. There were 27 different people who attended the meetings over a 15-month period, and 10 of the attendees were men, and 17 were women. The majority of the participants were White Americans and held membership in a religious organization that considers itself theologically conservative. The activity of the group was to mobilize churches in organizing events that distributed school supplies, food, and other resources to families at the beginning of the academic year (Todd, 2012). The group leaders did not want recognitions as Evangelicals; however, the group members belonged to congregations that embraced, practiced, and interpreted Scripture from an Evangelical perspective (Todd, 2012). Traditionally, theologically liberal groups perform social justice efforts directed towards the marginalized in the community, and often partner with secular social service organizations. However, the efforts of social justice from these theologically conservative congregations perceived their congregations to be socially inactive enough, and who felt out of place in working with secular organizations (Todd, 2012).

There are some Evangelical pastors that have successful social justice activities based out of their congregation. For example, Pastor Rick Warren of the Saddleback Church in Orange County, California lead a successful social justice project with the help of his group (Tangenberg, 2008). The name of Pastor Warren's social justice project was the P.E.A.C.E. Plan, which had success in Africa before he chose to replicate those efforts in communities in Orange County (Tangenberg, 2008). P.E.A.C.E. is an acronym

that means the following, Promoting reconciliation, Equipping servant leaders, Assisting the poor, Caring for the sick; and, Educating people (Tangenberg, 2008). After Pastor Warren had trained Saddleback Church and associated churches, efforts were launched in Orange County feeding 42,000 homeless people three meals a day for 40 days, an estimated 5.8 million meals (Tangenberg, 2008). To achieve this goal, Saddleback employed the use of small groups from the church to assume the responsibility of feeding the homeless in their neighborhood (Tangenberg, 2008).

There were Evangelical pastors that did not achieve successful attempts in social justice engagement. For example, a group of pastors serving a predominantly Black community in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina had sought to lead their congregations in community disaster planning. However, due to the lack of training and technical assistance in leading social justice efforts they made avoidable mistakes (Alawiyah, Bell, Pyles, & Runnels, 2011).

Catholic priests and Protestant ministers share in multiple roles, such as leading congregations spiritually by the tenets of their faith group. They also serve as organizational leaders to the families within their parish or congregation, and as community leaders. Boyatzis, Brizz, and Godwin (2010) conducted a three-year Parish Vibrancy Study. The scope of the study included a Catholic Diocese in Northern Ohio that spanned eight counties with approximately 234 parishes. During the timeframe of this study, there were 575 active priests serving 800,000 Catholics in Ohio. The focus of the survey addressed parishioner satisfaction. In this study, Boyatzis et al. (2010) used a quantitative method in evaluating parishioner satisfaction, by employing the utilization of The Vibrant Parish Life Survey (VPLS). The survey consisted of 39 questions that were

designed to assess parish vibrancy based on the perceptions and actions of parishioners. The Cleveland Catholic Diocese distributed the VPLS to all 234 parishes. However, the diocese only collected 52,786 surveys from 135 parishes.

Particular attentions to community outreach or social action were a major component of parishioner satisfaction. The study revealed that when a church addressed the needs of the elderly, the sick, and the neighborhood, there was parishioner satisfaction (Boyatizis et al., 2010).

Another study among 15 churches that involved themselves in a type of social justice activity referred to as faith-based community organizing (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). The study explored why certain churches remained motivated in community organizing given that these churches are not politically active and the scrutiny that their denominational lobbying offices were experiencing. These churches partnered with community organizing networks in their city to effect social change in their town. (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004) According to the study community organizing is one of the most successful forms of grassroots activism, and the most dynamic examples are networks dominated by churches and other religious bodies (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). This study reflects how clergy leaders saw the need to associate with a larger network of churches and nonprofit organizations, which shared the same mission. The 15 congregations located in Chicago, Milwaukee, and New Orleans, all are active in community organizing.

The research design consisted of telephone interviews with a sample of pastors whose churches are members of a faith-based community organizing network. The researchers developed the questionnaire from a review of existing literature information

received from previous interviews with local organizers, and knowledge of pastoral ministry (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). The survey included a set of questions about the congregation and the pastor, which included questions about their theological views. The researchers gathered data about the history of congregation's involvement in community organizing, and the type of ministries supported by the group and what percentage of the church's budget included social services. The questionnaire also assessed the impact of the work of the congregation, especially if new members joined; were new leaders trained or how was the pastor's primary role at their parish affected (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004).

An explanation of the 1999 census statistics of the three cities is forthcoming. New Orleans estimated that 27.9% lived in poverty, 19.6% in Chicago and 21.3% in Milwaukee (FedStats, February 2, 2004, <http://www.fedstats.gov/qf/states>). Additionally, New Orleans, which is predominantly African American, with Blacks 67.3% of the population, compared to 36.8% in Chicago and 37% in Milwaukee. Among the three cities, Chicago was most ethnically diverse with Hispanics composing 26% of the population and Asians 4.3%. Milwaukee consisted of 26% Hispanic and 2.9% Asian (FedStats, February 2, 2004, <http://www.fedstats.gov/qf/states>). The findings stated that 7 of the 15 (46%) congregational leaders regarded social justice as a priority for their work (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). Five of those seven leaders are Roman Catholic and two mainline Protestants (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). The pastors reported on their theological understanding of social justice in the following manner. Eleven (73%) of the pastors provided scriptural references to support their beliefs about social justice. There were also 67% of the pastors that mentioned theologians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr., and Gustavo Gutierrez as the ones that inspired them (Slessarev-Jamir,

2004). It is important to note that the researchers reported that 8 (53%) of the pastors that this was their first time they were involved in any social justice work.

The pastors answered questions regarding what triggered their engagement to social justice work. Twelve (80%) indicated that community and congregational concerns were triggers for them. However, those that serve poorer neighborhoods indicated that inadequate education, racial injustice, homelessness, affordable housing, drug addiction, unemployment and violence of against children were triggers for them (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004).

This study shows that there has been an interest in clergy participation in social justice activities. Community organizing of faith-based organizations is a form of social justice activities that involves several congregations working together to achieve positive community results to the social ills faced in their city. Finally, this study validates the need to engage in a study that focuses on the training needs for social justice engagement with the Evangelical clergy. The survey indicated that 53% of the pastors involved in this type of social justice effort had no previous experience or training (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). The study did not add any further comments regarding the lack of training or experience among these clergy members. However, the researchers thought it significant enough to highlight that over half of them (53%) lacked experience in social justice engagement, especially in communities who desperately need their social issues addressed. Community organizing networks are strategies that congregations can use to effect positive change in their respective communities, and could be one of the places where pastors could get the training they need for social justice engagement.

Another study focused on social entrepreneurship with religious congregations (Werber, Mendel, and Derose, 2014). Social entrepreneurship is a type of social justice activity that a nonprofit organization engages in a social mission with the intent to foster social change (Werber et al., 2014). Charitable Choice, the White House Office of Faith and Community Initiatives, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Act of 2010 are efforts that address the societal ills (Werber et al., 2014). The researchers also noted that data from a 1998 Congregational Study that 58% of those congregations surveyed engaged in social service activities. Furthermore, 11% involved in some collaborative effort some secular health agency (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Steinman & Bambakidis, 2008; Trinitapoli, Ellison & Boardman, 2009).

Specifically, in this qualitative, multi-case study the researchers examined how religious congregations engage in social entrepreneurship to address HIV-related health concerns in their respective communities. The location of the survey was Los Angeles, where a sample of 14 participating congregations from a racially diverse background of White, African-American, and Latino. Six congregations were predominantly (>70%) African-American, four were Latino, two were white, and two had no predominant race or ethnic group. The researchers interviewed (n=57), which included the following breakdown of lay members clergy: 22 African-Americans, 18 White, 15 Latino, and one either of Asian and other (mixed race). Furthermore, there were 30 men to 27 women interviewed, and 35 lay leaders 22 pastors interviewed. The study focused on Los Angeles, which is the second largest epicenter to AIDS in the United States (Werber et al., 2014). The researchers worked with community advisory boards and other local

sources to compile a list of 80 congregations potentially involved in HIV in the three areas of study.

The case study methods included observing health-related activities, the neighborhood setting, worship services, the administering of questionnaires to clergy and lay members, and reviewing the archival information. The study began December 2006 and ended May 2008. Accordingly, each congregational visit lasted seven months with the interviews averaging 1.5 hours, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed (Werber et al., 2014).

The results of this study showed the value of religious congregations involved in as social entrepreneurs. Additionally, the study showed these leaders were engaged with secular resources to achieve a common goal of addressing the HIV-related problem in their community. The study revealed that the religious congregations were havens of trust in their community, and the communities enjoyed the benefit of faith-based organizations and secular organizations working together (Werbe et al., 2014). The study also revealed the leadership roles that the clergy had as social entrepreneurs in which they initiated the entrepreneurial pursuits and encouraged their congregations to support these efforts (Werber et al., 2014). The study also concluded that while there were diminishing funds in the nonprofit sector to provide funding to assist religious congregations (Werber et al., 2014). However, the congregational resources and community networks shared among its members enable the clergy leaders to continue their effort (Werber et al., 2014).

This article contributes to the study of Evangelicals and social justice activities in the following ways: (a) pastors, and clergy leaders are valuable resources in leading their congregations in efforts of social justice; (b) health-related activities are just one of the

ways congregations can partner with secular organizations to address problems in their community; and (c) social entrepreneurship is another form of social justice engagement that congregations can consider as a legitimate approach to addressing community ills through partnerships with their local health agencies.

Another study conducted on Faith-Based Organizations and the social service delivery system in Marion County, the largest county in Indiana using the population. The researchers conducted a study on the involvement of religious congregations with Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives and compared the type of services provided by White and African American congregations in this county (Littlefield, 2010).

The study also revealed that Marion County is the most racially diverse where the population is 24% African-American and 70% White. Furthermore, the study revealed that in Marion County, women head 9% of the total households, and 11% of the population is living in poverty, all according to the 2000 U.S. Census (Littlefield, 2010). When the organizations were divided by race 29% of the Congregations were African-American, and 65% of the congregations were White (Littlefield, 2010).

The aforementioned information was relevant to the study to reveal the dynamics of how race plays a vital role in the type social service activity that the pastors lead their congregations in the community. When the researchers engaged the pastors they employed the following data collection methods: (a) telephone interviews were made to the clergy members asking questions that pertained to the organization, the number of volunteers and paid staff, collaborative efforts with other nonprofits and congregations, funding sources, and the number and type of people served (Littlefield, 2010).

The researchers conducted the surveys from 285 organizations that participated, and 232 of the self-reported surveys were used. The reports indicated that 190 of those organizations were identified as congregations, mosques or temples, and the other organizations. The findings confirmed that race played a factor in the how the organizations differentiated their services. For example, 24% of the African American organizations provided home ownership classes when compared to 5% of White organizations provided the same type of classes (Littlefield, 2010). These differences are important when considering the 2007 census that African Americans are least likely to own a home. Accordingly, 47% of African Americans own a home when compared to 72% of Whites that owned a home. The findings also revealed that White organizations were least likely to provide economic assistance when compared to African American organizations (Littlefield, 2010).

Furthermore, the study showed that African American organizations provided employment services, training classes for jobs, and business development opportunities when compared to White organizations (Littlefield, 2010). According to the researchers, this was important because it showed that these congregations were proving to be builders of social and human capital (Littlefield, 2010). The same was true for health-related outreach African American organizations engaged more in these efforts compared to White organizations in Marion County.

This particular study is important to this dissertation study on leading Evangelical congregations in social justice activities for the following reasons: (a) the researcher of this dissertation study lived in Marion County and was a pastor of an Evangelical congregation that had a successful grant-funded HIV outreach program at the time of this

study; (b) this piece of literature validates that the social, economic factors in the community will determine if White or African American congregation will in engage in specific and relevant social justice activities within that community; and (c) this study confirms that the clergyman who leads these efforts are the key to the congregations reaching out for their communities with specific social justice activities.

### **Clergy Education and Social Justice.**

A national survey of the church leaders of the American Baptist Church, USA (Valley Forge, PA) conducted in 2010. The American Baptist Church, USA is the fourth largest Baptist denomination in the United States, having 5800 congregations (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). This Christian faith group embraces Scripture and polity from an Evangelical perspective. This study was a random survey of 255 of its senior leaders, which analyzed their perception of pastoral preparation, leadership roles, and styles. The majority of pastors surveyed were in two racial categories. 198 of the respondents were White, and 50 of the respondents were Black.

The researchers approached this study with a quantitative method using the Pastoral Education, Accomplishments, Church Effectiveness (PEACE) survey instrument. This tool was developed a by a team comprised of 27 individuals including students clergyman, educators, and attorneys that tested the content for its validity. This team developed the instrument to focus on (a) how pastoral preparation was perceived, (b) the roles played in political leadership, social leadership spiritual leadership, (c) transactional and transformational leadership styles among pastors, (d) satisfaction and effectiveness in their pastoral roles, and (e) the length of time spent in the pastoral

vocation. The survey included a component that addressed social justice practices to its member congregations.

The results of the study indicated that the 198 White pastors had churches clustered primarily in suburban and rural areas, whereas the 50 Black churches located in urban areas (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). One of the weaknesses of this study is that the researchers did not give an actual percentage of White pastors that may have served in urban areas or the real percentage of Black pastors that served in suburban areas. The urban areas consisted of greater instances of unemployment, poverty, inadequate housing, and crime when compared to the communities where the location of the suburban congregations where the White pastors served (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

These investigators indicated that a motivating factor for social justice activities in communities of color, as compared to White congregations was the differences they had in the perception of their pastoral role. For example, the 50 African American pastors in this study perceived their pastoral role to be more than just spiritual leaders, but a socio-political leader compared to the 198 European American pastors. Social needs in the community where the African American pastors served required the pastors in those communities to become a transformational leader (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

The researchers claimed that churches serving high-need areas were safe havens for the needy (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Because the facility was a place that addressed the needs of the whole person, not just the spiritual needs (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). This emphasis among African-American pastors is an example of how an Evangelical congregation can successfully fulfill its social justice mission. The Evangelical mission instructs those churches to engage in social justice activities, especially when this type of

intervention is being requested by needy in the community (Neuhaus, 2008). The African American pastors in this study are just one of the many examples of how social justice engagement is occurring in and through Evangelical congregations today.

In this quantitative survey, a question was asked of the American Baptist pastors if they thought if their seminary preparation was adequate in preparing them to lead their congregation. Here are the percentages of the 240 pastors that responded to the question: 28.8% of the pastors disagreed with the statement that seminary adequately prepared them to lead; 22% of the pastors somewhat agreed; only 3% of the pastors strongly agreed with the statement. The researchers concluded that seminary training did not adequately prepare the majority of the American Baptist pastors (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

The American Baptist Church has taken on the mentoring of recent graduates from seminary and support on-going mentoring relationships. This initiative helped pastoral leaders receive the training no acquired in seminary (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). In the quantitative survey, the pastors were asked to respond to the statement as to whether they agreed or strongly agreed that pastoral mentoring would enhance their skills in leadership. The pastors responded in the following ways: 25.9% of the pastors agreed that pastoral mentoring improved their ministerial preparation. Another 44.3% strongly agreed that pastoral mentoring improved their religious training (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). These findings indicate that pastoral mentoring in a post-seminary environment can be an alternative opportunity to enhance pastoral skills in whatever area is needed to serve the church or community.

Another study was conducted with college students to determine if the impact of their faith or religious beliefs would somehow influence or incite social justice engagement in the future (Kozlowski, Ferrari, & Odahl, 2014). The study compared the perceptions of 304 college students with the median age 19.75. The students in this study were enrolled in a Catholic university with a diverse student body located in an urban area. The study gathered data through self-reporting on the structures of faith/belief, social justice, and community service attitudes (Kozlowski et al., 2014).

Kozlowski et al. (2014) described the level of commitment that an individual has to their faith or religious beliefs as faith maturity. Indicators of faith maturity include beliefs, values, and behaviors (Kozlowski et al., 2014). Mature faith is multidimensional and has a positive association with social justice behavior and racial equality (Koenigs & Ferrari, 2013).

Benson, Donahue, and Ericson (1993) divided faith maturity into vertical and horizontal faith maturity. On the one hand, vertical faith maturity is the extent that an individual spends adequate time maintaining, honoring and building a relationship between themselves and a transcendent reality (Benson et al., 1993). On the other hand, horizontal faith maturity is the degree a person expresses his or her faith in the world by serving others, pro-social values, acts of mercy, and deeds of justice (Benson et al., 1993).

Kozlowski et al. (2014) collected data using quantitative methods in the form of a survey. The number of students that participated in this study is 88 male students and 216 female students. The students that participated in the study identified themselves as Caucasian (69.4%) and Roman Catholic (44%). However, 23.3% of the participants did

not identify with any faith tradition. The other members are Protestant (13.0%), Jewish (4.0%), Orthodox Christian (4.0%), and Muslim (2.5%).

The psychometric measures used in the survey included Benson et al.'s (1993) the 12-item Faith Maturity Scale, which asked questions similar to, "My faith shapes how I think and act every day," (Vertical faith maturity), and "I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world" (Horizontal faith maturity). The researchers also used Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson (2011) 24-item Social Justice Scale where the items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). This scale measured four aspects of social justice, e.g., social justice attitudes, perceived behavioral control around social justice, subjective norms around social justice, and intentions to engage in social justice activities.

Lastly, the researchers used the Faith and Civic Engagement Scale (Droege & Ferrari, 2012), which examined five factors regarding the students' perception of civic engagement, faith life, political importance, spiritual growth influences and person growth influences.

The results indicated that the scores that focused on faith and civic engagement displayed a strong relationship to social justice attitudes and the intent to engage in social justice activities (Kozlowski et al., 2014). Furthermore, the faith and civic engagement score displayed a strong relationship to faith maturity that emphasized community relations with others compared to an individual's relationship with God.

The value of this article as it relates to this study on social justice and Evangelical congregations highlights the educational implications for a study like this. This Midwestern University was able to ascertain from this study the firm connection between

an individual's faith and their engagement in social justice activities. Although pastors are the focus of the proposed study, this particular study displays an interest at the university level regarding students' involvement in social justice activities once they leave college. In the previous article in this section, pastors were indicating that they were not being trained to lead social justice efforts in seminary. Furthermore, the findings from this dissertation study can be used to help bridge the gap of learning on leading social justice activities once a person leaves Seminary.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory and Christian Pastors**

Rowold (2008) conducted a study of pastoral leadership, by applying the theory of transformational and transactional leadership as an instrument of measure. Rowold (2008) noted that pastors have an extremely visible role of leadership; a role that needs to ensure congregational satisfaction, and motivates parishioners to contribute voluntarily. This research study was designed to extend the understanding of effective pastoral leadership in the paradigm of transactional and transformational leadership (Rowold, 2008).

The researcher hypothesized that transformational leadership had a greater impact upon parishioners as compared to transactional leadership (Rowold, 2008). The researcher performed a two-part study to assess the effect that pastoral leadership behaviors have on parishioners and to evaluate the participants' satisfaction with the pastor's worship service (Rowold, 2008).

There were 247 parishioners from 74 congregations that were of the German Evangelical Protestant Church, which is a denomination having 24 million members (Rowold, 2008). The participants in the second study did not include any members from

the first survey, but an independent sample of 120 parishioners from 31 different Evangelical Protestant congregations, located in western Germany (Rowold, 2008). The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, version 5 short (MLQ-5x; Bass and Avolio (2000b) was used to assess the leadership behavior of the pastors. Additionally, an independent research instrument was developed to evaluate the parishioners' satisfaction of the worship service.

The two studies revealed the positive impact the pastors had by engaging the congregants through a transformational leadership style. The performance indicators in the study showed that transformational leadership had a strong and positive influence on parishioners, (e.g., 27% and 50% of the variance in subjective performance indicators such as “extra effort” was explained by leadership behaviors). Transactional leadership in contrast did not have a relevant impact in defining outcome criteria. For example, transformational leadership enabled parishioners in their performance and increase their satisfaction in the tasks that they were assigned. Transformational leadership yielded enhanced levels of satisfaction in the worship service from parishioners, (i.e. 8% of the total variance in satisfaction of worship service and accounted for leadership behaviors) (Rowold, 2008). Although there were no additional data to contribute further to the correlation between the parishioner satisfaction and pastor, the previous results highlight the importance of transformational leadership behaviors in the role of leadership.

Overall the outcomes of this study contribute to the validity of transformational leadership as a useful theory in both profit and nonprofit sectors (Rowold, 2008), which religious congregations fit into this category. There were at least two limitations in the study. First, the research relied on a cross-sectional design, and a longitudinal approach

should be used to allow for causal interpretation (Rowold, 2008). Second, this study relied on only transactional-transformational theory, in future studies other leadership theories should be considered and compared to transformational leadership (Rowold, 2008).

This type of study identifies the role that transformational leadership plays in the life of pastoral leadership. Quantitative methods were used to acquire the data for this particular study. However, the qualitative approach and case study design of this proposed study is an additional means of obtaining data regarding the leadership skills required to lead Evangelical congregations in social justice activities.

Another study was also conducted on the transformational leadership theory, in which the researchers noted the lack of research involving pastors (Sosik, Chun, Blair, & Fitzgerald, 2013). In this particular study, the researchers focused on the self-concept of the leader and the impact it has on congregants. The researchers based the study on the transformational leadership theory and inferred that the transformational leadership style has a greater impact on followers as compared to the transactional leadership style (Sosik et al., 2013).

Transformational leadership theory (Bass, 2008) identifies the following four behaviors that impact followers: (a) individualized consideration that displays the type of confidence necessary to developing others; (b) intellectual stimulation, which challenges followers to look at a variety of options or perspectives to make better decisions; (c) idealized influence, which is the behavior that models the type of example that others are to emulate; and (d) inspirational motivation, which fosters and efficiently communicates a leader's vision to others.

The researchers assert that the way a leader self-conceives will have a positive or negative impact on its followers (Sosik et al., 2013). The two self-conceptions are referred to as described in the study as "hoped-for possible selves" and "feared possible selves" (Sosik et al., 2013). Possible selves are referred to, as identities representing the personal goals of the leaders of what they desire to become or are frightened about becoming in the future (Sosik et al., 2013).

In this quantitative study the researchers recruited 184 pastors from the following denominations: Pentecostal, 10%; Christian Reformed, 1%; Baptist, 11%, Mennonite, 1%; Congregational, 4%; Disciples of Christ, 1%; Nazarene, 6%; Lutheran, 10%; United Brethren, 6%; Episcopal, 9%; Presbyterian, 7%; Evangelical, 7%; Roman Catholic, 3%; Nondenominational, 5%; and others, 5% (Sosik et al., 2013). To collect the data, the researchers used a web-based survey, which evaluated the transformational leadership skills of the pastors. The measuring component used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X; Bass & Avolio, 1997), which is a sound measuring device for transformational leadership (Sosik et al., 2013).

The results of the study indicated that transformational leaders (a) value growth and relationships as a component of their possible selves expressed through the pastors behavior, (b) pastors that displayed a higher level of transformational leadership reported more hoped-for possible selves, (c) the findings support the notion that transformational leadership development occurs through the expression of self-identities that seek healthy social relationships and support learning and change, and (d) pastors promote social cooperation through religious beliefs (Sosik et al., 2013).

The researchers also reported on three need categories among the 184 pastors. The first need was a growth need, such as being found useful for God as a hoped-for possible self or not being not being a successful pastor as a feared possible self. The second need was defined as relatedness need, such as being happily married for many years or being alone. The third need was as an existence need, such as having good health or financial problems (Sosik et al., 2013).

The results from these categories contributed to the transformational leadership theory by indicating that 89 pastors were in the low transformational leadership category, and 95 fell into the high transformational leadership category. This finding occurred when pastors were compared and contrasted with the three need categories (Sosik et al., 2013). The results were a surprise to the researchers. They discovered that pastors did not differ on "possible hoped-for selves" reflecting growth needs "nor feared possible selves" reflecting existence needs (Sosik et al., 2013). The study also revealed that for the pastors in the age of group 40 to 59 years old that their professional lives were very salient.

Furthermore, this number of pastors were from the Baby Boomer generation and accounted for 71% (n=130) of the pastors sampled in this study (Sosik et al., 2013). The value of this type of study identifies the role that transformational leadership plays in the life of the pastor. The quantitative method was used to acquire the data for this study. The results of the survey revealed that low versus high transformational leaders did not differ on hoped for or feared selves. Therefore, it appears that these kinds of personal measures may not impact skill sets of pastors who are called upon to lead social justice efforts.

There was another quantitative study conducted with the same 184 participating pastors, which focused on the relationship between felt authenticity and transformational

leadership behaviors (Sosik, Zhu, & Blair, 2011). On the one hand, the researchers examined the pastors felt authenticity, i.e., where the leaders believe that the role is a genuine expression of who they are. On the other hand, the researchers compared those assessments with transformational leadership behaviors of being a visionary, role model, champion of change, and coach/mentor (Sosik, et al., 2011).

To clearly understand the correlation between pastors roles regarding "felt authenticity" and transformational leadership behavior the researchers described role authenticity of the pastors in the following ways: (a) visionary is the role where the pastor is comfortable articulating the vision to the congregants; (b) positive role model is where the pastor self-identifies as the one that should set an example for others; (c) champion of change is where the pastor is comfortable with advocating positive change in society; and (d) coach/mentor is where the pastor self-identifies with helping others to become the best that they can be (Sosik, et al., 2011).

A description of the transformational leadership roles are: (a) inspirational motivation is the role in which the pastor preaches to both believers and nonbelievers; (b) idealized influence is the role in which the pastor encourages congregant to be true be true one's word, trustworthy, and practice forgiveness; (c) intellectual stimulation is where the pastor encourages the congregants to embrace self-reflection with respect to changing the things they need to change their lives; and (d) individualized consideration is the role where the pastor encourages the congregants to care for the poor, the and disadvantaged in the community by establishing some form of social outreach (Sosik, et al., 2011).

Some of the significant findings in this study were very supportive of the proposed study among Evangelical pastors and social justice engagement, and the training needs to be required to lead their congregations effectively. First, the faith community leaders demonstrated higher levels of idealized influence behavior as compared to the other behavioral components of transformational leadership and across all roles of felt authenticity. This finding suggests that being a role model in the community is a biblical requirement and is expected by society. Second, the more pastors felt authentic in their capacity as a visionary the more they displayed inspirational motivation. Third, the more the pastors felt genuine as positive role models, the more they showed idealized influence behavior.

Finally, the more the pastors felt authentic as coach/mentors they displayed individualized consideration (Sosik, et al., 2011). Some of the limitations reported by the researchers were potential of bias in self-reporting and the inability collect data from parishioners rating the leadership style of their pastors.

The previous studies validate the need for the proposed study of identifying the type of leadership skills needed to lead Evangelical congregations in social justice activities. Some seminaries have included in their curriculum transformational leadership training for their future pastors (Bethel University, 2010). Transformational pastors have unique leadership skills that other pastors can adopt, which will better equip them for the task of social justice leadership.

### **A Critique of Research Methods for Past Studies of Pastor's Involvement in Social Justice Activities**

The problem this study addressed was the lack of training of Evangelical pastors in skills that can guide their leadership of social justice efforts in their communities (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Surveys have shown, however, that Evangelical pastors receive no training to lead social justice efforts (Todd & Rufa, 2013). Most authors used a mix of the quantitative and qualitative methods to study a pastor's leadership and around social justice activities. However, there were several problems in what these researchers captured that did not address the required skills needed for leading their congregation into social justice activities. Highlighted in this section are the issues with the methods they used and how they failed to capture the required leadership skills for social justice engagement. Furthermore, the researcher will make a case as to why the case study design of this study is suited best to examine these pastors' in-depth.

In a study by Barnes (2010), a mixed methods approach was used to explore the usage of the social gospel in their sermons. The researchers did not consider the leadership ability of each pastor or whether these sermons empowered their congregants to engage in social justice activities in their neighboring communities. Nor was there any attempt to elucidate the kinds of leadership skills pastors would need to lead social justice efforts in communities.

In this study, the researcher used a case study design to examine each of the pastors with a view to elucidating the required leadership skills for social justice efforts. The case study design allowed the researcher to explore the Evangelical leadership needs in-depth. The case study design helped the researcher conduct a detailed analysis (Yin, 2009) of each pastor. This method provided a clearer view of each of the skills the pastors used for leading their parishioners in social justice activities, and the skills they

needed to do a better job in leading their congregations. Furthermore, the researcher envisioned that the case study design was the best approach to addressing the research questions of the intended study.

In Todd and Rufa, (2013) a qualitative methodology along with a grounded theory approach assessed 15 Catholic and Evangelical pastors. However, the reason of the study was to examine how self-identified Christians understand and work for social justice. Their findings concluded that six of pastors had experienced barriers to engaging their congregation in social justice activities. Some pastors felt that to involve their congregations in social justice engagement would require training on how to overcome the resistance of having an effective social justice program in their church. The researcher in this dissertation study used a qualitative method not to focus on the barriers, but identify the skills that are necessary to lead a congregation in social justice activities. The researcher in this dissertation study interviewed pastors that have been doing an excellent job in leading their church in social justice activities. The researcher asked Evangelical pastors specific questions to ascertain pastors which leadership skills are essential for the successful leadership of social justice efforts in their communities.

Todd and Houston (2013) conducted a study to test how social processes, such as religious attendance, worship participation, the bonding social capital. The study also focused on the norm for social justice within the congregation and leadership characteristics. This approach included the modeling of social justice leadership, leadership styles to determine social justice involvement through the congregation. For this study, the researchers used data from 176,901 participants nested in 1,938 congregations. There were between 3 and 1,237 participants per congregation. A

weakness found in this study was the lack of information about the skills the religious leaders used or required in leading social justice efforts. The key finding in this report, which is relevant to the proposed study pertained to a belief that a leader should confront injustice. The implementation of this type of leadership will have a direct consequence on influencing the congregation to engage in relevant social justice activities.

This dissertation focused on identifying the skills the pastors use to direct their organization into successful social justice endeavors. The case study design was useful for this purpose because this approach will enable the researcher of this to gain an in-depth understanding of each pastor, which Todd and Houston (2013) did not.

Furthermore, the case study design enabled the researcher to better understand the pastor in their context (Yin, 2009). This approach assisted the researcher in identifying emerging themes (Yin, 2009) related to leadership styles, and skills associated with the congregations' social justice activity.

Another study conducted by Todd (2012) is critiqued here. On the one hand, the researchers were successful in determining how and why religious organizations work for social justice, by using ethnographic methods and a grounded theory analysis. On the other hand, during this eighteen-month period the researchers did not identify any of the leadership styles or skills required for successful justice programs.

Furthermore, the researchers made a comparison between the 27 organizations represented in the study, which did not include an examination of the 27 organizational leaders (Todd, 2012). The essential person in the success of any religious organization is the leader. The researcher did not place limitations on this study by just evaluating congregations but focused on an in-depth examination of the congregational leaders. The

case study design enabled the researcher to gain insight into the natural setting (Schram, 2006) of each pastor. This observation included the place of worship and the location of the social justice activity. Additionally, the case study design was the best approach to making sense of pastors' lives through an in-depth analysis in a setting that is familiar to them (Yin, 2011; Schram 2006).

Boyatzis, Brizz and Godwin's (2010) measured parishioner satisfaction in 234 parishes in a study of social justice activity in a Catholic Diocese in Northern Ohio. The method used was a quantitatively based survey designed to determine to what degree the parishioners were satisfied with their priest. The results of 52,786 surveys from 135 parishes showed that there was satisfaction with the priests that actively engage in social justice activities. However, those priests that did not participate in social justice activities the congregations displayed less satisfaction Boyatzis et al. (2010). Furthermore, Boyatzis et al. (2010) efforts did not focus on how the priests lead their parish into social justice activities. In this study, attempts were not made to identify the leadership skills of priests. Specifically the type of competencies needed to lead social justice efforts in their communities. Instead, Boyatzis et al. (2010) highlighted that parishioners were mainly satisfied in congregations that engaged in outreach efforts to the poor and needy. Although the quantitative survey method is very useful when evaluating a large number of participants, this approach lacks the ability to capture a view of the participants in-depth (Yin, 2011).

In this dissertation study, the researcher focused on no more than 16 Evangelical Pastors using the qualitative case study approach. The case study design was used to

evaluate participants in-depth (Yin, 2009) and provide more detail about each participant when compared to quantitative methods.

Additionally, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to collect, integrate and present data from a variety of sources (Yin, 2011). In this case, the researcher draw from the interviews with the Evangelical pastors observed any available social justice activity, made related notes, and reviewed archival documents, which validated the social justice program. A quantitative survey compared to the qualitative case study would not have allowed the researcher to gain a thorough examination of pastors and the social justice program the data collection phase.

In Slessarev-Jamir (2004), the goal was to examine 15 churches to determine their involvement in the type of social justice activity referred to as community organizing. The results of the study confirmed that 53% of the pastors had no previous training in the work of social justice. The research design was a quantitative survey. Although the data collected provided demographic information about the pastors, the study did not provide any information regarding the skills that were used to lead the congregations in this type of social justice activity. Studies such as this have been valuable in gathering surface information about the clergy, however, to ascertain in-depth information regarding the pastors' skills that were successful as well as the skills required to be successful in these efforts a case study would be needed.

The lack of detailed information about these pastors further confirms the use of the case study design to obtain a better profile on the Evangelical pastors. This study closed the gap on this lack of information by examining Evangelical pastors that have

demonstrated excellence in leading social justice efforts by using the case study approach.

Social entrepreneurship is a type of social justice activity that a religious congregation or nonprofit organization engages to foster social change. Werber, et al., (2014). used a qualitative multi-case study to examine how faith-based organizations participated in social entrepreneurship to address HIV-related health concerns. Although the multi-case study was successful in determining the value that pastors had in leading these efforts, the results of the survey lacked information on the skills they used to engage effectively in this efforts. This proposed study will employ the utilization of a qualitative multi-case to identify the skills necessary for pastors to lead social justice efforts in their communities. Furthermore, by using the multi-case design the researcher addressed the lack of pastoral training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations.

### **Summary**

The studies reviewed in this section are concerned with the readiness of Evangelical clergy to engage in social justice efforts in their communities. The Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008) indicates that Evangelical congregations should participate in social justice activities as it relates to the poor and needy in their community. The key person in Evangelical congregations that should provide the necessary leadership regarding social justice engagement is the pastor (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). However, research has shown that seminaries have not trained Evangelical pastors in social justice involvement (Cohall & Cooper, 2010; Todd & Rufa, 2013). Some researchers indicated that post Seminary courses and social justice mentors can assist in

preparing Evangelical clergy in leading their congregation into social justice engagement (Todd & Rufa, 2013). Another interesting feature emerging from these studies is that Conservative Evangelicals tend to be less engaged with social justice activities as compared to Liberal Evangelicals and mainline Protestants (Wallace & Lewis, 2007).

The review of the literature highlighted the contributions of Walter Rauschenbusch, Martin Luther King, and Cornell West. These men contributed on the topic of the Social Gospel, Liberation Theology and how social justice through the church was the hope of the Civil Rights Movement (Sandage & Morgan, 2013). The contributions of these men have been significant to the shaping of the theology regarding social justice and the church.

Secondly, the literature review provided showcased several studies regarding the church and social justice activities. The studies explained the various methods that were used to examine the churches and their leaders regarding social justice engagement.

Thirdly, the literature review provided an evaluation of these methods and determined that the studies lack in providing in-depth information regarding the pastors' skills that helped them succeed in social justice engagement. A case was made for a qualitative case study to collect information about the Evangelical pastors to reveal the skills necessary for leading a successful social justice program through their congregation.

Lastly, an entire section by the researcher was to critique the past studies of pastors and social justice. This critique was helpful in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the previous methods and highlight the importance of the method for this dissertation.

Furthermore, this literature review has been useful in providing the research material for the research questions of this dissertation. The leadership of social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations requires certain leadership skills by pastors. When leadership skills are understood and properly implemented, it ensures the success of social justice activities through a congregation. The researcher of this dissertation highlighted these skills to address the educational gap among Evangelical pastors regarding social justice engagement.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

This multi-case study (Yin, 2009) addressed the need to identify the skills necessary for leading social justice efforts. The researcher interviewed a broad cross-section of 16 Evangelical pastors on their experiences and felt needs regarding the leadership of social justice efforts in their congregations. The principle investigator of this study selected pastors that were have led or are leading successful social justice programs. Each Evangelical pastor was asked to identify the sources that (a) informed their practice of social justice; (b) identify the type of leadership skills they possessed in leading their congregation in the practice of social justice; and (c) identify determine the skills they did not have, but needed to in order to lead effective social justice campaigns in their communities.

Besides identifying the leadership skills pertinent to social justice engagement, the principle investigator intends to provide the following from the results of this study: (a) a report can be made available to the National Association of Evangelicals and clergy leadership groups on social justice engagement and the Evangelical pastor; (b) a training manual can be constructed for Evangelical pastors on how to develop a social justice program in their congregation; (c) a scholarly reference can be drawn up for clergy educators to devise curricula for training Evangelical pastors on how to lead their congregations in the practice of social justice; and (d) a report can be provided for training seminarians in Master of Divinity programs, etc., on social justice engagement. The qualitative research method and the multi-case study design have been chosen to achieve the goals above. The following research questions guided this dissertation study:

**Q1.** What type of training have these Evangelical pastors received prior to

launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?

**Q2.** What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?

**Q3.** What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem important in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?

**Q4.** What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are important to leading their congregations in social justice engagement?

**Q5.** What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities?

### **Research Methods and Design(s)**

**Justification for the qualitative method.** The principle investigator chose the qualitative case study design was over other methods for the following reasons: (a) the case study design will allow for in-depth exploration of the participant perspectives on their strengths and weaknesses with respect to leadership around social justice programs; (b) case study interviews appear to be the best approach for capturing the uniqueness of each Evangelical pastor's history in leading social justice efforts, community context, and their social justice needs in their given context; (c) the topic under investigation here—leadership skills—is by nature tied to personal qualities of the interviewees. Quantitative methods, by contrast, tend to be impersonal as compared to qualitative methods, especially when using personal interviews as the primary source of data collection (Dobrovlny, & Fuentes, 2008); (d) the researcher meet with each pastor face to face. Face to face interviews with participant Pastors allowed direct access to opinions, perceptions and histories of the pastors; (e) qualitative methods allowed the researcher to

be an integral part of the research process in the inquiry, interpretations, and findings; and (f) by conducting personal interviews, observing behavior, and examining archival information (Dobrovolny, & Fuentes, 2008; Shank, 2006).

**Justification for the multi-case study.** The multi-case study (Yin, 2009) is a better choice because more than one case is being examined. The unit of analysis in this study is each Evangelical pastor. The researcher studied the pastor's perception and practice of social justice, how each pastor modeled transformational leadership, and the type of social justice program operated by their church. Most importantly these pastors were asked to identify the skills required to lead successfully social justice efforts in a church setting. The multi-case study enabled the researcher to make full use of the designs potential for gathering in-depth data from a variety of sources from each case (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, the multi-case study (Yin, 2009) allowed the researcher to make sense of the real life phenomena of each participant through an in-depth study, whereas a single questionnaire is incapable of revealing this depth (Yin, 2009).

### **Participants**

The investigator in this study is also an Evangelical pastor, which had its advantages when approaching pastoral colleagues to be clergy participants. More credibility is usually ascribed to the researcher when there is a shared connection or profession. Only 16 Evangelical pastors selected for this study. In the qualitative studies presented in the literature review, the average number of pastors selected was 16. This number of participants was chosen based on several considerations described below including a preliminary investigation of the numbers of Evangelical pastors who have conducted social justice programs in the southwest district of the Evangelical Association

where the researcher resides. Also conducting no more than 16 interviews allowed a sufficiently broad range of experiences and opinions regarding leadership. The number of participants was small enough to allow for the in-depth, extensive face-to-face interviews planned, but large enough to sample a range of experiences and social justice challenges faced by Evangelical pastors.

Furthermore, choosing no more than 16 pastors allowed the researcher to adjust for any instance of unavailability or any returned Informed Consent Forms after the deadline. The majority of the pastors reside in the southwest region of the United States, to include southern California. The differentiation of clergy members will be by ethnicity, gender, and congregational sizes. Mandatory inclusion criteria for participant pastors are as follows: being an Evangelical pastor, and a leader of a congregation that operates a social justice program. The principal investigator did not select a newly appointed pastor of a congregation. The principle investigator did not choose a new pastor new pastor because he/she will spend the first few years getting acclimated to the church, community, and the social issues. A social justice program is any type relief or justice services provided to poor and vulnerable populations. These social justice programs may be, but not limited to homeless outreach service, disaster relief, HIV/AIDS outreach, before and after school programs, domestic violence shelters, prison reentry programs or Veteran outreach programs.

In 2012-2013, at least eight Evangelical denominations were identified (through examination of Evangelical news services) in the southwest as having pastors with active social justice programs in their respective churches. The following denominations have at least 16 pastors that expressed an interest in participating in this study: The United

Church of Christ (Southwest Conference), Lutheran Social Ministries of the Southwest, The Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship, American Baptist, Convention of Covenanting Churches, and The Church of God in Christ. The principle investigator also recruited several non-denominational for this study.

The following are the steps in participant selection: (a) a letter was sent to the pastor describing the study and inviting their participation in the study, (b) in a follow-up telephone call the study was explained to each pastor, (c) the pastor was asked to sign an informed consent form, and (d) if a pastor declined to participate their personal information was discarded to safeguard their confidentiality. Furthermore, the principle investigator has maintained a record of the number of pastors that declined.

### **Materials/Instruments**

The researcher chose the qualitative method with a multi-case study design (Yin, 2011) for conducting research with Evangelical pastors. When conducting qualitative research, the primary instrument was the researcher (Patton, 2008). To engage in in-depth interviews with each clergy participant the researcher developed a set of open-ended questions (Yin, 2011). These open-ended questions allowed the researcher to delve into the pastor's experience regarding social justice engagement (Todd & Rufta, 2012).

The researcher interviewed the clergy participants face-to-face when possible, and telephonic interviews when the face-to-face interview was not possible. During the process, a recording of each interview took place, and copious notes transcribed (Yin, 2011). In Appendix A is the Proposed Demographic & Interview Questions, and in Appendix B is the Proposed Interview Protocol.

### **Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis**

**Data collection plan.** Collecting data for this study included semi-structured, one to one interviews with the intent to elicit the thoughts, feelings, and detailed stories of the clergy participants (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The data collection plan made use of audiotapes, transcribed field notes, and notes from reviewing archival data (Yin, 2011), such as reports, brochures or fliers of social justice activities. When selecting the location for the interview, the researcher allowed the clergy participant to choose a setting that is comfortable, safe for all parties, reasonably quiet, and free from interruptions (Smith et al., 2009). This type of interview process engaged the researcher and the clergy participants in the form of dialog with adjustments to the original questions based on how the clergy members respond. Furthermore, the investigator explored other areas of interest as a result of this dialog (Smith et al., 2009).

**Qualitative versus structured interviews.** During the structured interview, the researcher used a questionnaire that lists a set of closed-ended questions for acquiring demographic information (Yin, 2011). In this study the researcher used a qualitative interview approach using open-ended questions (Yin, 2011) to (a) inquire about the pastor's leadership skills (Bass & Riggio, 2006); (b) how the pastor defined themselves as an Evangelical (NAE, 2012); (c) the sources that informed the pastor's perception of social justice; (d) what type training did they receive in social justice engagement; and (e) the kind of social justice engagement activities performed by their congregation (Todd & Rufa, 2012).

Choosing a qualitative interview with components of a structured interview allowed the interviewer and interviewee to engage in an unscripted conversation (Yin, 2011). The conversation ascertained the following: (a) the meaning of social justice; (b) the

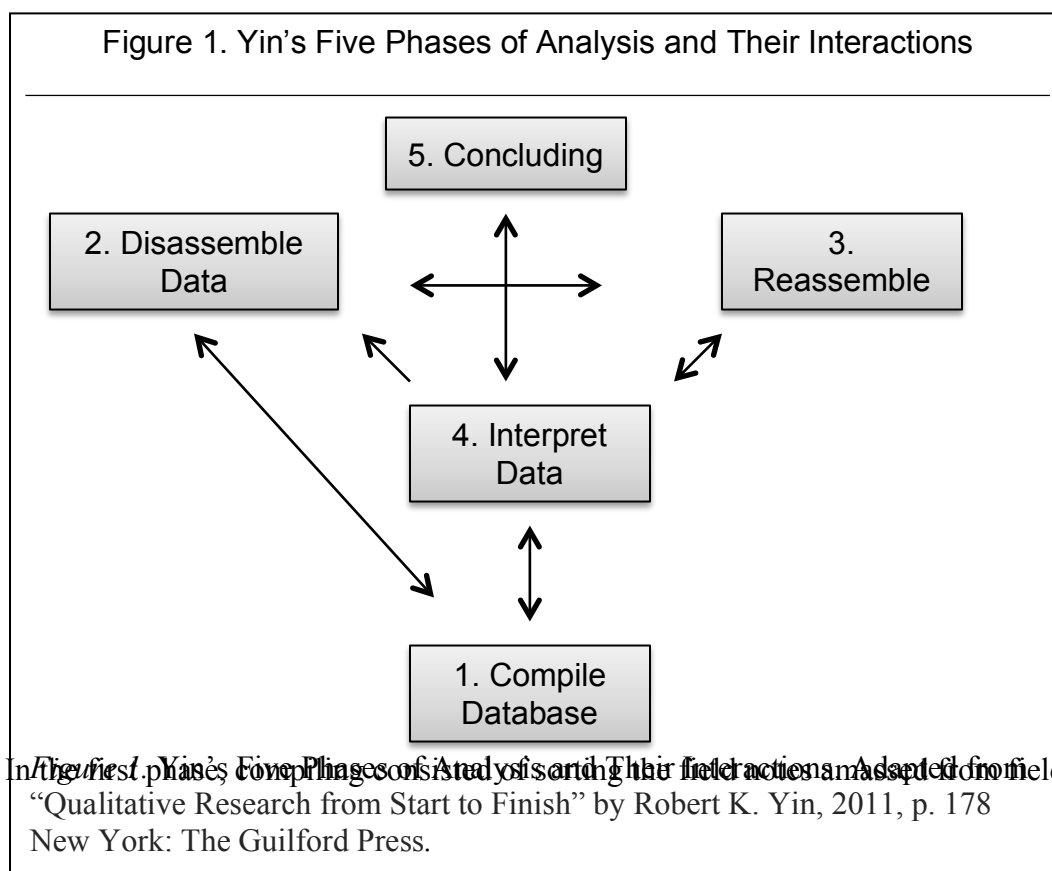
leadership skills (Bass & Riggio, 2006) what a pastor needs to embrace for social justice engagement in a church setting; (c) the type of social justice engagement program (Todd & Rufa, 2012) a church can choose to adopt; and (d) what kinds of training the pastors need to lead their congregations in social justice efforts. Furthermore, the qualitative interview enabled the conversation between the researcher and the pastor to result in a social relationship, whereby each pastor felt comfortable sharing freely, while the interviewer listened intently to understand (Yin, 2011). The qualitative interviews occurred at a location that was conducive to a private conversation between the pastor and the researcher; however, the preferred location was the church or the site of the social justice program. The researcher designed an interview protocol as a guide in addressing the research questions (See Appendix B). The researcher field-tested the interview protocol through mock interviews among existing clergy in the congregation where he presides as pastor. Additionally, none of the clergy participants pastors were in the mock interview process.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation is an analytic technique applied in qualitative research during data collection and analyses to corroborate a finding with evidence from at least three sources, such as direct observation, verbal report, and document (Yin, 2011). In the case of this study, direct observation is what the investigator witnessed first hand regarding the pastor and the social justice activity. Brochures or archival records were accessed either through their websites in the following ways: (1) the investigator asked the pastors' for specific brochures regarding their congregations social justice activities; (2) when the pastors didn't have specific brochures on hand they were asked if there was a location on the congregations website that described any of the social justice

activities conducted by their congregation; (3) the investigator compared the specific document source or website data to the assertion made by the pastor to confirm the validity of the social justice activity; (4) after the document was confirmed the investigator store the data in a electronic folder bearing their pseudonym ; and (5) the document sources and interview data were used concurrently in identifying emerging themes with the Evangelical pastors of this study.

The overall purpose of triangulation was to combat threats to validity, by collecting converging evidence from different sources (Yin, 2011). Triangulation is a process that is unique to both single case and multi-cases study designs (Yin, 2009). The archival documents and the information acquired from each pastor directly addressed the training needs of the pastoral leaders.

**Data analysis plan.** In the data analysis plan, the principal investigator combined both manual techniques and computer-assisted software to analyze all the collected qualitative data. A brief introduction of the essential elements of these stages and the software are in this section. Yin (2011) describes the qualitative analysis in five integral stages known as compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (see Figure 1).



tape recordings of interviews before transcribing them. Once all this material was reviewed and arranged into some order, the use computerized software assisted with data management. The computerized software is a discussion topic later in this section later in this section. The second phase Yin (2011) refers to as disassembling, which calls for dismantling the data into fragments, and inserting a different set of new labels or codes. During this phase, the researcher was constantly going back and forth between the initial ideas about how to disassemble the data and the actual data and kept memos of what is useful for coding. The third phase referred to as reassembling, which included depicting the data in graphs or arranging in lists or other tabular forms. Yin (2011) indicated that during this phase the researcher will identify emerging patterns by creating a hierarchal

array with the most concrete items at one end of the hierarchy and more abstract concepts at the other end. Finally, in a successful reassembling phase the researcher was able to see the broader themes or outline of the entire analysis (Yin, 2011).

The fourth phase referred to as the interpreting phase, in which the researcher gave meaning to the reassembled data and data arrays (Yin, 2011). This phase calls for a broad range of interpreting skills with goal of developing a comprehensive interpretation of the data, Yin (2011) suggests that the following attributes are in a comprehensive or good interpretation:

- *Completeness* (Does the interpretation have a beginning, middle and ending?)
- *Fairness* (Given the researcher interpretive stance, would others with the same stance arrive at the same interpretation?)
- *Accuracy based on empirical evidence* (Is there a fair interpretation of the data represented?)
- *Added Value* (Does the interpretation offer fresh insights, or is it a repetition of the literature associated with topic?)
- *Credibility* (Independent of its creativity, how would the most esteemed peer in the researcher's field critique or accept the interpretation?)

The fifth analytic phase is the concluding phase that entails an overarching statement or series of statements that raise the findings of the study to a higher conceptual level or a broader set of ideas (Yin, 2011). Some of those conclusions could entail the following: (a) by requiring that research in new areas; (b) by creating a challenge to the previous generalizations; (c) by concluding with new concepts, theories or discoveries;

(d) by making substantive propositions; or (e) by generalizing (Yin, 2011).

According to Yin (2009), there are five different data analysis techniques for case studies. The five techniques are pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis Yin (2009). Regarding this study pattern-matching best fits the study with the pastors. Pattern matching seeks to identify similar patterns (Yin, 2009) as they emerge from analyzing the data acquired from the pastors.

When using the pattern-matching technique the researcher ascertained the type of skills that the pastors have in common when leading their congregations in social justice activities, transformational leadership characteristics, strengths or weaknesses they share in common and training needs that they have identified associated with social justice engagement through their congregations. The second part of this introduction describes NVivo, which is the computerized software of choice for this qualitative study. NVivo was developed by QSR International to provide qualitative researchers a tool to assist researchers in the following: (a) by providing an organizational system that keeps track of data related to the qualitative study; (b) by organizing and providing rapid means of accessing knowledge during this course of study; (c) enable the researcher to query data stored in the database; (d) to show relationships between concepts and ideas, and present them in matrix or model; and (e) making reports from the data stored in the database (Bazeley, 2007).

Based on the information provided with the introduction and the details of this study regarding pastoral leaders the researcher analyzed the data received from each of the pastoral interviews, using the following procedure: (a) transcribing the interviews according to set transcription rules; (b) organizing the data in folders in NVivo to prepare

it for analysis; (c) collecting supporting documents to be analyzed concurrently with interview data (d) repeatedly reading through all the data obtained from the pastoral interviews and supporting documents; (e) coded the interview data and the data from the supporting documents by using NVivo Analysis Software; (f) identified emergent themes from the pastoral interviews and supporting documents with the assistance of Nvivo Analysis Software; (g) reported the findings using graphs and evaluative narratives (Yin, 2009).

NVivo Data Analysis Software enabled the investigator: (a) manage data from raw data files from interviews, questionnaires, observations, articles, memos, and other data sources regarding the pastors and their social engagement activities; (b) assisted in managing, organizing and providing quick access to the knowledge acquired in this proposed study; (c) allowed the researcher to query the data by retrieving answers to questions; and (d) create graphic models of the cases, ideas, concepts and their relationships to each other from the data (Bazeley, 2007).

Finally through analyzing the interview transcripts, the collected documents and sources that emergent themes were identified. The researcher also kept a tally of how many times a particular theme emerged from the data collected from the interviews and supporting documents. The researcher was observant to data saturation during this process. Data saturation is similar to the law of diminishing returns (Shank, 2006). For example, in this study, it would mean that the researcher has analyzed the data to the point that there is nothing new that emerges from coding themes derived from the pastoral interviews and supporting documents. When the researcher started noticing a

repetition of the same patterns emerging from themes data saturation has occurred (Shank, 2006).

Furthermore, the researcher addressed the reliability and the validity of data in the research plan to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in the study. According to Shenton, (2004), the researcher must be first of all must be credible. In this study, the credentials as an ordained pastor of a church placed the researcher on equal footing with the pastors he interviewed. In other words, the pastors respect the researcher because of the shared experience, and knowledge of pastoring. Additionally, the researcher became familiar with the culture of those to be interviewed, by establishing a rapport with the participants before the study (Shenton, 2004) to ease any tensions or suspicions that hinder the objectives of the study. Triangulation is another key feature of credibility and has been mentioned earlier in detail.

Second regarding transferability, a full description of the context of the study, to include the number of participants, congregations and their regional location, the number and length of the data collection sessions, and the period in which the researcher collected the data (Shenton, 2004).

Third regarding dependability, the researcher included the strategies outlined in transferability, and reported in detail on the design and methods used makes it possible for this study to be replicated (Shenton, 2004). For example, in the case dependability, another researcher could perform the same study, with the same environment using the qualitative approach and the multi-case study design and obtain similar results.

Therefore, if another researcher desired to perform a study on the lack of training in social justice engagement with the same group of Evangelical clergy they would obtain similar results. Regarding transferability, a researcher could also use the qualitative approach and a multi-case study with an entirely different environment and arrive at comparable results. In this particular study, the majority of the clergy participants reside in the Southwest region of the United States, and specifically in the Phoenix metropolitan area. A new researcher could use the same method and design and focus on the Northwest region and conduct a study with Evangelical clergy and compare them with the findings of Southwest region. Lastly, regarding confirmability, the researcher maintained an audit trail of the collected data, adhered to the standards of the qualitative researcher, and remained ethical throughout this process to avoid bias (Shenton, 2004; Shank, 2006).

### **Methodological Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

**Assumptions.** The first assumption pertains to that every selected participant considers themselves as an Evangelical. The researcher made the best attempt in prescreening the selected pastors to make this determination. The second assumption is that every pastor was honest regarding the answers they provide about themselves, the congregation, and the social justice activity. Lastly, the researcher assumed that being an Evangelical Pastor establishes credibility with the other pastors (Shenton, 2004).

**Limitations.** This study used qualitative methodology to achieve its research goals. The challenge with qualitative methods is the possibility of bias since the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument (Patton, 2008). Therefore, the researcher made every effort to safeguard against in bias in every phase of the study. The researcher

could have used Quantitative methods if he wanted to capture a larger audience (Dobrovlny, & Fuentes, 2008) of Evangelical pastors. However, the researcher understood that quantitative methods would limit the amount of collected information (Dobrovlny, & Fuentes, 2008) because only a survey will be the primary instrument. This study interviewed clergy participants for the purpose of conducting an in-depth interview. The in-depth interview made it possible to capture a fuller picture of the Evangelical pastor and their environment.

**Delimitations.** The primary delimitation is accessing information only from pastors that identify with the Evangelical movement. Evangelicalism is not a denomination (NAE, 2012), but a particular worldview that exists among Protestants and not Catholics. The Catholic Church historically has addressed social wills through their parish and diocese. However, the Catholic Church was not chosen for this study because the problem exists among Evangelical groups.

**Ethical assurances.** The researcher has made every effort to become aware of ethical problems, which occur in the research process, by becoming familiar with the ethical codes that inform sound decisions in research (İşman, Askal, & Gazı, 2009). Scholarly articles and peer-reviewed studies have indicated the following ethical considerations for the researcher: (a) the ethical codes at the university are an effective guide for researchers; (b) the researcher is the key element in making ethical decisions in the proposed study; and (c) being honest, remaining authentic, and ensuring confidentiality, of participants is a vital role of the ethical researcher (Isman, et al., 2009). Additionally, doctoral learners at Northcentral University (NCU), in the School of Education, are asked to familiarize themselves with the Ethical Principles of

Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2002), Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010), and American Educational Research Association Code of Ethics (2011) before conducting any research study. Regarding this proposed study the following ethical assurances are noteworthy.

**Conflicts of interest.** The researcher made every effort to avoid engaging in any conflict of interest, whereby the personal, professional or financial concerns of the researcher prevents unbiased research from being conducted (AERA, 2011).

Furthermore, the researcher avoided potentially biasing affiliations or relationships with clergy colleagues that would pose a conflict of interest (AERA, 2011). The researcher made every effort to be objective in interpreting evidence and remained unbiased in interpreting the facts in this study because conflicts of interest potentially hinder the possibility of objectivity in any research study (APA, 2010).

**Informed consent and confidentiality.** Individuals have the right to determine if entering into this study is appropriate (Lee, 2010). Therefore, the researcher will protect the rights of participants before engaging in the dissertation study, by acquiring the informed consent of the participant or the participants' legal authorized representative where applicable (AERA, 2011). The researcher took further precautions to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, by not disclosing any personal information without permission. The use of an informed consent form is the usual way participants become familiar with his or her rights, before data collection. The signed informed consent form verifies the understanding of (a) the participants' rights, (b) purpose of the study, (c) benefits for participating, (d) guarantee of confidentiality, and (e) the participant's permission for involvement in the study (Yin, 2011).

Lastly, regarding respect at research sites: (a) the researcher sought permission from the authorized person(s) to conduct the research at the church or social justice activity; (b) respect was given to the organization so that the research study does not affect operational activities; (c) respect was given so that the research study had little intrusion upon the participants flow of activities; and (d) the research provided respect to each pastor's confidentiality, by incorporating a method of anonymity to operationalize the confidentiality, such as using a pseudonym rather than a personal name of the participant (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). The principal investigator stored all data, including data on flash drives, in a locking file cabinet in a secure location. These items are stored for seven years and then the documents will be shredded, and any electronic media will be erased from hard drive, flash drive or other recording devices.

### **Summary**

In this section, the investigator explained in detail the qualitative research methods and the multi-case study design procedures for this study. The research questions were the guide for this study, which the investigator confirmed in this section. The investigator provided a thorough explanation of the data collection and analysis phases with particular attention regarding the NVivo Data Analysis Software, and the role it had in this study. Furthermore, the investigator explained the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations related to this study. Finally, the researcher provided a thorough explanation of the ethical assurances in this section.

## Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this multi-case study (Yin, 2009) was to address the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. The principal investigator sent out 32 requests for participation in this study, interviewed 18 Evangelical pastors through the use of audio recordings and discarded 2 of the interviews were due to discrepancies with the recording. The remaining interviews were from an interdenominational cross section of 16 Evangelical pastors. Thirteen of the pastoral leaders were from Arizona, 2 reside Indiana, and one currently resides Florida. All of them have Evangelical ties to the Southwest region of the United States through religious affiliation. In Table 1 is the demographic data regarding the 16 Evangelical pastors.

Table 1

*Evangelical Pastor Demographics*

<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Race-Ethnicity</u>	<u>Denom.</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>City</u>
1	Male	54	African American	Non D	27	125	Phoenix
2	Male	58	African American	Baptist	35	N/A	Orlando
3	Male	74	African American	Baptist	52	250	Indianapolis
4	Male	66	White American	Non D	44	4500	Mesa
5	Male	54	Liberian	Pentecostal	28	80	Phoenix
6	Male	59	African American	Non D	35	75	Indianapolis
7	Male	64	African American	Baptist	46	1200	Phoenix
8	Male	63	African American	Non D	34	140	Indianapolis
9	Male	59	African American	Non D	37	600	Phoenix
10	Male	36	African American	Non D	7	150	Mesa
11	Female	54	African American	Pentecostal	30	200	Phoenix
12	Female	57	White American	ELC	18	117	Mesa
13	Male	54	Native American	Nazarene	35	30	Phoenix
14	Female	51	African American	Christian	21	150	Tuscon
15	Male	36	African American	UCC	20	50	Tempe
16	Male	32	African American	Christian	8	80	Phoenix

The principal investigator before conducting the interviews acquired a signed Informed Consent form from each participant, which was either returned by mail or collected on the day of the interview. The data collection method for this study was a direct audio recorded interview, which was either conducted in person or via telephone. Ten of the interviews were carried out in person at a location of the participants choosing, and the six remaining interviews via telephone due to distance or scheduling limitations during the holiday season of 2015.

All of the interview questions received approval by the Institutional Review Board before data collection. Refer to Appendix A for the list of questions. The interview questions had two parts. The first part had seven questions that were demographic in nature. Table 1 displays demographic characteristics of participants. The second part had nine open-ended questions that allowed the Evangelical pastor to elaborate on their experience with social justice and social justice engagement through their congregation. The interviews were essential in addressing the research questions:

- Q1.** What type of training have Evangelical pastors received prior to launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?
- Q2.** What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?
- Q3.** What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem important in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?
- Q4.** What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are important to leading their congregations in social justice engagement?

**Q5.** What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities?

In this chapter, the principal investigator will include the findings as it relates to each of the research questions, provide an evaluation of the findings, and conclude this chapter with a summary.

## **Results**

**Q1. What type of training have Evangelical pastors received before launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?** The findings presented for this question was derived from interview question 2 found in Appendix A. In reference to research question 1 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: church bulletins, church websites, pastor resumes' church, and the social media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. The following four themes emerged from the interviews and document reviews regarding the type of training they received: *College Coursework*, *Denominational Sources*, *Mentorship*, and *Self-Education*. Table 2 below displays the training source for each pastor. Provided below is an explanation of Table 2:

- *College Coursework* refers to any studies received in seminary or classes taken on social justice in college.
- *Denominational Sources* refers to any training provided by their denomination on social justice.
- *Mentorship* refers to an individual or individuals that provided training on social justice.

- *Self-Education* refers to training they received by reading literature, observing others or viewing some form of media regarding social justice.

Table 2

*Evangelical Pastor Training Sources*

<u>Evangelical Pastor</u>	<u>College Coursework</u>	<u>Denominational Sources</u>	<u>Mentorship</u>	<u>Self-Education</u>
Pastor 1			X	X
Pastor 2	X			X
Pastor 3				X
Pastor 4			X	X
Pastor 5				X
Pastor 6				
Pastor 7	X			X
Pastor 8				
Pastor 9				X
Pastor 10			X	
Pastor 11				
Pastor 12		X		
Pastor 13				
Pastor 14			X	X
Pastor 15	X			X
Pastor 16				X

In Table 2 Evangelical pastors 6, 8, 11, and 13 did not provide a direct answer regarding any training or education received before social justice engagement. However, 3 Evangelical pastors identified college studies as a source of training in social justice. One Evangelical pastor indicated that their denomination was the source for training in social justice. Four Evangelical pastors reported that they trained in social justice engagement by being mentored by another individual or individuals. Finally, 10 of the 16 Evangelical pastors indicated they received training in social justice engaged through self-education, which included reading the Bible, reading other literature, observing others or viewing some form of media.

For example, Pastor 1 stated that “Proven methodologies for outreach and connection with other nonprofits that are likeminded have been a great source training.” Pastor 2 included college coursework as a source of training for social justice, but it was not the primary source. His source of training was largely dependent on self-education based on reading the Bible and personal experiences. He states, “My spiritual conviction in following the Christ. Secondly, the Holy Scriptures especially the book of Acts. Thirdly, my college studies were a source of social justice, including Gandhi” Lastly he mentioned, “My experiences in living half my life in the Caribbean and the other half in America and my experiences as being a teacher were a source of social justice.”

Pastor 15 derived his training from a variety of sources including, the Bible, historical records, lived experiences, and seminary courses in social justice. He states, “I think most fundamentally I have the Bible. I have used historical documents, like ‘Eyes on the Prize’ the video series. I have also used my lived experiences being a person who is African American in the south, and also who identifies as non-heterosexual or gay.” Furthermore, he stated, “I have used resources, as one of the newest resources is the book entitled ‘The New Jim Crow.’ It is about how people in the prison population are disproportionately represented by certain demographics.”

Lastly Pastor 15 stated, “I have used courses and training I have had in seminary in particularly at Eaton Theological Seminary, I have taken a course on ‘White Privilege.’ I have also taken a course on Neocolonialism.” Pastor 15 sums up his training in social justice with this one succinct statement. “I guess I have used coursework, lived experiences and historical documentation to define what social justice is.”

**Q2. What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?** The findings presented for this question was derived from interview questions 2, 5 and 6 found in Appendix A. In reference to research question 2 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: written publications authored by the pastors, church websites, and the social media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. The following themes that emerged from the interviews and document reviews were the following major influential factors that inspired them in social justice efforts: *The Bible, but specifically the Gospels, Politics, Martin Luther King Jr., and Injustice, either witnessed or personal experience.* Table 3 displays the influential factors for each Evangelical pastor.

<u>Evangelical Pastor</u>	<u>The Bible</u>	<u>Martin Luther King Jr.</u>	<u>Injustice</u>	<u>Politics</u>
Pastor 1	X	X	X	
Pastor 2	X	X	X	
Pastor 3	X	X	X	X
Pastor 4	X	X	X	X
Pastor 5	X		X	X
Pastor 6	X		X	X
Pastor 7	X	X	X	X
Pastor 8			X	X
Pastor 9		X	X	
Pastor 10	X	X	X	
Pastor 11			X	X
Pastor 12	X		X	X
Pastor 13	X		X	
Pastor 14	X			
Pastor 15	X	X	X	X
Pastor 16	X	X	X	X

In Table 3 above 13 of the Evangelical pastors stated that the Bible was influential in their practice of social justice. Nine of the Evangelical pastors indicated that Martin Luther King Jr. influenced their practice of social justice. Fifteen of the Evangelical pastors identified as a source some form injustice either from personal experience or by witnessing it. Lastly, 10 of the pastors stated that politics was an influential factor in leading their congregation in social justice engagement. Based on these finding Evangelical pastors 3, 4, 7, 15, and 16 were influenced by all the categories in leading their congregation in the practice of social justice. Here a few things these pastors had to say:

Pastor 7, when asked if politics was an influential factor when leading his congregation in social justice activities he stated, “Yes because most modern day politics have very little to do with justice. I consider my ministry as a prophetic-pastoral ministry where I speak truth to power.” Pastor 7 also identified the plight of poor people being an influential factor by stating, “Poor people and people of color, especially in the United States continue to get the short end of the stick as it relates to justice due to systemic racism. I cannot not talk about racism! I cannot not talk about justice issues! I have said this before; more people are injured and or killed daily from the effects of systemic racism than people with AIDS, Ebola, black on black crime, police brutality put together.”

Pastor 15 described his influence from politics in the following manner, “One of the most fundamental definitions of politics is, who gets what, when and how. That goes directly to the heart of social justice. Who it is that is receiving those resources, how are

they are getting them, and when they get them, things of that nature. For me, politics goes hand and hand with social justice.”

Pastor 15 also described his experiences of discrimination in the South being a source of inspiration. He states, “Growing up in the South, my father at an early age converted to Judaism. My father being an African American and so in the South being a little black Jewish boy in rural Mississippi makes for some very interesting stories. Particularly since the largest Jewish community didn’t accept you and the Christian community didn’t accept you. And so early on I experienced isolation, marginalization simply because of the faith practice I was a part of.”

Pastor 15 went on to say how racial marginalization still exists today and how his sexual identity marginalized him. He states, “The South I experienced growing up in, to this day is largely segregated. White people lived uptown, and black people lived downtown, and this still is the case today. Then during my teenage years as I discovered my sexuality. I came to realize that I was gay, and so there was exclusion and marginalization around that.”

Pastor 16 tells a powerful story about how his experience in India was a major influence in inspiring him to lead his congregation in the practice of social justice. He states, “When I was in India, I told people a few years ago of me and my wife’s combined income, and that we were probably close to the poor side of the middle class. The people in India would say when you translate my income into Indian Ruby that you would be like the equivalent to a governor in this state. I am not scraping the barrel, but we ain’t eating plush meals back where I am from.”

Pastor 16 further stated, “This led me to some other research, and there is as set of statistics that I find powerful for me and drive me. There are 925 million undernourished people in the world the United Nations says that need 2400 calories a day to be relatively healthy. It is also estimated there is enough grain alone being produced in the world to give everyone 3600 calories a day. So if we only took the calories from the amount of grain production in the world, we can give everyone in the world 1200 more calories than they need, yet we have 925 million undernourished people! So the problem is not there is not enough food. The problem is not strictly overpopulation, although that is part of it. The problem is that there is poor distribution, not everybody has access to it! What lit me up it is not about necessarily creating more; it is about fighting the injustices that keep people from accessing the vital resources that they need to live and to thrive.”

**Q3. What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem necessary in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?** The findings presented for this question was derived from interview question 7 found in Appendix A. In reference to research question 3 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: fliers from seminars or speaking engagements of the pastors, church websites, pastor resumes’ church, and the social media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. The emerging themes from the interviews and document reviews were separated into two categories. The first category is labeled major themes, which contain four or more instances for each theme regarding leadership skills. The major themes were *Passion, Communication Skills, Vision, Biblical Knowledge, and Sense of Injustices*. The second category is labeled minor themes, which contain only 2 or 3 instances for each theme regarding leadership skills. The minor

themes were *Teachable, Research Skills, and Bridge Builder*. Below are Table 4 and Table 5, which illustrates the themes categorically and the Evangelical pastor selections.

<u>Evangelical Pastor</u>	<u>Passion</u>	<u>Communication Skills</u>	<u>Vision</u>	<u>Biblical Knowledge</u>	<u>Sense of Injustices</u>
Pastor 1			X		
Pastor 2					
Pastor 3				X	X
Pastor 4			X		
Pastor 5			X		
Pastor 6		X	X		X
Pastor 7				X	
Pastor 8		X		X	X
Pastor 9	X		X		
Pastor 10	X	X	X		
Pastor 11	X				
Pastor 12	X	X			X
Pastor 13					
Pastor 14		X			
Pastor 15			X		X
Pastor 16	X	X		X	

<u>Evangelical Pastor</u>	<u>Teachable</u>	<u>Research Skills</u>	<u>Bridge Builder</u>
Pastor 1			
Pastor 2		X	
Pastor 3			
Pastor 4		X	X
Pastor 5			
Pastor 6		X	X
Pastor 7			
Pastor 8			
Pastor 9	X		
Pastor 10			X
Pastor 11			
Pastor 12			

Pastor 13	
Pastor 14	X
Pastor 15	
Pastor 16	

Pastor 13 was the only Evangelical pastor that did not present a leadership skill in any of categories in Table 4 or Table 5. However, he did indicate that being able to speak the language of a specific ethnic is a good leadership skill to have. Pastor 13 and his wife are Native Americans that were missionaries in Latin America for a few years. He states, “For me having been in Latin America I was able to use Spanish to minister to people. Here in Phoenix, there is a large Hispanic community, when they hear me speak Spanish being a Native American it opens a door for me to be a part of their family. They understand me, and I understand where they are coming from.”

Pastor 15 who indicated that Vision and a Sense of Injustices were essential leadership skills in social justice engagement had the following to say: “I think having a good psycho-social understanding of reality. Being able to understand what shapes the minds and groups of individuals who are not only the benefactors of privilege but also those who are marginalized and excluded because of social justice issues. Understanding those mind frames, because it is not as simple as being right and wrong. Social justice issues go deeper, so understanding those dynamics is going to be germane.”

Pastor 15 also stated that having both political and business savvy are critical leadership skills to have. He said, “I think just having political savvy, understanding the way that society works the society, understanding resources and how they are allocated are necessary. We are increasingly living in a capitalistic society so having a business

savvy, understanding how to generate resources is going to be necessary for social justice issues.”

Pastor 12 who identified with Passion, Communication Skills and a Sense of Injustices was the only Evangelical pastor that mentioned listening skills were necessary for the work of social justice. She said, “They have to have a passion and they have to be able to listen. It does not hurt to have good oration skills and to be able to think quickly on feet. There also has to be a large sense of fairness to be able to hear all sides of the matter, because it is never a black or white issue. It is always a gray issue. There is never just one way to do it. So listening skills and that fairness are incredible also.”

**Q4. What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are important to leading their congregations in social justice engagement?** The findings presented for this question was derived from interview questions 7 and 8 found in Appendix A. In reference to research question 4 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: written sermons, recorded sermons, and written publications produced by church or pastor. Ten of 16 Evangelical pastors did not disclose any additional skills when asked this question. The dominant theme that emerged from 3 of remaining 6 Evangelical pastors for this research question was *Christian Experience*. The theme of Christian Experience emerged as a result of reviewing both interview data concurrently with written sermons, recorded sermons or written material produced by the church or pastor.

The following Evangelical pastors had this to say about Christian Experience as an important skill. Pastor 6 mentioned this about Evangelical pastors: “They need to be in prayer and thinking, and looking ahead, and try to be steps ahead of where we want to

take our people.” Pastor 2 stated, “They should rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit using Scripture as a basis.” Finally, Pastor 9 emphasized, “Of course the most important skill is to have a strong relationship with Christ.”

The remaining 3 Evangelical pastors had these this to contribute as additional skills for social justice engagement: Pastor 12 mentions that an additional skill is “to be able to think quickly on feet.” Pastor 4 stated that Evangelical pastors should, “Make time to connect with the community.” Furthermore, he stated, “I devoted 30-40% of my time to get to know the community.”

**Q5. What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities?** The findings presented for this question was derived from interview questions 2, 3 and 4 found in Appendix A. The findings for this research question were obtained by searching for direct and indirect assertions of what the training should entail for Evangelical pastors. In reference to research question 5 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: archival information from special events hosted by the church, curriculum material from social justice seminar, written material produced by the pastor, and media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. It is important to note 6 of 16 Evangelical pastors did not provide any answer to this research question directly or indirectly. Among 6 of the remaining 10 Evangelical pastors, Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as a dominant theme with 2 of them also mentioning Mahatma Gandhi as the subject matter. The remaining 4 Evangelical pastors provided nonthematic assertions for what the training should entail. Following are some of the comments they had to say:

Pastor 4, a White Evangelical pastor mentioned that having an African American to come and speak at your congregation would be a valuable source of training. He specifically stated, "I know all of the pastors of the biggest churches in the valley. What we did I would have an African American come and speak, but it was not the only time I would have an African American speak. I would have them to specifically talk about their own issues with injustice. I had Dr. John Perkins, Riley Washington, Wellington Boone. I tried to get some significant voices and told them to tell their story."

Pastor 5 believed that having social justice taught in Bible College would be helpful. He stated that "During college, there was not a particular course on social justice. All I had was a course on sociology. I believe this is a great need. If bible colleges had a particular course on social justice, I believe this would be a great help."

Pastor 15 alludes to two contemporary subjects that can be training material for Evangelical pastors, such as, "Coursework on White Privilege and Neocolonialism." Finally, Pastor 1 believes that learning what works, such as, "Proven methodologies for outreach, and connection with other nonprofits that are likeminded are a great source training."

### **Evaluation of Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study (Yin, 2009) was to address the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. Research has shown that if congregations are to engage in social justice efforts the pastor of the congregation must be the driving force to lead these efforts (Todd & Rufta, 2012). The conceptual framework that guided this study is the Transformational Leadership Theory (Sagnak, 2010). Transformational Leadership is

the ability to lead change efforts by assisting the transformation of followers into leaders themselves and inspiring others to champion their cause. Therefore, when the pastor functions as a transformational leader their role is to lead, motivate, and inspire parishioners in the congregation's mission (Paarlberg & Lavigna 2010).

In order for the researcher to accomplish the goals needed for this study a broad cross-section of 16 Evangelical pastors were interviewed on their experiences and felt needs regarding the leadership of social justice efforts in their congregations. The pastors that were selected for this study have led or are leading successful social justice programs. In this section an evaluation of the findings that resulted from the interviews with the 16 Evangelical pastors. The evaluation of the findings will be presented for each research question along with the associated themes, and the research that supports the findings.

### **Research Question 1: RQ1**

**Q1. What type of training have Evangelical pastors received before launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?** In reference to research question 1 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: church bulletins, church websites, pastor resumes' church, and the social media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. Four themes emerged from the interviews and document reviews regarding the type of training they received. Interview question 2 found in Appendix A was the data source along with the document reviews mentioned earlier in this paragraph for RQ1. Table 2 displays the Evangelical pastor's source of training. The emerging themes are College Coursework, Denominational Sources, Mentorship, and Self-Education. On the one hand, only 3

(18.75%) of pastors in this study received social justice training through seminary or college coursework. On the other hand, 10 (62.50%) of the pastors derived their training in social justice away from the seminary, which includes Self-Education, Mentorship, and Denominational Sources. This finding confirms that Evangelical pastors receive little to no training in social justice at the seminary before engaging in social justice activities through their congregation (Todd & Rufa, 2013). Another study conducted in 2004 indicated that 53% of the pastors involved in those social justice efforts had no previous experience or training (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). Lastly, it is unknown where the remaining 3 (18.75%) pastors received their training because they did not identify any training source. Thus findings from this dissertation project are consistent with and confirm previous research, which demonstrated that pastors have no specific previous training in leading social justice efforts.

## **Research Question 2: RQ2**

**Q2. What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?** In reference to research question 2 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: written publications authored by the pastors, church websites, and the social media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. The following themes that emerged from review of interview questions 2, 5 and 6 found in Appendix A and the document reviews were the following major influential factors that inspired them in social justice efforts: *The Bible, but specifically the Gospels, Politics, Martin Luther King Jr., and Injustice, either witnessed or personal experience.*

A study conducted in 2004 with 15 pastors revealed that 11 (73%) of them supported their beliefs about social justice with the Bible (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). In this study, the findings in RQ2 reveals that the Bible was an influential factor in 9 (81.25%) of the 16 Evangelical pastors. Thus both of these studies suggest that the Bible is a major influence for pastors involving themselves in the work of social justice.

The next factor of influence was the example and life of Martin Luther King Jr. In this study 9 (56.25%) of the 16 Evangelical pastors were influenced by Martin Luther King in their practice of social justice. The study conducted by Slessarev-Jamir (2004) also revealed that 67% of those 15 pastors had derived their influence about social justice from Martin Luther King Jr. The research here is a clear confirmation that supports the theme of Martin Luther King Jr.

The next factor of influence was the personal experience of Injustice. In Table 3 the findings indicate that 15 (93.75%) of the Evangelical pastors were influenced to engage in social justice activities by some form injustice either directly or indirectly. In Slessarev-Jamir (2004) research, the 15 pastors were asked to identify what triggered their involvement in the work of social justice. Twelve (80%) of those pastors indicated that inadequate education; racial injustice, homelessness, affordable housing, drug addiction, unemployment and violence of against children were triggers (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). The in this study with 16 Evangelical pastors corroborates the findings conducted with 15 pastors (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004) that injustice is a major source of influence that leads pastors to social justice engagement.

The final theme associated with RQ2 is Politics, and 10 (62.5%) of these Evangelical pastors indicated that politics was an influential factor in leading their

congregation in social justice engagement. When Barnes, (2010) examined the Social Gospel usage and Community Empowerment in 16 Black Megachurches, it was noted the Social Gospel suggests that the Christian church should engage in political activism, social reform, and community empowerment. Furthermore, the Social Gospel is a synthesis between the ethics of the Christian faith and social/political activism (Barnes, 2010).

It is worth mentioning again 2 of the comments from the Evangelical pastors that corroborate with Barnes (2010) and the sentiments of political activism and social justice. The researcher asked Pastor 15 if politics was an influence in leading his church in social justice engagement. He stated, “For me, politics goes hand and hand with social justice.” Pastor 7, when asked if politics was an influential factor when leading his congregation in social justice activities he stated, “Yes because most modern day politics have very little to do with justice. I consider my ministry as a prophetic-pastoral ministry where I speak truth to power.”

Previous research has shown the tendency among Evangelicals to align their political stance toward the particular party of interest. Liberal Evangelicals aligned more with the Democratic Party and Conservative Evangelicals aligned more with the Republican Party (Wallace & Lewis, 2007). These findings differ with the previous research among Evangelicals. For this group of Evangelical pastors, it was not about political party loyalty that determined their practice of social justice, but the kind of political stance that speaks out against injustice and advocates for the poor. However, these findings corroborate with Barnes (2010) because they have included the practice of social justice with their congregational mission.

Furthermore, previous research has shown that leaders of predominantly African American congregations have a dual mission of addressing spiritual and temporal needs, such as social reform, community empowerment, and political activism (Barnes, 2010). In this study 13 (81.25%) of the Evangelical pastors are African American or of African descent. The findings for RQ2 indicate that of the 13 African American pastors 8 (61.50%) of them stated that politics was an influential factor that led to their acts of social justice with their congregation. Overall the findings for RQ2 for this dissertation project are consistent with and confirm previous research that pastors are influenced politically towards acts of social justice.

### **Research Question 3: RQ3**

**Q3. What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem important in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?** The findings presented for this question was derived from interview question 7 found in Appendix A. In reference to research question 3 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: fliers from seminars or speaking engagements of the pastors, church websites, pastor resumes' church, and the social media sites provided by the pastor or church representative. The emerging themes from the interviews and document reviews were separated into two categories. The first category is labeled major themes, which contain four or more instances for each theme regarding leadership skills. The major themes were *Passion, Communication Skills, Vision, Biblical Knowledge, and Sense of Injustices*. The second category is labeled minor themes, which contain only 2 or 3 instances for each theme regarding leadership skills. The minor themes were *Teachable, Research Skills, and Bridge Builder*.

Table 4 and Table 5 illustrated the theme categories and the selections by each Evangelical pastor. The major leadership themes that emerged from the Evangelical pastor interviews were Passion, Communication, Vision, Biblical Knowledge and a Sense of Injustices. The minor leadership skills that emerged from the Evangelical pastor interviews were Teachable, Research Skills, and Bridge Builder.

It was important to identify the leadership skills of these Evangelical pastors because they were successful in leading their congregation in the practice of social justice. Research has shown that social justice engagement is not occurring in Evangelical congregations due to a lack of training among Evangelical pastors. When this occurs the poor and vulnerable in the community will go with their needs unmet (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). When these skills are lacking it becomes necessary for Evangelical pastors to receive training (Carter, 2009). By identifying the leadership skills among the successful Evangelical pastors, the researcher can provide a base of knowledge on what skills should be in the training.

The researcher used the Transformational Leadership Theory to evaluate the leadership of the Evangelical pastors because of its success in previous research when evaluating pastoral leadership skills (Rowold, 2009), and it has been known to be the best place to look for a description of these pastoral skills (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

In this study, Passion was the first major theme that was coded. Five of the Evangelical pastors identified this as required leadership skill. The literature did not highlight passion as a specific leadership skill. However, the existence of passion as a leadership skill is evident when a leader motivates, inspires and empowers subordinates, (Northouse, 2007). This skill is related to leadership behavior described by Bass (2008)

as individualized consideration. In this case, a pastor displays passion or individualized consideration when he or she can encourage their parishioners to care for the poor and disadvantaged by establishing some form of social outreach (Sosik, et al., 2011).

In this study, Communication Skills were the second major theme that was coded. Six of the Evangelical pastors identified this as required leadership skill. Bass & Riggio (2006) also described transformational leaders as having the skill to communicate their expectation and commitments of future goals clearly.

The third major theme that was coded was Vision. Seven of the Evangelical pastors identified this as a required leadership skill. Vision is when transformational leaders help members envision a better tomorrow (Bass & Riggio, 2006) or by establishing direction through the creation of vision, clarifying the big picture and setting strategic goals (Northouse, 2007). In this study, the pastor is the visionary who is comfortable articulating the vision to their parishioners regarding social justice activities (Sosik, et al., 2011).

The last two major themes coded by the researcher were Biblical Knowledge and Sense of Injustices. The literature for this study did not provide any support for these themes as leadership skills. However, the pastoral responses for RQ2 included the Bible and Injustice as factors of influence that led these Evangelical pastors towards social justice engagement.

The *Minor Leadership Skills* were labeled Teachable, Research Skills and Bridge Builder. The first minor leadership skill evaluated by the researcher was Teachable. This skill is related to mentoring. If the pastor is teachable, then they will be open to being mentored in the area where they lack skills related to social justice engagement. Research

had shown that mentoring was an excellent resource when the pastor did not receive social justice training in the seminary (Todd & Rufa, 2013). In this study, only two pastors placed value on mentoring or being teachable in the area that they were lacking. Here is what they had to say.

Pastor 9 stated, “We also need some mentorship. You need someone else to that is able to share with you what they have been through.” Whereas, Pastor 14 agreed by saying, “Every leader has to be teachable. I think that is extremely important that you have to remain in a place where you can still be taught. It is dangerous for leader to think they know it all.”

The American Baptist Church conducted a study, which asked pastors if they thought if their seminary preparation was adequate in preparing them to lead their congregation. There were 240 pastors that responded to the question; 28.8% of the pastors disagreed with the statement that seminary adequately prepared them to lead; 22% of the pastors somewhat agreed; only 3% of the pastors strongly agreed with the statement. The researchers concluded that seminary training did not adequately prepare the majority of the American Baptist pastors (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

To eradicate this problem, The American Baptist Church began to mentor their recent seminary graduates and continued to support them through on-going mentoring relationships (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). After this mentoring program begun the pastors indicated if they agreed or strongly agreed that pastoral mentoring would enhance their skills in leadership. Those pastoral responses indicated that 25.9% of the pastors agreed that pastoral mentoring improved their ministerial preparation (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

Therefore the findings of this study with Evangelical pastors agrees with the research here about mentoring as a means to enhance the skills of leadership.

The second minor leadership skill evaluated is Research Skills. Here is what the pastors had to say. Pastor 2 stated, “A leader should be knowledgeable, and get extensive training in sociological, psychological, historical courses and should have research skills.”

Pastor 4 identified his research skills through community assessment. He states, “I devoted 30-40% of my time to get to know the community.” Lastly, Pastor 6 placed a high value on research as a leadership skill. He stated, “First of all, a leader must have a fundamental appreciation of research, and reading and understanding. A leader needs to have a moral foundation to have studied and researched before they became leaders. I think that leaders that lack that are more self-serving. Without a foundation of history and research and reading biographies, I think motivations go toward personal ambition rather than serving the people and serving God.” Although these Evangelical pastors have regarded research as being a necessary leadership skill, however, it is not supported in the literature as a leadership skill.

The third minor leadership skill evaluated is Bridge Builder. Pastor 4 in this study stated Evangelical pastors should have, “The capacity to build bridges and value relationships.”

Pastor 10 conducts periodic forums called “Conversation with Cops.” He states, “What we have done as a church is that we started something that is called “Conversation with Cops.” We had the first “Conversation with Cops” immediately after a gentleman was killed by a police officer in the City of Phoenix. So at that “Conversation with Cops” we had representatives there from various police agencies, Department of Public Safety,

City of Chandler, City of Mesa the Deputy Chief, we the County Attorney, the elected official County attorney.”

Pastor 10 further stated, “We did another ‘Conversation with Cops’ with the Maricopa County Sheriff, Joe Arpaio, because he has had racial profiling instances, and so our church has started to have a dialogue with the various police agencies in the Valley to make sure that certain behaviors of police officers are not tolerated. To make sure if a cop has a camera that it is turned on as soon as he gets out of the vehicle.”

A researcher conducted a study on a total 15 churches in the cities of Chicago, New Orleans, and Milwaukee and discovered that faith-based organizing was a strategy they used to effect social change in their town. (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004) This same study also showed that community organizing is one of the most successful forms of grassroots activism, and the most dynamic examples are networks dominated by churches and other religious bodies (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). This research supports bridge building as leadership skill for Evangelical pastors that want to engage in social justice efforts.

#### **Research Question 4: RQ4**

**Q4. What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are important to leading their congregations in social justice engagement?** In reference to research question 4 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: written sermons, recorded sermons, and written publications produced by church or pastor. The findings presented for this question was derived from interview questions 7 and 8 found in Appendix A along with a review of the documents mentioned earlier in this paragraph. Although 10 (62.5%) of the Evangelical pastors did not share

any additional skills for social justice engagement, however, 3 (18.75%) of remaining 6 Evangelical identified Christian Experience is an essential skill.

This finding corroborates with a study conducted with 304 college students at a Catholic University to determine if the impact of their faith or religious beliefs would somehow influence or incite social justice engagement in the future (Kozlowski, Ferrari, & Odahl, 2014). The study gathered data through self-reporting on the structures of faith/belief, social justice, and community service attitudes (Kozlowski et al., 2014). Mature faith as described by Koenigs & Ferrari (2013) has a positive association with social justice behavior and racial equality. Faith maturity according to Benson et al., (1993) is the degree an individual expresses their faith in society by service to others, pro-social values, acts of mercy, and deeds of justice.

The results indicated that the scores that focused on faith and civic engagement displayed a strong relationship to social justice attitudes and the intent to engage in social justice activities (Kozlowski et al., 2014). Furthermore, the faith and civic engagement score displayed a strong relationship to faith maturity that emphasized community relations with others compared to an individual's relationship with God. Previous research supports the finding in RQ4 that Christian Experience is an additional skill that is crucial to leading their congregations in social justice engagement

#### **Research Question 5: RQ5**

**Q5. What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities?** The purpose of this multi-case study (Yin, 2009) was to address the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. This

section will provide an evaluation of the findings concerning what the training should entail.

In reference to research question 5 the following documents were analyzed concurrently with the interviews analyses: archival information from special events hosted by the church, curriculum material from social justice seminar, written material produced. The findings revealed that 6 (37.5%) of 16 Evangelical pastors did not submit any response that correlates with RQ5 directly or indirectly. The remaining 10 (62.5%) of the 16 pastors had direct or indirect contributions, which correlate with RQ5. Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as the dominant theme with 6 (60%) of the 10 Evangelical pastors with 2 of them mentioning Mahatma Gandhi as well. The remaining 4 Evangelical pastors provided nonthematic or independent assertions for what the training should entail.

The research associated with this study did not give any details the kind of subjects associated with social justice training. However, the research does support the notion that pastors did not receive social justice training were not provided in a seminary setting before social justice engagement (Todd & Rufa, 2013). In the same study, the research reveals that one of the pastors expressed being ill-prepared for social justice engagement because “There certainly wasn’t a class on how to do this” (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

In this particular study, 6 of the responses from Evangelical pastors that correlate with RQ5 indicate that Martin Luther King Jr. was the subject matter that theologically shaped the pastors thinking about social justice. This finding agrees with a study among 15 congregational leaders that 10 (67%) of them indicated that Martin Luther King Jr.

influenced their theological understanding of social justice (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004).

Based on the findings in RQ5 and the research conducted with 15 congregational leaders (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004), it is surmisable that the primary subject matter should be Martin Luther King Jr. when training Evangelical pastors in social justice.

The 4 Evangelical pastors that provided nonthematic assertions, which correlate to RQ5 are valuable contributions to the training needs for social justice engagement. Pastor 5 believed that having social justice taught in Bible College would be helpful. He stated that “During college, there was not a particular course of social justice. All I had was a course on sociology. I believe this is a great need. If bible colleges had a particular course on social justice, I believe this would be a great help.” Pastor 5’s response agrees with research by Todd & Rufa (2013) that social justice training was absent in the seminary training.

Pastor 4, who is a White Evangelical pastor that mentioned having an African American to come and speak at a congregation, talking specifically about their issues with injustice would be a valuable source of training. He mentioned having prominent Evangelical African Americans such as Wellington Boone and Dr. John Perkins as speakers. Pastor 4 addressed his lack training on how to prepare his congregation for social justice engagement by having experts to his congregation. Pastor 15 discussed coursework on White Privilege and Neocolonialism. Pastor 1 believes that learning proven methodologies for outreach, and having nonprofit connections are an excellent source training. The assertions from 3 of the 4 Evangelical pastors corroborates with the research by Cohall & Cooper (2010) that a post-seminary environment can be an

alternative opportunity to enhance pastoral skills in whatever area is needed to serve the church or community.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 4 the principal investigator reported the findings and the evaluation of the findings for research questions RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5 found at the beginning of Chapter. The principal investigator used a qualitative multi-case study (Yin, 2009) using the research instrument found in Appendix A, which consisted of 7 demographic and nine open-ended questions.

The most significant findings for RQ1 is that 10 of the pastors derived the training in social justice away from the seminary with Self-Education being the primary source of training. This finding confirms that Evangelical pastors receive no training in social justice at the seminary before engaging in social justice activities through their congregation (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

Four emerging themes in RQ2 evidence the Evangelical pastors' acts of social justice through the congregations. The Bible was a factor of influence with 9 of the pastors; Martin Luther King Jr. with 9 of the pastors; Injustice with 15 of the pastors; and Politics with 10 of the pastors.

The findings for RQ3 identified two sets of leadership skills that were labeled *Major Leadership Skills* and *Minor Leadership Skills* illustrated in Table 3 and Table 4. This study with Evangelical pastors addressed the lack of leadership training in social justice engagement (Carter, 2009). RQ3 was needed to identify the leadership skills of Evangelical pastors because which were successful in leading their congregation in the

practice of social justice. Evangelical pastors that desire to engage in social justice practices should be aware of the skills which are necessary to be successful.

The findings for RQ4 indicate that 10 of the Evangelical pastors had nothing to contribute regarding additional skills for social justice engagement. However, 3 of the pastors agreed that Christian Experience is an essential skill. Kozlowski, Ferrari, & Odahl (2014) support this assertion by the Evangelical pastors that faith has a positive impact on social justice engagement.

Lastly, the findings for RQ5 6 of 16 Evangelical pastors provided no response that correlates with RQ5 directly or indirectly. The remaining 10 of the 16 pastors had direct or indirect contributions that correlated with RQ5. Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as the dominant theme with 60% of the 10 Evangelical pastors with 2 of them mentioning Mahatma Gandhi as well. The remaining 4 Evangelical pastors provided nonthematic assertions for what the training should entail. Overall the findings in this chapter are supported by the research associated with this study are consistent with and confirm previous research, which demonstrated that pastors have no specific training in leading social justice efforts.

## **Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions**

Pastors for the Christian Church have accepted the calling to engage in social justice efforts to assist the poor (Koku & Acquaye, 2011; NAE, 2012). Furthermore, Evangelicals are called to poor relief as described in The Evangelical Manifesto (Neuhaus, 2008). However, the research literature on this subject indicates that many of these pastors are not leading their congregations in social justice due to a lack of seminary training (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). If Evangelical pastors are going to lead their congregation in the practice of social justice, it is essential that these pastors receive appropriate training on social justice engagement.

The purpose of this multi-case study (Yin, 2009) was to address the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. This multi-case study (Yin, 2009) addressed the need to identify the skills necessary for leading these social justice efforts. The researcher accomplished these goals by interviewing a broad cross-section of 16 Evangelical pastors, which have led or are leading successful social justice programs. The Evangelical pastors were asked to identify the sources that informed their practice of social justice, and the type of leadership skills they possessed in leading their congregation in the practice of social justice. All of the pastors or their representative have ties to the Southwest region of the United States through religious affiliation.

The researcher chose qualitative case study design because it provided the ability to conduct an in-depth exploration of the Evangelical pastors' leadership around social justice programs, and to capture the uniqueness of each Evangelical pastor's history in leading social justice efforts. Quantitative methods could have been used to capture a

larger audience of Evangelical pastors, but that approach would have been too impersonal and would have limited the amount of data (Dobrovolny, & Fuentes, 2008) from the pastors, their community context, and the social justice needs in their given context. The researcher corroborated the findings by triangulating statements regarding social justice activities with archival records, church websites, and brochures (Yin, 2011). The data was transcribed, organized into folders, analyzed, and coded into themes with the use of NVivo software (Bazeley, 2007).

Before conducting this study, the researcher became familiar with the ethical codes that inform sound decisions in research on being honest, remaining authentic, and ensuring confidentiality (İşman, Askal, & Gazi, 2009). The researcher made every effort to be objective in interpreting evidence and remained unbiased in interpreting the facts in this study (APA, 2010).

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss each research question, how the findings respond to the study problem and fit the purpose. The researcher will present recommendations for practical applications for this study, present recommendations for future research, and provide a summary of all the key points in this chapter.

### **Implications**

The goals of this study explored the following research questions with these Evangelical pastors:

**Q1. What type of training have Evangelical pastors received prior to launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?** The coded responses from the interviews resulted in 4 emerging themes regarding the type of training they received. Those emerging themes were College Coursework,

Denominational Sources, Mentorship, and Self-Education. The study revealed that the majority pastors identified Self-Education as being the type of training they received in social justice, not Mentorship, or Denominational Sources. Furthermore, only two pastors regarded College Coursework as a source of training. Based on those findings, the research study confirms that Evangelical pastors have not received formal training (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004), nor has the seminary been the source of training in social justice engagement (Todd & Rufa, 2013). This implies the need for training in practical leadership of social justice efforts for pastors during seminary for those pastors interested in social justice efforts

**Q2. What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?** The coded responses from interviews resulted in 4 emerging themes regarding what inspired these pastors in leading their congregation in social justice involvement. The emerging themes in this research question were The Bible, Martin Luther King Jr., Injustice, and Politics. Therefore, these findings imply that the pastor's faith or in this case the Bible was fundamental; Martin Luther King Jr. has been the champion or model of faith-based social justice; and injustice experienced or injustice observed are corroborated as factors of influence by previous studies with pastors (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). Furthermore, these findings also imply that politics is corroborated as a factor of influence among pastors when it relates to social/political activism through the congregation (Barnes, (2010). Role models like MLK Jr. might also be useful in training evangelical pastors in social justice efforts.

**Q3. What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem necessary in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?** The coded

responses for this research question resulted in 8 emerging themes associated with leadership skills among pastors. These skills were essential because this group of Evangelical pastors was successful in leading their congregation in the practice of social justice, and because the majority of Evangelical pastors have had no formal training in social justice (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

The following are the eight leadership skills identified by the pastors: Passion; Communication Skills; Vision; Biblical Knowledge Sense of Injustices; Teachable; Research Skills; and Bridge-Builder. The leadership skills of Passion, Communication Skills, and Vision corroborate with the Transformational Leadership Theory because (a) passion as a leadership skill is evident when a leader motivates, inspires and empowers subordinates (Northouse, 2007); (b) Transformational leaders have the ability to clearly communicate to subordinates their expectations and goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006); and (c) the pastor functions as a visionary when he/she articulates the vision to the congregation regarding their strategy for social justice engagement (Sosik, Zhu, & Blair, 2011).

Although the leadership skills of Biblical Knowledge and Sense of Injustices are not supported by the Transformational Leadership Theory but corroborated in other research literature as influential factors regarding pastors in social justice engagement (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004).

The last three leadership skills identified by these pastors are essential. Since Evangelical pastors have lacked training in social justice (Carter, 2009), some of these pastors regarded Teachable as being a leadership skill congruent with mentoring. Previous research corroborated mentoring as an excellent resource when the pastor did not receive social justice training in the seminary (Todd & Rufa, 2013).

Furthermore, Research Skills has no support as a leadership skill according to the literature reviewed for this study. However, it is evident that these pastors did their homework on what was needed to lead their congregation in social justice engagement. The capacity to be a Bridge-Builder should be a skill among Evangelical pastors that intend on conducting social justice activities through their congregation to affect change in their communities corroborates with previous research as a viable skill among pastors (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004).

**Q4. What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are essential to leading their congregations in social justice engagement?** The only theme that emerged for this research question is Christian Experience. Christian Experience as a skill is corroborated because of the positive impact an individual's faith has towards conducting social justice activities (Kozlowski et al., 2014). Christian Experience is identified thematically as skill with only 3 of the participants. However, it should be apparent that Christian Experience is implied as a skill among all 16 participants since they are Evangelical pastors.

**Q5. What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities?** The only theme that emerged for this question came from 6 of the Evangelical pastors. Six of the pastors did not provide any response that correlates with the research question directly or indirectly. The remaining 4 Evangelical pastors provided nonthematic or independent assertions for what the training should entail. Martin Luther King Jr. was the dominant theme that emerged from those that responded. The findings in Research Questions 2 and 5 indicate the positive influence that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has had on these Evangelical

pastors as it relates to social justice engagement (Slessarev-Jamir, 2004). This implication is once again that MLK Jr. should be considered a role model for training in social justice efforts. Perhaps his life and nonviolent methods could be studied in seminary.

### **Recommendations**

The purpose of this study addressed the lack of pastoral leadership training associated with social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations today. The researcher has proposed the following recommendations for the present usage of this study, and for future research.

#### **Recommendations for Evangelical Pastors**

Those Evangelical pastors that are intending to engage in social justice efforts should consider the following:

1. Become familiar with the Evangelical Manifesto and with Scripture both in the Old and New Testaments that address social justice (Neuhaus, 2008).
2. Familiarize themselves with individuals that have contributed to the theological shaping of social justice engagement, such as, Reinhold Niebuhr, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Martin Luther King Jr. (Evans, 2010).
3. Identify the social ills in their community that they want to address and inquire from other pastors that are addressing those concerns (Barnes, 2010).
4. 4. Implement course work or training modules in social justice leadership efforts during seminary training

#### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The researcher proposes that the same qualitative multi-case study (Yin 2011) be conducted in other regions of the United States and compare those findings with the

present study (Shenton, 2004). Secondly, a qualitative multi-case study could be with specific groups such as Pentecostals and Charismatics that identify with being Evangelical.

Thirdly, a quantitative study performed for a larger audience of Evangelical pastors focusing on social justice engagement and what kinds of skills they need (Dobrovlny, & Fuentes, 2008). Here are the research questions that can be explored in a quantitative study with Evangelical pastors:

1. What was the source of training in social justice?
2. What leadership skills do you deem essential for engaging in social justice?
3. What should an Evangelical pastor consider prior to launching a social justice program?

Fourth, pastors, are encouraged to research accessible databases, libraries or resources for studies on pastors that have been successful in social justice engagement. Lastly, Evangelical pastors should further research the contribution of the Social Gospel, Liberation Theology, the theological underpinnings of Civil Rights Movement and its impact on social justice engagement through the church today.

## **Conclusions**

In Chapter 5 the researcher provided an explanation of the implications derived from the findings of the pastoral interviews. The researcher accomplished this by highlighting the main themes for each research question, and what this implies for those interested in the leadership of social justice engagement in Evangelical congregations. Furthermore, the researcher provided recommendations for the usage of this present study

and what could future research entail regarding social justice engagement and Evangelical pastors.

Lastly, the researcher realized that this study was disconcerting in the following ways: First, the researcher began the data collection during the holiday season of 2015, and the many of the pastors were hard to schedule for a face-to-face interview. Second, the researcher planned to have an ethnically diverse representation of Evangelical pastors to have a broader perspective on social justice leadership. However, the majority of the pastors that responded to the recruitment were African American. The majority of the White American pastors contacted during the recruitment phase expressed that they were not interested or simply didn't respond to any of the emails or phone calls.

During this study, the researcher discovered that the pastors who had personal experiences with injustice seemed to have a higher motivation to perform social justice work. The Evangelical pastors who served poor and vulnerable populations had well organized social justice programs that were successful in providing poor relief. The majority of the pastors in this study placed a high regard on the authority of scripture as it relates to social justice work, and regarded Martin Luther King Jr. as an example of social justice.

The researcher also realized that a more rich set of data could have been acquired regarding training needs for social justice, if the pastors were asked to list and explain why they chose those topics for a social justice leadership curriculum. The researcher also could have asked each pastor to disclose if they identify as a Liberal Evangelical or Conservative Evangelical. Research has shown that Liberal Evangelicals have a greater preponderance towards social justice work when compared to Conservative Evangelicals

(Todd & Rufa, 2012). It would have been important to know the positions of each pastor to determine if previous research regarding Liberal and Conservative Evangelicals applies to this group. Although this study proved to be overwhelming at times, the experience enabled the researcher to grow in his understanding of social justice leadership and in the skills that are required for an effective researcher.

In summary, these pastors, with the majority having an average of 30 years of pastoral ministry, are all leading significant social justice efforts in their communities. Their efforts include, "Conversation with Cops," working with individuals that are HIV positive and their families, providing food and shelter for the homeless, unemployment services, serving at-risk youth, or those confronting racism. What allows these pastors to lead such efforts, not just a single instance, but many times over their years of faithful service? Why have they not burned - out? They testify that they see their social justice work as part of their devotion to Jesus Christ and his mission to the world. Their work is Christ's work, and He never burns out.

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## Appendix

## Appendix A

### Demographic & Interview Questions

#### Demographic Questions

- Q1. What is your age?
- Q2. What is your ethnicity?
- Q3. What is your gender?
- Q4. What is your denominational affiliation?
- Q5. What is your length of time in ministry?
- Q6. What is the size of your congregation?
- Q7. What city does your ministry reside in?

#### Interview Questions

- Q1. Explain what it means to be an Evangelical?
- Q2. What sources have you used in defining your meaning of social justice?
- Q3. What social justice issues do you deem important for the church to engage in?
- Q4. Describe the social justice program(s) your congregation engages in?
- Q5. Has politics been a factor in guiding your leadership around the issues of social justice?
- Q6. Describe how social injustice inspired you to lead your church in the practice of social justice?
- Q7. What leadership skills do you deem important for a pastor to effectively lead their congregation in the practice of social justice?
- Q8. What challenges have you faced in leading your church in the practice social justice?

**Q9.** What criteria did you use in evaluating the success of your congregation's social justice mission?

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Protocol**

The researcher will use a qualitative interview approach that incorporates open-ended instead of closed-ended questions (Yin, 2011). The questions that will be asked of each pastor will inquire about the type of leadership skills (Bass & Riggio, 2006) the pastor deems important for social justice engagement. The pastors will also be asked questions such as the following: (a) how the pastor defines themselves as an Evangelical (NAE, 2012); (b) the sources that informed the pastor's perception of social justice; (c) what type training did they receive in social justice engagement; and (d) the type of social justice engagement activities performed by their congregation (Todd & Rufa, 2012).

Below are the research questions that are guiding this study:

#### **Research Questions**

- Q1.** What type of training if any had these Evangelical pastors received prior to launching a social justice engagement program through their congregation?
- Q2.** What inspired these Evangelical pastors to lead their congregations in social justice engagement?
- Q3.** What leadership skills do these Evangelical pastors deem important in leading a social justice engagement program through their congregation?
- Q4.** What other skills do these Evangelical pastors believe are important to leading their congregations in social justice engagement?
- Q5.** What should the training entail that would properly equip Evangelical pastors for social justice engagement in their communities?